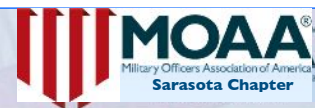


# THE SARASOTA BREEZE



## THE MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF SARASOTA, INC

An Affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America MOAA and The Florida Council of Chapters

Best Newsletter 2000-2004, 2007/2010; Runner Up 2008/2009, 2012-2014; Newsletter 5 Star 2015/2017-2024; 4 Star 2016; Website 5-Star 2015-2024  
Vol. XXXVII No. 2 MOAA 4-Star Chapter 2003/2008/2019; MOAA 5 Star Chapter 2004-2007, 2009-2018, 2020-2024 February 2026

### **JANUARY 2026 PROGRAM - MOTE Science Education Aquarium (SEA)**



Our January Guest Speaker, Ms. Sheyla Ravelo Perez, Mote Science Education Aquarium (SEA) Education Specialist, was born in Cuba and is a proud alumna of the University of Florida.

She gave an energetic and enlightening presentation describing Mote's humble beginnings in a one room lab on Siesta Key, its growth through the years to their world-renowned facility on City Island on Sarasota Bay and culminating in their new first class multimillion dollar home at University Town Center (UTC).

She elaborated on Mote Marine Laboratory's vision to excel as a leader in nationally and internationally respected research programs that are relevant to conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity, healthy habitats and natural resources.

With extensive expertise in global science communication, Ms. Ravelo Perez has successfully engaged diverse stakeholders and led outreach initiatives across Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Her presentation surely piqued everyone's interest to experience Mote SEA firsthand. You will not want to miss our next YAHOO outing. Be sure to join us at Mote SEA for a YAHOO behind-the-scenes guided tour Friday 6 February (see Yahoo events on page 10).

### **FEBRUARY 2026 PROGRAM - National Park Service DeSoto National Monument**

Our February Guest Speaker, National Park Service Ranger Daniel Stephens, will provide a presentation related to the Spanish expedition into the southeast, "An Epic Journey into the New World."

Tucked between Everglades and Big Cypress National Parks to the South, and Gulf Islands National Seashore to the North, De Soto is the only mid-state National Park unit on Florida's West coast. Established in March 1948 the Memorial commemorates the landing of Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto in Florida and the first extensive organized exploration of what is now the Southern US by European explorers.

In May 1539, Conquistador Hernando de Soto's army of soldiers, hired mercenaries, craftsmen, and clergy made landfall in Tampa Bay. They were met with fierce resistance of indigenous people protecting their homelands. De Soto's quest for glory and gold would be a four year, four-thousand-mile odyssey of intrigue, warfare, disease, and discovery that would form the history of the United States.

The Memorial tells the story of both the Spanish explorers and the Indigenous tribes they encountered during their four-year journey.

The park is open year-round and offers many seasonal activities. The highlight of the park's activities include living history programs and demonstrations at Camp Uzita, a re-creation of a 16th Century native village. During the summer the park operates guided kayak tours in the surrounding water and bays. Park Rangers and staff are on hand to assist visitors in their understanding of this important and controversial historical event.

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Receive the Breeze via email or view it on our website [www.sarasotamoaa.com](http://www.sarasotamoaa.com) or blog [sarasotamoaa.blogspot.com](http://sarasotamoaa.blogspot.com)

**Military Officers Association of Sarasota (MOAS)****Mission Statement**

MOAS, a non-profit 501c(19) organization, exists to improve the awareness, life style, and overall environment of its members; support and serve the citizens of the Sarasota area; influence the political process in matters pertaining to active duty, retired and former military personnel; and enhance the image of America's uniformed services in our local community.

**Chapter Officers, Directors and Committees**

President	Steven L. Carnes
1st Vice President	Wesley R. Moy
2nd Vice President	Christopher V. Nind
Treasurer	Christa I. Friedlander
Secretary & Historian	Peter Dering
Director (Scholarships)	William F. Lawyer
Director (Communications)	Richard J. Greenspan
Director (Legislative)	Michael Lindquist
Director (Membership)	Len Friedlander
Immediate Past President	David Downer
<b>Legislative Committee</b>	Michael Lindquist
<b>Vets Affairs/Commission</b>	Peter Dering
<b>Marketing &amp; Communications Committee</b>	
Chairperson	Richard Greenspan
Editor-Newsletter	Len Friedlander
Web Site	Vacant
BLOG/Social Media/Photo	Vacant
<b>Membership Committee</b>	
Recruiting & Retention	Len Friedlander
Recruiting & Retention	William F. Lawyer
Reporting & Records	Christa I. Friedlander
<b>Personal Affairs Committee</b>	
Surviving Spouses Liaison	Vacant
Chaplain	Michael Lindquist
<b>Programs Committee</b>	
Chairperson	Christopher Nind
Luncheon Programs	Christopher Nind
Young at Heart [YAHOO]	Ron Wozniak
YAHOO Coordinator	Linda Wozniak
Meet & Greet	Peggy O'Connell
<b>Luncheon Committee</b>	
Chairperson & Coordinator	Mary Gordon
Greeter	Peter Dering
50-50 Manager	Jonathan Gordon
<b>Scholarship Committee</b>	
Chairperson	William F. Lawyer
Member	Brenda Moy
Member	Len Friedlander
Member	Mary Gordon
Member	Linda Wozniak
Member	Art Hillman
<b>JROTC Liaison</b>	William F. Lawyer
<b>Support Our Troops [SOT]</b>	Ron Wozniak
<b>Awards Board Chair</b>	Jonathan C. Gordon

**Editorial Policy:** "The Breeze" newsletter is published by the Military Officers Association of Sarasota, Inc., an affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) and the Florida Council of Chapters (FCOC). MOAA and its affiliated chapters & councils are non-partisan."

