

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 2015/2017-2023; 4 Star 2016; Website 5-Star 2015-2023
Vol. XXXVI No. 1 MOAA 4-Star Chapter 2003/2008/2019; MOAA 5 Star Chapter 2004-2007, 2009-2018, 2020-2023 January 2025

DECEMBER 2024 PROGRAM - MOAS 42nd MILITARY GALA

Unfortunately, our annual Military Gala scheduled for Sunday, December 8, 2024, had to be cancelled. Our original agreement with Michael's on East was for a minimum of 50 attendees; however, the restaurant would have allowed us to have the event with 35. We did not reach that number and at the end had several cancellations from our number of 31. Thus, the decision to cancel was made for us; the MOAS Board discussed the issue at the December 2nd monthly board meeting.

Colonel Gary Nolan, the FCoC Area Vice President for Southwest Florida, and his wife Cindy were scheduled to attend as Gary would be conducting the installation of chapter officers; they had to be informed of the change of plans. It was necessary also to notify not only the restaurant but also the JROTC Color Guard, the Lacey Jane Band, and the Toys for Tots donation box provider. Fortunately, Michael's on East allowed us to cancel without any financial penalty. We did, however, have to pay the band since we cancelled less than a week before the event.

The MOAS Board in 2025 will be rethinking plans for our December holiday gathering. We have an ever-growing number of singles who gladly attend a luncheon but prefer not to be at an evening formal event. Some members were still feeling the effects of our stormy fall; and additionally, we have sadly lost a number of very active members and spouses.

Your thoughts on this matter would be greatly appreciated; please pass them along to our President David Downer, Peggy O'Connell, the incoming luncheon coordinator, or any member of the MOAS Board.

HAPPY NEW YEAR HAPPY NEW YEAR HAPPY NEW YEAR

JANUARY 2025 PROGRAM - State College of Florida Presidential String Quartet

The State College of Florida – Manatee-Sarasota (SCF-M/S) is a center for music education and cultural highlight in our community. It is the only music transfer program in the Manatee and Sarasota region, providing a complete 2-year program for music majors, preparing them to pursue a degree at a 4-year university.

Scholarships are available for music and non-music majors, and each year, the SCF Music Program and the SCF Foundation award over \$200,000 in scholarships to students who participate in the SCF music program.

With distinguished faculty, state of the art facilities, performance opportunities along with interaction and internships with world class performing arts professionals, the Performing Arts Department guides and develops the artistic, intellectual, and professional growth of its students in music, music production, and theatre.

The SCF-M/S Presidential String Quartet is the school's premier chamber music ensemble. Students are selected through a rigorous audition process and are rewarded with a scholarship for their participation. They perform mostly standard string quartet repertoire along with other music for various occasions.

We hope you will join us and enjoy this wonderful group of young musicians.

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Receive the Breeze via email or view it on our website www.sarasotamoaa.com or blog 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	David Downer
1st Vice President	Steven L. Carnes
2nd Vice President	Ron Wozniak
Treasurer	Christa I. Friedlander
Secretary & Historian	Peter Dering
Director (Scholarships)	William F. Lawyer
Director (Communications)	Vacant
Director (Legislative)	Michael Lindquist
Director (Membership)	Len Friedlander
Immediate Past President	Jonathan C. Gordon
Legislative Committee	Michael Lindquist
Vets Affairs/Commission	Vacant
Marketing & Communications Committee	
Chairperson	Craig Hullinger
Editor-Newsletter	Len Friedlander
Web Site	Craig Hullinger
BLOG/Social Media/Photo	Craig Hullinger
Membership Committee	
Recruiting & Retention	Len Friedlander
Recruiting & Retention	William F. Lawyer
Reporting & Records	Christa I. Friedlander
Personal Affairs Committee	
Surviving Spouses Liaison	Peggy Mock
Chaplain	Michael Lindquist
Programs Committee	
Luncheon Programs	Chris Nind
Luncheon Programs	Karen Olson
Young at Heart [YAHOO]	Ron Wozniak
YAHOO Coordinator	Linda Wozniak
Meet & Greet	Peggy O'Connell
Luncheon Committee	
Chairperson & Coordinator	Peggy O'Connell
Greeter	Peter Dering
Greeter	
50-50 Manager	Mary Gordon
Scholarship Committee	Bill Lawyer
Member	
Member	
Member	Len Friedlander
Member	Mary Gordon
Member	Linda Wozniak
JROTC Liaison	William F. Lawyer
Support Our Troops [SOT]	Ron Wozniak
Awards Board Chair	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 David Downer