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE****Steven L. Carnes**

Welcome to a new year and new administration in MOAS. Thank you for your vote of confidence in the new slate of officers. We pledge to serve you well. Colonel Wesley Moy, 1st Vice President, and I will be representing the chapter at the Florida Council of Chapters annual president's meeting, leadership conference, and annual meeting to be held in Orlando January 29 through February 1. This will allow us to learn firsthand what is transpiring at the national and state levels as well as interact with leaders from other chapters in our area.

As indicated in my last message, part of the mission of national MOAA is to preserve and protect earned benefits for our uniformed services, veterans, their families, and surviving spouses through advocacy. MOAA advocates with Congress to pass legislation affecting both active duty and retiree benefits. One of the ways we can support MOAA is to log on to their Legislative Action Center on their website and send a pre-written letter of support to your legislators. I want to call your attention to one piece of legislation that needs our support now.

The Major Richard Star Act, a MOAA-supported bill ([H.R. 2102](#) | [S. 1032](#)) eliminates a dollar-for-dollar offset faced by service members whose combat-related injuries force them to medically retire before the 20-year mark. Ending this "[wounded veteran tax](#)" would allow eligible veterans to receive both full retirement pay and full disability compensation. In a strategic shift to advance the legislation in this session of Congress, senators have filed the text of the bill as an amendment to House-passed appropriations legislation ([H.R. 4016](#)). That House bill contains five of the 12 annual funding bills often viewed as must-pass legislation for federal operations. Attaching the legislation to must-pass funding bills represents a key shift in advocacy strategy as the first session of 119th Congress winds down. Because the standalone bills have faced procedural hurdles over the past seven years, leveraging the appropriations process may provide the best remaining opportunity to secure floor consideration and a recorded vote in the coming weeks. MOAA's advocacy remains focused on passing the Major Richard Star Act. We need your help to urge members of Congress to support inclusion of the bill's language as an amendment to the appropriations legislation, and to oppose procedural barriers that could derail progress. Grassroots engagement remains critical to maintaining momentum. We urge you to [send a message to our lawmakers today](#) through the MOAA Legislative Action Center.

Thank you for supporting our organization, and we are looking forward to a great year!



**SECRETARY’S CORNER**  
*Peter Dering*

**Military Officers Association of Sarasota, Inc (MOAS)  
Sarasota Military Officers Foundation, Inc (SMOF)**

The board meeting for the above organizations was held Monday January 5, 2026 at the Meadows Meadows Lifestyle & Wellness Facility. Issues of significance are addressed below. **NOTE:** The complete minutes and financial reports will be on the MOAS website [www.sarasotamoaa.com](http://www.sarasotamoaa.com) following approval of the Board of Directors, The information below should be considered unofficial as the meeting minutes are not yet board approved.

**CALL TO ORDER:** President Steve Carnes called the meeting to order at 1406. The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer led by President Carnes, and the installation of the 2026 Board of Directors by FCOC Secretary, Jon Gordon .

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Steve Carnes (Pres), Wesley Moy (1VP), Peter Dering (Sec’y), Christa Friedlander (Treas), Bill Lawyer (Dir), Len Friedlander (Dir), Richard Greenspan (Dir) & Dave Downer (IPP)

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Chris Nind (2VP), Michael Lindquist (Dir),

**COMMITTEE CHAIRS & VISITORS PRESENT:** Jon Gordon, Ron Wozniak, Peggy O’Connell & Francine King.

**PRESIDENT’S ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:**

- The next MOAS luncheon meeting will be on Friday, 1/16/2026 with a speaker from MOTE Science Education Aquarium (SEA).
- 2026 FCOC President’s Mtg, Leadership Seminar, Annual Mtg, and Convention 29 Jan – 1 Feb, Rosen Center, Orlando

**1VP & 2VP COMBINED DISCUSSION:** (Wes Moy & Chris Nind) Christopher Nind and Wesley Moy met on 12/31 to compare notes and observations as the incoming MOAS chapter 2VP and 1VP.

- There should be an annual evaluation of the chapter and its activities, measured against the MOAS Constitution and Bylaws Article II-Purposes.
- There should be an onboarding process for new chapter members to increase the “stickiness” of the chapter and its events. Emphasis should be on retaining new and younger members for the long-term health and viability of the chapter.
- Identify a chapter member pool to be sponsors for new members.
- Create an onboarding process for new board members.
- Conduct outreach to various area veterans’ organizations.
- Reach out to non-military organizations with similar objectives.
- Use the Associate Member category to recruit new members.
- Establish/reestablish relationships with past associated organizations.
- Outreach and support to Sarasota County JROTC organizations.
- Creation of a Speakers Bureau to lend chapter member expertise to the community.
- Press release program to inform the media and community.
- Begin Nominating Committee activities now.
- Explore social media for communications to the membership and community

**SECOND VICE PRESIDENT & PROGRAMS:** (Chris Nind)

**Future Programs**

16 January: MOTE Science Education Aquarium (SEA)

20 February: National Park Service

20 March: Southwest Florida Honor Flight

17 April: Mr. Michael Keil, Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches, Inc

**IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT:**(Dave Downer) Nothing to Report

**SECRETARY’S REPORT:** (Peter Dering) The December 2025 BOD Meeting Minutes were approved unanimously.

**TREASURER’S REPORT:** (Christa Friedlander) The December 2025 Treasurer’s Reports were approved unanimously.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**MEMBERSHIP:** (Len Friedlander) Current membership is 203

- Renewal Mailing mailed to 203 members Nov 18.
- As of 12/31 - 150 Renewals; 8 Resignations; 45 No Response.

**JROTC, MCJROTC:** (Bill Lawyer) Nothing to Report

**LEGISLATIVE:** (Mike Lindquist) Please refer to the Breeze for the full report.

**MEET & GREET:**(Peggy O’Connell): The next Meet and Greet will be Wednesday, Jan 14, at 5:00 PM at Mattison’s on 41

**BREEZE NEWSLETTER:** (Len Friedlander) January issue was published and emailed to 229 addressees. Twenty-two (22) copies were printed and mailed to members.

**WEBSITE:** (Len Friedlander) Scholarship Introduction page & Application have been updated. Leadership Page - Names - photos prepared for upload. Website hosting transferred to consultant.

Current website requires total upgrade –software no longer supported/cannot update the website with current structure. Must update system & applications software and plug-ins.

Consultant will provide needed software licenses; will re-design page content, data flow, and user interaction. Normally a \$5K job – FCOC chapter rate is \$800. Request Board approval for the \$800 expenditure.

**VETERANS’ AFFAIRS:** (Peter Dering)

- VA resources at the [The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs](http://The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs).
- The next SC Veterans Council meeting will be February 10, 2026, at 3:00 PM, at Gold Coast Eagle Distributing, 7051 Wireless Court, Sarasota, FL 34240. [sarasotacvc.org](http://sarasotacvc.org)
- **Sarasota County Honors Veterans - Monthly Ceremony**

On the second Wednesday of every month, at 9:00 AM, Sarasota County honors those honorably discharged veterans who have passed away in the area without family.

Please join this important Monthly Ceremony to remember our local veterans. Services are held at Sarasota National Cemetery at 9:00 AM. Service is Rain or Shine.

**YAHOO:** (Ron & Linda Wozniak)

**Past Events/Outings**

- Saturday 13 December Army Navy Football Game Watch Party hosted by the Scotts, & the Warmingtons.
- Sunday 28 December Sarasota Polo Military & 1st Responders Appreciation - We feel having the match scheduled by between Christmas & New Years contributed to the low MOAS turnout. Next year we will consider scheduling this outing for MOAS in the late Winter or early Spring as in previous years.

MONTH	BOARD	LUNCHEON
February	Monday 2	Friday 20
March	Monday 2	Friday 20
April	Monday 6	Friday 17

	LUNCHEON PROGRAMS
January	Mote Aquarium (MOTE SEA)
February	National Park Service - De Soto Memorial
March	Southwest Florida Honor Flight

**Future Events/Outings**

- Saturday 10 Jan Florida Medal of Honor Memorial - Sebring FL
- Friday 6 Feb MOTE SEA 2-hour Guided Tour

**SARASOTA MILITARY OFFICERS FOUNDATION, INC****SCHOLARSHIP REPORT:** (Bill Lawyer): Nothing to Report**OLD BUSINESS:** None**NEW BUSINESS:**

- 1) Approve the 2026 Budget
- 2) Approve \$800 expenditure for website update and re-design.

**BOARD APPROVED ACTIONS/MOTIONS:**

- A motion was made and seconded to approve the MOAS 2026 budget with one change to the "Travel Expenses" item, changing the \$500.00 expense for the president, to \$250.00 each for the president and the 1st VP for FCOC related events. The motion was unanimously approved.
- A motion was made and seconded to approve the SMOF 2026 budget. The motion was unanimously approved.
- The \$800.00 expenditure to update and redesign of the website was unanimously approved.

**MISCELLANEOUS:** Newly elected 2026 MOAS Board of Directors

President - Col Steven L. Carnes, USAF (Ret)

1st VP - COL Wesley R. Moy, USA (Ret)

2nd VP - LTC Christopher V. Nind, UK Army (Ret)

Sec'y - Maj Peter Dering, USAF (Ret)

Treas - Mrs Christa I. Friedlander

Director - CPT William F. Lawyer, USA (Former Officer)

Director - CPT Richard J. Greenspan, USA (Former Officer)

Director - COL Michael A Lindquist, USA (Ret)

Director - Col Leonard Friedlander, USAF (Ret)

The meeting adjourned at 1542.