As we enter 2025 it is important to note that we are shrinking; as we age, the inevitable happens. While this is normal and expected, we need to remember that every member is important to our organization and every member also has a responsibility to recruit new members, including spouses of military members (or non-members!) who have passed on. We exist to support everyone who qualifies for membership. Keep your eyes open for opportunities!

I recently received a solicitation in the mail for a new medical group in the area. I quickly noticed that one of the doctors is a retired Air Force Major. You can rest assured that I plan to contact her to invite her to one of our luncheon meetings. It could benefit her – and her medical group as they seek to establish a local practice.

Some of you also have talents that we could use for the benefit of the group. With Craig Hullinger planning to leave, we could use someone good with a camera to take photos at our luncheons for publication in the Breeze. There are other talents we could use, so don't hesitate to let me or another board member know of your abilities and interests. Preparation of awards applications for the chapter is another task that can always use some help.

Many of us visited the Military Heritage Museum in Punta Gorda, on Saturday, December 7 (Pearl Harbor Day), as rescheduled by Ron Wozniak. Ron Suchiu, who was our luncheon speaker on Friday, September 20, also spoke to the group at the museum. We gathered afterward for lunch (or most of us did) at "The Captain's Table" out at the very end of the Fishermen's Village. A good time was had by all.

We'll (hopefully) be having another formal Gala next year at Michael's on East. They always have a very special set-up for us, which is greatly appreciated. Since it was cancelled, our Southwest Regional Vice President, Colonel Gary Nolan, will be attending our first luncheon meeting on January 15th to install our officers. The Breeze includes the sign-up information (Page 1 of this Breeze).

This Spring, MOAA will again be conducting "Advocacy in Action" visits to Capitol Hill. You might want to look into this if there's a chance you might be in the Washington area at that time. There are very important issues to be discussed, including the Tricare pharmacy network.

Merry Christmas (if you get this in time) and Happy New 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 Dec 2, 2024 at the Meadows Lifestyle and Wellness Facility 3350 Longmeadow. Issues of significance are addressed below. NOTE: The complete minutes and financial reports will be on the MOAS website 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 Dave Downer called the meeting to order at 1405 and began the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Dave Downer (Pres), Steve Carnes (IVP), Peter Dering (Sec'y), Christa Friedlander (Treas), Susan Warmington (Dir) & Jon Gordon (IPP)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Len Friedlander (Dir)

COMMITTEE CHAIRS & VISITORS PRESENT: Bill Lawyer, Peggy O'Connell, Linda Wozniak, Ron Wozniak, Karen Olson, Mary Gordon

PRESIDENT'S ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

- Estrella Engelhardt's presentation, assisted by Jon Gordon on the projector, went well. One of her guests, Jason Cannon, also contributed. Attendees learned a lot.
- The 50-50 program resumed.
- The November business meeting was quick & to the point.
- The FCOC Leadership Training Seminar will occur January 17-18, 2025, in Orlando.

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT: (Steve Carnes) No Report

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT: (Jon Gordon) No Report

SECRETARY'S REPORT: (Peter Dering) The November 2024 BOD Meeting Minutes were approved unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT: (Christa Friedlander) The November 2024 Treasurer's Reports was approved unanimously.