**NEXT MEETING:** The next Board meeting will be Monday, February 2, 2026 2:00 pm at the Meadows Fitness & Wellness Facility 3350 Longmeadow .

## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

### Michael Lindquist

**2026**, can you believe it?

New Year's resolutions are commitments to personal improvement and growth. They can cover various areas, including health, relationships, career, and personal development. Many of you made New Year's resolutions. By now some of those resolutions have gone to the wayside. However, you are not alone, many people struggle to stick to their resolutions, often due to setting overly ambitious goals or lacking a clear plan.

There is no set time to make a resolution, the New Year is convenient because it is often associated with discarding the past and looking for a new start.

Here are some questions you might ask yourself about the resolution you made but do not seem to be able to keep.

Was your resolution realistic? If your resolution was vague, e.g. I am going to become physically fit; you may want to revise the resolution to be more specific. "I am going to join XYZ Gym and exercise with a trainer three mornings a week."

Were you focused on a meaningful and achievable goal? A goal is achievable only when you have the resources, time, and motivation to follow through on commitment to yourself to go to the gym three times a week.

Did you have a plan? A plan is a conscious effort to write your ideas down in sufficient detail that you know it is something you want and can do.

1. Write out your goal and set specific objectives.
  - Join XYZ gym not later than February 1st, 2026
  - Go to the gym each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday morning at 8:00 AM
  - Meet with the trainer 3 days a week for 6 weeks.
  - Create a calendar and include an achievable objective each day, such as,
    - Monday use the bicycle for x-minutes,
    - Wednesday attend a Tai Chi Class
    - Friday complete x-number of laps in the swimming pool.
  - Check-in with your trainer every month to see that you are on track to meet your goal.
2. Share your goals and objectives with friends and family and consider joining a group who has similar goals to each other.
3. Celebrate each success, be proud, and reward each of your accomplishments no matter how small the achievement may be.

Blessings on your journey,

*Michael*

# TAPS

*Our heartfelt sympathy is extended  
to the family and friends of  
Edward L. Hamilton, LTC, USAR (Ret)*

## Bill Introduced to Broaden Vet Brain Injury Treatment

House and Senate legislators have introduced bills that would give veterans wider access to treatments for brain injuries at facilities outside the Department of Veterans Affairs. Reps. Jack Bergman, R-Mich., and Sarah Elfreth, D-Md., rolled out their proposed “Beacon Act,” aiming to foster partnerships with academic institutions and providers for treatment and finance research into alternative treatments for mild to moderate traumatic brain injury (TBI).

From 2000 through June 2025, DoD personnel were diagnosed with nearly 497,000 mild to moderate TBIs, according to the department. The majority were treated at military hospitals or clinics, including the Defense Intrepid Network for TBI and Brain Health or the VA, which maintains four polytrauma rehabilitation centers and 21 sites in a polytrauma network.

Under the legislation, a TBI Innovation Grant Program would award up to \$30 million in grants through 2028 to nonprofits, academic institutions and non-VA health care providers for treatment and recovery, suicide prevention, training and outreach.

The bill’s Independent Research Grant Program would provide \$625,000 awards for pilot studies and \$1.5 million grants for research on alternative therapies for TBI.

Bergman and Elfreth say their bill would strengthen the VA’s ability to treat TBI by expanding access to new treatments.

“The men and women who served our country deserve access to the best care available, especially when it comes to invisible injuries like traumatic brain injury,” said Bergman, a retired Marine Corps lieutenant general. “The Beacon Act strengthens the VA’s ability to deliver modern, effective care by bringing proven innovation, academic expertise, and community partnerships to the table, while supporting the important work the VA is already doing,” he said.

“As the granddaughter of a veteran who suffered from [post-traumatic stress disorder], I’ve seen firsthand the complex mental health challenges that our veterans and their families face. I’ve also seen how traditional VA treatments have come up short for decades to fully address the complex challenges our veterans face,” said Elfreth.

A similar bill was introduced last November in the Senate by Dave McCormick (R-PA) and Jacky Rosen (D-Nev). Their bill, the Veterans Traumatic Brain Injury Adaptive Care Opportunities Nationwide Act, also would promote partnerships and develop research through similar grant programs.

“As I think about the soldiers I served alongside, I feel this issue deeply,” said McCormick, a former Army officer. “Our veterans deserve access to innovative and groundbreaking TBI treatments that will enhance their quality of life and finally address the suicide epidemic among servicemembers.”

## ROTC Students Helping The Military Defend Against AI Deepfakes

by Hope Hodge Seck

An image shows a column of fire and billows of deep black smoke in the aftermath of a bomb blast in downtown Kiev. A news story purporting to be from CNN raises alarm about a rash of drone sightings causing community panic in Syracuse, New York.

Aside from their plausibility in changing times, what these media reports have in common is that they’re totally fake: computer-generated products of the Synthetic Media Lab at Syracuse University.

The school doesn’t use these deepfakes to deceive the American public, as many hostile foreign actors seek to do; they use them to build tools that will help organizations including the U.S. military to distinguish truth from hoax. And they’re doing it with the help of some of the school’s ROTC cadets.

For the school, the work dates to 2020, when the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications got a subcontract from DARPA to develop tools to combat the spread of fake news.

The AI technological revolution has increased the challenge and the need for solutions, said Jason Davis, a research professor at the school and co-principal investigator on the deepfakes effort. “The AI moment happened, and we said, oh, okay, so we’re not just humans creating this kind of information. There’s an automation and a scale that comes with AI and large language models and image generators that are just changing the entire landscape of how this can happen. So, we skilled up, we rode that wild wave of large language model generation and synthetic AI generated content. How do we create content in an automated fashion? How do we interface as humans with those tools, and how do we sort of model that new threat as well as the traditional, conventional threat? And then we continued to grow our capabilities from there.”

Now the lab has more than 20 tools that aid deepfake detection and creation, to further study and identify the differences between synthetic and authentic media.

ROTC students, in small cohorts, joined the work around 2021 — the current one is just three students— but the work is not only meaningful, it’s useful in future careers. Two of the first cohort got key assignments in military cyber.

One of the current cadets is spearheading a program focused on deepfake video detection, with the goal of developing tools to identify if someone is using a face swap or other identity masking mechanism on a video call.

The lab is currently collaborating with the DoD for at least the next two years. The work now focuses on building human confidence in the AI agents and tools they engage with - e.g. developing checks and safeguards to make sure the chatbot assisting in online shopping needs isn’t a malicious agent trying to steal their data and scam them.



## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE Michael Lindquist

### MOAA News Highlights

(To read the entire article click on the [highlighted](#) title)

#### [MOAA Meets With Military Health Leaders on GLP-1 Coverage](#)

- MOAA's work continues on behalf of TRICARE For Life beneficiaries. Learn the latest and share your story with us (MOAA).

#### [Medicare, TRICARE Price Increases and Tax Changes for 2026](#)

- Find details and links to critical financial information for the new year.

#### [2026 Outlook: What's Ahead for the Uniformed Services \(and Your Earned Benefits\)](#)

- From new technology to personnel to procurement, learn the latest from each branch.

#### [TRICARE Adds Coverage for Test Detecting Dozens of Cancers](#)

- The change involves the groundbreaking Galleri test ... and stems from a MOAA advocacy win dating back more than a decade.

### MUST READ

#### Will the Government Shut Down This Month?

by Brenden McMahon 1/5/26

Congress closed out 2025 with a significant accomplishment: passing the FY 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which the president signed into law Dec. 18.

Congress has yet to complete the full FY 2026 budget, causing uncertainty for servicemembers, veterans, their families, and survivors who depend on stable, predictable government funding for their service-earned pay and benefits.

[The] defense appropriations for FY 2026 have not yet been approved. This gap means that, despite the NDAA's passage, critical initiatives affecting readiness, modernization, and quality-of-life improvements remain on hold. And consequently, the uniformed services community begins the year facing continued uncertainty as Congress returns to Washington.

**MOAA's Transition Center regularly presents webinars. Here are a few that may be of interest to you. (Click on the link to review the Webinar)**

- [What You Need to Know About the Survivor Benefit Plan](#) (No login required)
- [Resources for Military and Veteran Caregivers](#) (with support from the Wounded Warrior Project)
- [How Military, Veteran Caregivers Can Apply for Respite Relief](#) (No login required)

#### Key Bills Supported by MOAA

MOAA's experts in Washington are constantly reviewing and assessing legislation that may impact on the earned

pay, benefits, and support programs of the uniformed services and veteran communities. The organization's endorsement process is deliberative; MOAA will not support or oppose any legislation without a thorough review of its potential effects, positive or negative.

**S. 607:** Improving Veteran Access to Care Act VA Health Care 12/19/2025 (Passed/agreed to in Senate: Message on Senate action sent to the House.)

**S. 1383:** Veterans Accessibility Advisory Committee Act of 2025 VA Health Care 12/19/2025 (Passed in Senate: Message on Senate action sent to the House.)

**H.R. 2576:** Servicemembers & Veterans Empowerment and Support Act of 2025. Retirees/Veterans, VA Health Care 04/09/2025 Referred to the Subcommittee on Health.

#### Retired Navy officer takes helm of DOD's military health care

Keith M. Bass, a retired Navy CDR who was a former director of the White House Medical Unit and a former VA health care executive was sworn in as the DoD's top medical leader Jan 12th.

As the new Ass't SECDEF for Health Affairs, Keith Bass will oversee health policy and budgeting across the Military Health System, which is responsible for the health care of 9.5 million beneficiaries, including active duty personnel, retirees, families and others. He will direct the activities of the Defense Health Agency and be chief medical adviser to the secretary of defense.

#### Advocacy

**Write to your legislators today and support MOA initiatives and goals** - Learn more about MOAA's key advocacy issues and contact your elected officials using our messaging platform.

#### TAKE ACTION

#### Tools & Resources for You and Your Family

MOAA continues to provide up-to-date guidance and expert insight across key areas of interest:

- [Personal Finance](#)
- [Military Benefits](#)
- [Transition Assistance](#)
- [Survivor Support](#)
- [Chapter Activities](#)
- [Family & Spouse Resources](#)

Explore articles and publications online or read the digital version of Military Officer magazine

**Stay Connected and Informed** To ensure uninterrupted access to your MOAA account, please confirm your email address is up to date on the MOAA online member portal.