- The \$1,000 donation for Palmetto HS JROTC was mailed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

LEGISLATIVE: Vacant, (Mike Lindquist, incoming Director, Legislative Liaison) Nothing to Report

PROGRAMS: (Chris Nind, Karen Olson): January: State College of Florida Presidential Quartet; February: NOAA

LUNCHEON REPORT: (Mary Gordon):

- We had 34 reservations for the November luncheon but only 29 in attendance (three had to cancel at the last minute and two were no-shows). The guest speaker, Estrella Engelhardt, brought two guests with her but MOAS only paid for one and she covered the other.
- There are several monetary concerns connected with the monthly luncheons. First, several have expressed an interest in trying to find a different venue with a lower cost for the luncheons; the problems with that are the issues of finding a place with a separate room for our group and the inconvenience of all ordering individually from a menu. We also need to consider a central location and convenient parking. Michael's currently charges us \$35.10 per meal and we

collect \$37 per reservation. Next year Michael's cost will increase 5% bringing it up to \$36.85 per meal; we would need to charge \$39 or \$40. Several people have expressed willingness to explore other options. The second concern is our covering the cost of the luncheon for the speaker and his/her guest. It is probably time to only pay for the speaker's meal at the luncheon since our margin is so slim. We should discuss both issues at the December board meeting.

- The Military Gala will be Sunday, December 8, in the restaurant at Michael's on East. The deadline for reservations is Monday, December 2. This is one of the two occasions in the year that there will be a seating plan. Even though the stated minimum attendance number is 50, we will be able to have the event with as few as 35; otherwise, we will have to cancel.

- Peggy O'Connell will become Luncheon Coordinator in January, and I will be helping with the 50/50.

BREEZE NEWSLETTER: (Len Friedlander) December Breeze was emailed to 242 recipients and mailed (USPS) to 27 members.

MEET & GREET: (Peggy O'Connell)

- We missed Joe at the November Meet and Greet as he had a bad fall and is hospitalized. Those of us who made it, had a pleasant evening at Grillsmith.
- The January Meet & Greet will be Wednesday January 22 at Mattison's on 41 at 5:30pm.

JROTC, MCJROTC: (Bill Lawyer)

- Arranged the color guard for the December gala. Sarasota High School will provide cadets for that evening.
- Starting to contact senior military instructors to gather the names of the outstanding cadets for the coming year and to take their plaques to Sarasota Trophy for engraving.

SOCIAL MARKETING, COMMUNICATION AND WEBSITE: No Report

MEMBERSHIP: (Len Friedlander) Membership renewals = 119 responses of the 208 that were mailed — 1 resignation (moving out of state).

YAHOO: (Ron & Linda Wozniak) For info on cancellations, venue, date & time changes, go to the MOAS website Calendar & Blogs at <https://www.sarasotamoaa.com/> or text Ron Wozniak: 941-779-5448 or e-mail: RonWozniak13@gmail.com or Linda at 941-779-5447 or NauticalEffect@msn.com.

• Saturday 7 December - Military Heritage Museum New date . 900 West Marion Ave., Punta Gorda Hours: 1000-1600. Cost: \$12. 1400 lunch to follow at Fisherman's Village.

SARASOTA MILITARY OFFICERS FOUNDATION, INC

SCHOLARSHIP REPORT: (Susan Warmington):

- Getting things ready for the turnover to Bill Lawyer.
- Writing thank you notes to those who donated over 50 dollars to the scholarship fund.

OLD BUSINESS: Visit to the Military Heritage Museum in Punta Gorda rescheduled due to the hurricanes.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Amendment to the MOAS Constitution and Bylaws to allow an Allied Officer Member to serve on the Board in selected capacities and, perhaps, after a certain term of membership in the organization.

MONTH	BOARD	LUNCHEON
December	Monday 2	Sunday 8
January	Monday 6	Wednesday 15
February	Monday 3	Friday 21

	LUNCHEON PROGRAMS
December	Annual Military Gala
January	State College Presidents String Quartet
February	NOAA

- RSVP status for the Gala.
- Increase in luncheon fee at Michael's on East.
- Should we look for a more reasonably venue for luncheons.
- The January Meet & Greet will be on Wednesday, January 22, 2025, at 5:30.

BOARD APPROVED ACTIONS/MOTIONS:

- Based upon the low number of RSVPs for the Gala, a motion was made and approved to cancel the 2024 Gala.
- A motion was made and approved to increase the luncheon fee to \$39.00, to cover MOE's increased cost to us. (This will be for the January luncheon. We will be looking for a less expensive venue for future luncheons).
- A motion was made and approved to find a less expensive venue for future luncheons.
- Christa will notify the Band that the Gala has been cancelled and, if asked, issue a check for \$500 to Dan Hill.
- David to notify Gary Nolan about the Gala cancellation. Board officers will be installed in January.
- Bill Lawyer to notify Sarasota High School JROTC about the Gala cancellation.