Call 1-800-234-6622 if you need assistance with your record.

*Thank you for standing with MOAS as we continue to protect and support our military family.*

— Michael

# January Luncheon Photos



(l-r) Sara Little, Barbara Shaver & Chris Friedlander



Potential New Member Ted Devens (l) & host George Johnson



Guest speaker Sheyla Perez accepts honorarium for Mote from President Steven Carnes



Brenda & Wesley Moy



Peggy Denham & Grant Krueger



Debra Sandberg & Joe Cyr



Ron Wozniak



Ilene & Paul O'Connell and Chris Nind (standing)



Steve Mulligan



Larry Bennison



Jeff Wortmann



Carl &amp; Mary Lou Morris

Michael Lindquist (I)  
& Art Hillman

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

### MEMBERSHIP UPDATES Member Information Changes

**Bennison, Larry L.** CPT, USA (Patricia)  
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**MOAS MEET & GREET**  
**Wednesday February 11th**  
**5:00pm to 7:30p**  
**Evie's Tavern & Grill On Main**  
**1560 Main Street**  
**Sarasota, FL 34236**  
**Evie's on Main Street**

**Please let Peggy O'Connell know by Monday  
February 9th if you will be attending.**

[pegoconnell12@gmail.com](mailto:pegoconnell12@gmail.com) or (312) 982-1374



## New Law Will Preserve Value of VA-Issued Life Insurance

by Kevin Lilley

A new law will protect VA insurance programs for servicemembers and veterans from inflation, allowing for regular adjustments of the maximum coverage amount and ensuring meaningful peace of mind for those who've earned access to these plans.

The president signed the MOAA-backed Fairness for Servicemembers and Their Families Act into law Dec. 12. The bipartisan legislation passed the House by a voice vote in the spring, then cleared the Senate by unanimous consent in November.

"Bipartisan, commonsense improvements to trusted programs like this make a real difference," said Jen Goodale, MOAA's director of government relations for veteran and retired affairs. "Protecting the value of these benefits is the core of MOAA advocacy — we thank the lawmakers from both sides of the aisle who made this change possible."

The law requires the VA secretary to report to House and Senate Veterans' Affairs committees on cost-of-living (COLA) increases and inflation rates every five years in relation to the maximum coverage allowed under the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) and Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI) programs. It links the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) to the current maximum of \$500,000 as a benchmark.

"Our servicemembers put their lives on the line for their country, and we must protect the well-being of their families in the event of a tragedy," said Rep. Marilyn Strickland (D-Wash.), who introduced the House bill, in a press release. "This new law makes it clear that our nation will always stand by our military families."

Senate supporters included Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas), who led that chamber's version of the bill. He said the bill would "help ensure the Veterans Affairs Department can offer competitive life insurance packages that keep pace with the current cost of living."

SGLI launched in 1965 with a \$10,000 coverage maximum. VGLI began nine years later, allowing veterans to convert SGLI to a five-year term policy. It would later become a renewable, premium-based plan.

Maximum coverage levels for both plans have increased over the decades, but not in regular fashion. It rose from \$200,000 to \$250,000 in 2001 and to \$400,000 in 2005 but remained at that level for nearly two decades until a 2023 law boosted the limit to the current \$500,000.

By indexing the coverage maximum to inflation figures, the new law will preserve the value of the insurance program against inflationary threats, strengthening a safety net that has been used by millions of servicemembers and veterans throughout the decades.

Learn more about SGLI, VGLI, and other VA life insurance options on the [VA website](#). For more on MOAA's work to preserve the value of service-earned benefits, visit our [Legislative Action Center](#).

## WWII Memorial in Washington Closed for Five Months

by Claire Barrett

The National World War II Memorial in Washington, dedicated to the 16 million members of the U.S. military, will be closed for the next five months to address "aging infrastructure, improve reliability, and enhance the appearance of the memorial" the National Park Service said last week. Construction to modernize the fountains and lighting at the site is also planned.

Dedicated on Memorial Day weekend in 2004, the memorial stands at the heart of the National Mall and draws millions of visitors yearly.

Designed by Austrian immigrant Friedrich St. Florian, the memorial, a bronze and granite monument featuring facing semicircles of 56 pillars decorated with bronze wreaths and punctuated by two triumphal arches, was initially criticized.

While some said it fit well into the space on the Mall, others called it banal or evocative of fascist dictatorships. Some critics even went as far as comparing it to the work of Hitler's favorite architect, Albert Speer.

St. Florian, who grew up under Nazi rule as a child, pushed back. "Wars must be remembered, not glorified," he said. "There is absolutely nothing imperial about this design," he told [The New York Times](#) in 2000. "The architecture is most appropriate, in the classical language. We did not want to go back and copy but to be interpreters," he said.

The updates to the memorial follow President Donald Trump's March executive order, "Making the District of Columbia Safe and Beautiful," saying the capital's "monuments, museums, and buildings should reflect and inspire awe and appreciation for our Nation's strength, greatness, and heritage."

The memorial is to reopen by May 15, in time for Memorial Day.



**Medicare** Looking for ways to stay on top of your health in 2026?

**Medicare covers many preventive and screening services.**

These services can help you stay healthy by finding health problems early, when treatment is most effective. Talk with your doctor about which services might be right for you. [See What's Covered](#)

If you have Original Medicare (Part A and/or Part B), [log into your secure Medicare account](#) to see a personalized list of current and upcoming preventive services. If you don't already have an account, **it's easy to sign up.**

If you're in a Medicare Advantage Plan, contact your plan for their list of covered preventive services. MA Plans must cover all the same preventive services as Original Medicare, and some plans may offer additional services.

**Here's to your health in the new year!**



**YAHOO  
Young At Heart Organization  
Linda & Ron Wozniak**

**PAST EVENTS/OUTINGS**

**Sunday 28 December Sarasota Polo  
Military & 1st Responders Appreciation.**

Sarasota Polo was looking for 3-4 Veterans in uniform to participate in Opening Ceremonies riding in a cart. Volunteers: Frances Rice, Booker HS JROTC Cadets; Mairym Hernandez, Julia Leroy & Alex Matute, led by our newest Member; Jason Greene for Opening Ceremony & they joined MOAS at the tailgate spaces for



the match. MOAS Members and spouses/guests attending: Chris Nind and guests Dr Sarah Burkett & Louise Down, Ron & Linda Wozniak, Frances Rice & guest Ken Brooks, Steve Mulligan & Sue Ross, Rich & Amy Greenberg, George Johnson. Dennis Ciborowski, Meryl Gale & daughter Emma visited our tailgate but had purchased VIP Seating.

**Saturday 10 January**

**Florida Medal of Honor Memorial Tour**

442 South Eucalyptus Street, Sebring, FL 33870

Mike Borders and his Team did a wonderful job creating and maintaining the Florida Medal of Honor (MOH) Memorial. First Class all the way. What a fantastic tribute to these Florida American Heroes. We were really impressed and appreciate all he has done for

the Memorial and his guidance during our visit.

Everyone who cares about their American Freedom needs to visit the FL MOH Memorial and

understand firsthand the sacrifices these Heroes made, and in most cases the ultimate sacrifice of their short lives.



For MOAS Members who could not make the tour I encourage them to do so at least once. It was a most informative tour, and we learned about the Florida Medal of Honor Memorial, gardens, and visitor center - a moving tribute to the 24 courageous Floridians who have received the Medal of Honor—the nation's highest military recognition for acts of valor performed "above and beyond the call of duty." This thoughtfully designed memorial not only preserves the legacy of these heroes but also shares their extraordinary stories with visitors from near and far.

Lunch followed at **The 301** a local Sebring Restaurant.

**UPCOMING EVENTS/OUTINGS**

**Friday 6 February**

**The new MOTE Science Education Aquarium  
2 Hour Guided Group Tour 0900-1100**

225 University Town Center Drive, Sarasota

**COST: \$30/person. Tour maximum number is 20 - so 1st come 1st serve.**

**We will be broken up into 2 groups of 10.**

You will be able to tour the rest of the aquarium on your own after the tour.

**Contact Woz NLT Friday 30 January** to reserve your space. [[RonWozniak13@gmail.com](mailto:RonWozniak13@gmail.com) or 941-779-5448]

MOTE SEA will create a know before you go flyer so that everyone gets the needed information for the tour. It will include a link that will take each person to the ticket page allowing them to register and pay individually for the MOAS group tour only. If you intend on visiting MOTE SEA a few more times this year you may want to investigate purchasing an annual pass.

Lunch to follow at **Yard House**, a local UTC restaurant.

**Ride Sharing:** If you need a ride please check the MOAS online Calendar for folks who have already signed up nearby you. You may be able to get a ride to an event or outing. We do not want to prevent folks from attending for lack of transportation.

**Cancellations and/or Changes:** For info on venue dates & times, see the **MOAS Website Events Calendar** <https://www.sarasotamoaa.com/>; text Ron 941-779-5448 or email [RonWozniak13@gmail.com](mailto:RonWozniak13@gmail.com) or text Linda 941-779-5447 or email [NauticalEffect@msn.com](mailto:NauticalEffect@msn.com).





**SARASOTA CHAPTER**

**Friday February 20, 2026  
@ 11:30am**

**Michael's On East**

1212 S East Ave Sarasota, FL 34239

**Dress Code – Coat - Tie Optional**

**MENU**

*SERVED LUNCHEON  
Specialty Bread Basket*

**ENTREE**

**Savory Blackened Mahi-mahi**  
*with Fresh Fruit Salsa served with  
Saffron Basmati Rice,  
Steamed Green Beans & Baby Carrots*

**VEGETARIAN**

*Asparagus Crespelle with Porcini &  
Shitake Mushrooms, Ricotta,  
Parmesan & Truffle Oil*

**DESSERT**

**Perfect Carrot Cake**  
*Moist Home-Style Version  
with Chunks of Walnuts & Pineapple  
Bits with Swirls of Delicious Cream  
Cheese Frosting*

**Served Coffee, Decaf & Tea**  
*Pre-set Iced Water*

*Served Iced Tea w/Lemon upon  
request*

**Please make your luncheon reservation by mail.**

Fill out the form below and mail us your check.