BOARD ACTIONS/MOTIONS NOT APPROVED: None

The meeting adjourned at 1501

NEXT MEETING: The next Board meeting is scheduled for **Monday January 6, 2025 1400 hours** at the **the Meadows Lifestyle and Wellness Facility, 3350 Longmeadow**

Survivor Benefit Plan Awareness

Tax season is quickly approaching and that means you are probably gathering important documents and verifying your information is correct. While you have those important documents handy, it's a good time to make sure your loved ones know about your Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) coverage.

You can view your Retiree Account Statement (RAS) on [myPay](#) to see the type of SBP coverage you selected. Make sure that your family knows what the Survivor Benefit Plan is and what they will need to do to start payments: <https://www.dfas.mil/startsbp>

After checking your RAS, if the SBP coverage shown no longer applies to your current life situation, please see our website for what steps to take: <https://www.dfas.mil/changesbp>

We also have a new checklist to assist when a military retiree passes away. This is a very useful tool that we suggest adding to your important documents. Download the PDF here: <https://www.dfas.mil/reportdeath>

Sincerely,
DFAS Retired and Annuitant Pay



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER Michael Lindquist

January: A New Beginning

January marks the arrival of a New Year—a time for reflection on the past and a chance to set intentions for the future. Many traditions encourage practices that help release the burdens of the past and make space for growth and renewal.

One such practice is the **Burning Bowl Ceremony**. This ritual is a time to let go of anything that no longer serves us. Participants write down thoughts, habits, or experiences they wish to release. By symbolically burning this paper, they leave behind negative energy and open the door for a fresh start.

Another meaningful tradition is the **White Stone Ceremony**, which has roots in ancient practices. In historical contexts, a white stone was given to those granted freedom from bondage, signifying a new beginning. In a modern interpretation, participants write a word or phrase on a white stone. That word on the stone represents your hopes, values, or guiding inspiration for the coming year.

These practices encourage us to let go of what weighs us down and embrace the potential for a brighter, more positive future. The New Year is a time to claim our inner strength and move forward with purpose.

Embracing Love and Kindness

This January, consider making "LOVE" a central theme of your journey. Love, in its many forms—compassion, kindness, and care—has the power to connect us all.

As a poet, Alyce L. Kaufman (Jan/Feb 2024) expresses her thoughts on the Power of Love as we begin a New Year:

Now the dance begins again;
We circle 'round a star
Just imagine what we look like from afar:
Moving on into the future,
Moving on beyond the night
Let's stay close to one another;
Come, let's start the New Year right
Let's all shine the light of love
Let's all show how much we care
Let's get very good at being very kind
Let us all enjoy the gift of peace of mind.
May this New Year be a time of renewal, connection,
and hope for all.

Michael



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Michael Lindquist

Hello,

My name is Michael, and I am proud to join the MOAS Board. I have agreed to represent MOAS Legislative Interests for the coming year. I will remain your Chapter Chaplain and look forward to supporting your spiritual needs.

MOAA's greatest mission is to improve the lives of those who serve and their families, achieved largely through the tireless representation in our nation's capital. For 90-plus years, MOAA has supported legislation that benefits the uniformed services community and has remained equally vigilant when fighting to stop legislation threatening our livelihood. The larger our numbers, the greater our voice.

MOAA NEVER STOPS SERVING TO HONOR THEIR SERVICE AND HELP THEM RETIRE THE WAY THEY ENVISIONED.

“With more than 350,000 members from every branch of service - including Active Duty, National Guard, Reserve, retired, former officers, and their families - MOAA is a powerful force speaking for a strong national defense representing the interests of military officers at every stage of their careers. Retirees and their dependents deserve the fully earned pay and benefits for decades of service and sacrifice entitle them.”