1. Provide first & last names, rank and service of attendees. Use back of form, if needed. Please note in comments if it is your birthday month, you're a new member, a surviving spouse, or if this is your, or your guests, first time attending.
2. Special diet and vegetarian meal requests **MUST** be submitted together with the initial luncheon reservation. Michaels on East will no longer honor last minute requests at the luncheons.
3. **Your reservation and payment should be received no later than 3 days before the luncheon date.** For late registrations, you must EMAIL or Call our Luncheon Coordinator (Mary Gordon).
4. Do **not** contact Michaels on East. We will try to accommodate late registrations, but *no guarantees*. We must inform Michaels on East at least 48 hours in advance. *No refunds will be possible after that date.*
5. If you make your reservation with the intent to pay at the door, we must hold you to that promise, as Michaels on East will charge us for your guaranteed meal, if you attend or not.

**MEMBER INFORMATION**

Name, Rank Service \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please reserve \_\_\_ seats for the luncheon

**Cost \$41.00/person** (Tax & Gratuity incl.) (Note New Price)

Enclosed is a check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name	Meal (E / V)	Comment

**COMMENT CODES:** SS-Surviving Spouse; BD-Birthday; NM-New Member

**Please make the check payable to MOAS**  
and mail to:

**MARY GORDON**

8208 Deerbrook Circle, Sarasota, FL 34238-4382  
Questions? (941) 923-2302 or email: [JMKPL@aol.com](mailto:JMKPL@aol.com)

**NAME TAGS**

Fill out the form and provide a check for \$16.50 payable to **MOAS** & we will hand deliver a name tag to you at the next luncheon. Please allow 2 weeks for fabrication.

Give to Len Friedlander at a luncheon or mail to 8221 Deerbrook Circle, Sarasota, FL 34238.

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last name \_\_\_\_\_

Rank (Abbreviated) \_\_\_\_\_ Service \_\_\_\_\_ Status \_\_\_\_\_

**Example**






First Name Henry Last name O'Connell

Rank (Abbreviated) LCDR Service USNR Status Ret



FEBRUARY - MARCH 2026



DATE	EVENT	TIME
Monday, Feb 2	MOAS/SMOF Board Meeting - Meadows Lifestyle & Wellness Building	2:00 p.m.
Friday, Feb 6	YAHOO: Mote Science Education Aquarium - Details on Page 10	9:00 a.m.
Tuesday, Feb 10	SC Veterans Commission Mtg - Gold Coast Eagle Distributing	3:00 p.m.
Wednesday Feb 11	Meet & Greet: Evie's Tavern & Grill on Main - Details on Page 8	5:00 p.m.
Monday, Feb 16	 Presidents Day 	
Friday, Feb 20	MOAS Luncheon - Michaels on East - National Park Service - DeSoto Memorial	11:30 a.m.
Monday, Mar 2	MOAS/SMOF Board Meeting - Meadows Lifestyle & Wellness Building	2:00 p.m.
Sunday, Mar 8	 DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME STARTS	2:00 a.m.
Tuesday, Mar 17	 ST. PATRICK'S DAY 	
Friday, Mar 20	MOAS Luncheon - Michaels on East - Southeast Florida Honor Flight	11:30 a.m.

**2026 MOAS Membership Renewal Campaign**

If you have renewed your chapter membership for 2026 —**THANK YOU**. If you have not yet responded to our renewal request, please review the application form information to ensure its accuracy, and return the application with your annual dues at your earliest convenience. If you need a new application, please request one from Len Friedlander at [lenfriedlander@verizon.net](mailto:lenfriedlander@verizon.net).

Anyone who is not currently a national MOAA member and would like to join with a **FREE** basic membership, please check the box on the form providing permission for us to submit your email address to MOAA to establish your FREE electronic membership.

Please consider adding a donation for our Foundation when writing your membership check, and enable us to continue our support of veterans, JROTC programs, and graduating high school seniors.

Military Officers Association of Sarasota, Inc. | P.O. Box 1016 Sarasota, FL 34230-1016

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Annual Membership Dues:  Regular  Surviving Spouse  Allied  Associate *Mail application with your check for \$35, made payable to MOAS. Postal Newsletter add \$24*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Last Name                      First Name                      MI                      Rank                      Spouse Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address (Include Apt#)                      City                      State                      Zip Code

\_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone                      E-Mail Address                      Birthday mm/dd/yyyy

Status:  Active  Retired  Former Officer  Regular  Reserve  Surviving Spouse  Foreign \_\_\_\_\_  
Country

Service Component:  Army  Navy  Air Force  Marine Corps  Coast Guard  NOAA  USPHS  National Guard  Space Force

Please do not publish my personal information in the Directory      Who told you about the Association? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature                      Date                      National MOAA Member Number

Revised 11/23

Receive the Breeze via email or view it on [www.sarasotamoaa.com](http://www.sarasotamoaa.com) or *blog* [sarasotamoaa.blogspot.com](http://sarasotamoaa.blogspot.com)