MOAA has engaged with Congress to protect pay and benefits from budget-driven threats, continued access to quality medical care, and countless other areas of concern to retirees, those currently serving, and the wider uniformed services community. MOAA will continue to inform Congress of the importance of protecting and expanding benefits for those who have served and preserving earned benefits such as COLA increases for retirees and survivors and the commissary benefits that frequently become targets for cost-cutting.

When was the last time you signed into MOAA and sent letters to your Representatives in Washington expressing support for the many legislative initiatives supported by MOAA?

MOAA's advocacy priorities for retirees in the upcoming 118th Congress include:

- Ensuring pay at or above the Employment Cost Index, allowances, and programs necessary to recruit and retain a quality force.
- Concurrent Receipt of military retirement pay, and VA disability pay.
- Maintaining the hold on medical billet reductions until required reports clarify how any cuts will fully support readiness and benefit from access to care.

- Reversing the degradation of the pharmacy benefit, specifically ensuring access and achieving limits to copay increases.
- Requiring DoD to establish a transparent and well-publicized problem reporting system for TRICARE beneficiaries experiencing access challenges within the direct care system of military hospitals and clinics, including an annual report to Congress on the number and types of beneficiary access problem reports by MTF and steps taken by DHA to address systemic access problems.
- Monitoring recent major legislation enacted - such as the PACT Act - in the areas of health care, compensation, and follow-on support for surviving spouses and families and seek statutory or policy changes as required.
- Compelling Congress and VA to accelerate caregiving and whole health care services, and modernization of VHA workforce and facility infrastructure to improve veterans' access to high-quality care.
- Improving congressional support for uniformed services families: enhancing programs to support spouse employment, ensuring implementation of an effective basic needs allowance, and providing accessible, affordable childcare options.
- Overcoming the lack of effective problem-reporting mechanisms and resolution systems in the Military Health System.
- Repealing the recoupment of last month's paycheck after the retiree's passing and continuing to improve SGLI/VGLI updates to match inflation.
- Improving the DIC baseline to align with other government entitlements' baseline of 55%.

While MOAA represents the issues most important to members of America's Armed Forces, it is up to us to flood our legislative leaders in Washington with letters of support for various bills under consideration in the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Below are three (3) such initiatives that affect retirees and their dependents.

[Expanding America's National Cemetery Act](#)
[Impact of TRICARE Pharmacy Network Changes](#)
[Concurrent Receipt for Combat-Injured](#)

In future months I will keep you informed of changes in legislation that affect you, and your family.

Michael

Reference; [MOAA | Legislative Action Center](#),

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

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Sarasota World Affairs Council 2025 Lecture Series

New College Campus Mildred Sainer Pavillion
5313 Bay Shore Road Sarasota, Florida 34243

Jan. 9, 2025 - The Art of Diplomacy: How American Negotiators Reached Historic Agreements that Changed the World

Ambassador Stuart E. Eizenstat
former U.S. Ambassador to the European Union
and former U.S. Deputy Secretary of the Treasury

Feb. 20, 2025 - Threat Multiplier:

Climate Change, the Military and Global Security

Ms. Sherri Goodman,
Senior Fellow, Woodrow Wilson International Center's
Polar Institute and Environmental Change and Security Program
RSVP to: info@sarasotawac.org

FCOC Leadership Training Seminar & Convention

Rosen Centre Hotel in Orlando January 17-18, 2025

The Florida Council of Chapters (FCOC) will be having a "mini-convention" in conjunction with the January Leadership Training Seminar at the **Rosen Hotel in Orlando**.

All chapter members are cordially invited to attend with your spouse or guest.

Breakfast and lunch voucher prices are \$22, and each room night is \$156. The discounted self-parking fee is \$12.50/night. MOAA National will be paying for your Saturday night dinner.

Event will include required business/training and a casino-themed fundraising event resulting in a donation to The MOAA Foundation Charity. Agenda on Registration page.

[Registration is now open!](#)

HELP WANTED

Volunteer Guides Needed at Patriot Plaza

If interested, or for more information,
please reach out to:

Maria Schaedler-Luera

Patriot Plaza Tour Coordinator

Email: patriotplaza@sarasotaarts.org

Phone: 941-365-5118 x305

MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

New Members

Ciborowski, Dennis E. LTC, USAR (Meryl Gale)
1617 Keely Lane
Sarasota, FL 34232
dciborowski@aol.com

Mulligan, Stephen D. CW5, USA (Susan Ross)
4318 Tamarind Place
Bradenton, FL 34203-3645
860-670-5524. muggs06074@msn.com

Member Information Changes

Kasper, John S. CDR, USN (Denise)
3544 Santa Catarina Blvd
Bradenton, FL 34211-5854
678-777-6257 jskasper@sprintmail.com

Maraman, David L CPT, USA (Brenda)
7429 Divot Loop
Lakewood Ranch, FL 34202-3111
941-306-5559 david.maraman@gmail.com

Tambini II, Anthony L., CDR, USN (Angie)
1251 S. Tamiami Trail. APT 235
Osprey, FL 34229-9147
941-244-1614

Travers, Robert g. CDR, USN (Charussri)
12541 Meribel Street
Venice, FL 34293-2528
941-416-3839 travassos.rg@outlook.com

Dovener, Veronique E, Mrs
941-840-2159

Olson, Karen L, Lt Col, USAF
klolson49@gmail.com



MOAS MEET & GREET

Wednesday January 22nd

5:30pm to 7:30pm

Mattison's 41

**7275 S Tamiami Trl
Sarasota, FL 34231**

<https://mattisons.com/forty-one>

Please let Peggy O'Connell know by Monday
January 20th if you will be attending.

pegoconnell12@gmail.com

or (312) 982-1374

Easier Access To Military Bases For Eligible Veterans

The more than 4 million veterans who are eligible for certain on-base benefits may have an easier time getting into military installations, under new rules announced by the DoD and VA.

Veterans with at least a 0% VA-documented service-connected disability became eligible by law in 2020 for commissary, exchange & some MWR benefits. For a variety of reasons, and varying from one installation to another, veterans and caregivers have sometimes encountered difficulty getting through the gate to use those benefits. Over the last four years, there have been fewer complaints about difficulties, but the new rules should simplify the process.

The new procedures allow these veterans and their eligible caregivers to enroll for recurring access to an installation, so that once they've completed that process, they can go directly to the installation gate and present the same credential to enter the installation at subsequent visits. Under the new rules that took effect Nov. 1, veterans can use their VA-issued Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC) or their Real ID to enroll for recurring installation access. Those who don't have a VHIC, as well as eligible caregivers, can use their REAL ID Act-compliant driver's license or non-driver's identification card to enroll for installation access at the installation visitor center.

The law that took effect in 2020 extended eligibility to veterans with VA-documented service-connected disability ratings from 0% to 90%; Purple Heart recipients, former POWs; and individuals approved and designated as the primary family caregivers of eligible veterans under the VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. Medal of Honor recipients and veterans with 100% service-connected disability ratings documented by the VA already had access to DoD installations and commissary, exchange and MWR facilities.

There may be additional identification requirements once the veterans and caregivers get to the commissary, exchange or MWR facility, because those facilities can't electronically verify eligibility.

Eligible veterans who don't have a VHIC must still provide a copy of their VA-issued service-connected disability letter, or VA Health Eligibility Center Form H623A, and caregivers must provide their VA-issued caregiver patronage letter, to show their eligibility.

Enrollment is generally valid for one to three years, or for one year after the last visit to the installation.

To enroll, veterans and caregivers must visit each installation's visitor center where they plan to visit. They will be required to:

- Present a VHIC or REAL ID to establish identity.
- Undergo an on-the-spot criminal record and terrorism check.
- Have their eligibility for on-installation benefits verified electronically.

Trust in the Military Rising, But Still Below Pre-Pandemic Levels

Public trust in the military rose slightly in the last year and remains significantly higher than most other civic institutions, according to results from the annual Reagan National Defense Survey recently released.

More than half of the individuals polled in the report (51%) said they have a great deal of trust in the armed forces. That's up from 46% last year, the lowest level since survey administrators began polling on the topic in 2018.

Faith in the military easily outpaced trust in the White House (22%), the Supreme Court (21%) and Congress (9%). It also easily exceeded trust in police and law enforcement institutions, which rose to 34% in this year's report.

The survey is based on responses from roughly 2,500 Americans polled in the week after the November presidential election. Report authors said they are hopeful the results indicate growing levels of public support for the DoD after several years of declining confidence in the institution.

"The number fell from 70% [in 2018] to 45% [in 2021], but what you can see now is that that trend seems to have stabilized," said Rachel Hoff, the Reagan Institute's policy director.

"Several years ago, when we started to really dig into the decline in confidence, it all had to do with politicization. Americans on the right thought the military was too woke. Americans on the left thought the military was full of extremists. And both on both sides of the aisle, people thought the military's leadership was politicized."

Researchers found that confidence in the military increased last year across all age, race and partisan demographics. Roughly 56% of Donald Trump voters and 50% of Kamala Harris voters expressed high confidence in the institution.

Still, 54% of those surveyed said they would not be willing to personally serve in the military, on par with 56% of respondents from last year.

Even with those reservations, 79% of individuals surveyed said they would support increasing military spending in future federal budgets, the highest figure recorded in the survey's past eight years.

That mark was higher than issues like border security (75%) and foreign aid (43%) but trailed behind public infrastructure (89%), Social Security (89%) and education (83%).

The full survey results are available at the [Ronald Reagan Institute's website](#).

2025 Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)

Based on the increase in the Consumer Price Index, there is a 2.5% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for most retired pay and Survivor Benefit Plan annuities, effective December 1, 2024.

Retirees will see the change in their December 31, 2024 payment and annuitants in their January 2, 2025 payment.

For details, see the Fiscal Year 2025 COLA Memorandum:
<https://militarypay.defense.gov/Pay/Retirement/cola>

What Retirees Can Expect in the Year-End Mail from DFAS

For retirees who request their tax statements to be sent by postal mail from DFAS each January, we will mail your IRS Form 1099-R along with a special print edition of the DFAS Retiree Newsletter which includes important news for the coming year.

We will also include a Retiree Account Statement (RAS), which shows the change in your gross and net payment that occurs when there is a cost of living adjustment (COLA) to your pay.

It's important to note that the effective date of this RAS is the first of December, so its year-to-date summary figures are only for 11 months (the December payment is not included). Therefore, the year-to-date summary figures on this RAS will not match your 1099R.

If you opted out of receiving mailed delivery of statements, you will not receive this notice in the mail. Your 1099-R and RAS documents are conveniently available to print or download from myPay.

If you are not yet using myPay, it's easy to get started. Learn how to create a myPay account at <https://mypay.dfas.mil>.

VA plans to expand caregiver benefits, postpone program discharges

VA officials unveiled plans to expand caregiver support services to thousands more families in coming years, while also easing program rules to minimize disruptions for families already receiving those benefits.

The move comes more than two years after department leader suspended their previous efforts to reform the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) amid criticism from advocates and lawmakers that the changes were hurting veterans instead of helping them.

Under proposed changes, to be posted on the Federal Register for public comment, officials would expand eligibility in the program to include veterans who meet the standard for "individual unemployability" benefits, a lesser bar than the previous "serious injury" requirement for enrollment. Other details on eligibility would be determined after a public comment period, which lasts 60 days. That could complicate the process, given the change in presidential administrations scheduled for January.

The announced reforms would also cut back on how often families would have their eligibility reassessed, scheduling those checks for not more than once every two years. And it would ensure that any new discharges from the program will not take place until late 2026 at the earliest, and possibly even later. VA officials had previously announced that no legacy participants of the program would be discharged before September 2025.

"We understand the critical role that family caregivers play in supporting the health and wellbeing of veterans, which is why VA is committed to ensuring our programs are meeting the needs of veterans and their caregivers," VA Secretary Denis McDonough said

in a statement announcing the proposals. "These proposed changes would expand the program to tens of thousands of veterans and their family caregivers — ensuring we can provide these caregivers with the respite care, education, support, and resources they need to care for their veteran."

Currently, nearly 90,000 caregivers are enrolled in either the PCAFC or the Program of General Caregiver Support Services. The latter provides access to peer mentoring, skills training and other assistance programs for individuals caring for infirm veterans.

The PCAFC provides even more support, including stipend of up to \$3,000 a month. Officials expect thousands more to be eligible in coming years but could not provide an exact estimate until the eligibility guidelines are finalized.

Dr. Colleen Richardson, executive director of the Caregiver Support Program, acknowledged missteps with past reform efforts and said officials are focused on working closely with advocates and program participants on changes moving ahead.

She could not provide a timeline for when the new caregiver rules may be enacted. VA officials will have to review and respond to public comments starting in February and submit adjustments to their plan after that.

President-elect Donald Trump will be in office by then, and his new VA leadership team may opt for a different approach. VA officials said it was important to move ahead with the process now, despite the transition.

Separately, Congress is considering its own legislative package regarding veterans' caregivers, to include an expansion of access to home-based and community-based services for infirm veterans.

Bill Would Push VA to Expand Outside Medical Care Options For Vets

In December House Republicans unveiled new legislation to further expand veterans' ability to access private sector medical care options using taxpayer funds, a move that launches debates expected in coming years about the size and responsibilities of the VA health care system.

The bill — dubbed the “Complete the Mission” Act — sponsored by House VA Committee Chairman Mike Bost (R-III) would expand community care options for patients of the VA Health Administration (VAHA) to include nearly all extended care services, such as mental health residential rehabilitation, and block VA from offering tele-health appointments with department physicians in lieu of outside care options.

The measure would also ease rules for consideration of community care eligibility, to include accounting for caregiver schedules and preferences. It would mandate new reimbursement rules for outside medical offices and mandate better sharing of private-sector options by VA leaders to patients.

Expanding “choice” in veterans' medical benefits was a major focus of President-elect Donald Trump's first term in office and is expected to be a point of emphasis when he takes office again next year.

Congress approved the VA Mission Act in June 2018, which overhauled eligibility rules for veterans outside care options. Community care options have risen significantly since then. In FY2017, the department paid for nearly 27 million outside care appointments, roughly 27% of VA total scheduled medical visits. In FY2023, that number grew to almost 47 million, about 39% of the total.

Despite the growth, conservative groups have accused the current administration of trying to undermine the outside care options, through excessive rules and insufficient communication of patient choices. They've also accused VA leaders of working to grow their own department instead of finding ways to best serve veterans.

While introducing the bill, Bost criticized “VA bureaucrats standing in the way of veterans' community care access.” VA leaders dispute that.

If the measure does not pass this year, it's likely to become a foundational point for veterans legislative efforts in the next session, where Republicans will control the House, Senate and White House.

Will Senior Enlisted Troops See a Targeted Pay Boost in 2026?

Junior enlisted troops are poised to see a massive increase in base pay next year. Senior enlisted service members could be next in line.

Even as they were putting the finishing touches on service member quality of life reforms in this year's NDAA, lawmakers were already looking ahead at the next steps for improving pay and benefits for troops.

At the Reagan National Defense Forum, Virginia Republican Rep Rob Wittman — a senior member of the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) — said that leaders on the panel have already begun discussion on boosting pay for senior enlisted troops in an effort to help with recruiting and retention challenges in the ranks.

The authorization bill includes a 4.5% pay raise for all service members in 2025 but an additional 10% pay boost for troops rank E-1 through E-4. It means between \$3,000 and \$6,000 more annually for those individuals and bring nearly every junior service member's base pay above \$30,000 annually. Improving pay for junior enlisted had been a major priority of House lawmakers this year, and Wittman said he is pleased with the final compromise.

“This [authorization bill] is for E-1 through E-4, so the next effort has to be from E-5 to E-9,” Wittman said. “I think the officer corps is in fairly good shape, too, because there was an overall salary increase in the bill. ... The next step we'll have to take is for senior enlisted. There are folks that are committed to doing that next year.”

According to estimates released by the Congressional Budget Office earlier this summer, the 14.5% pay raise for all junior enlisted troops is expected to cost around \$10 billion over three years. Updated estimates are expected to be released in coming days.

Getting the junior enlisted pay raise in the final compromise authorization bill took a year of negotiations between House and Senate leaders. Whether a senior enlisted pay raise could survive the same gantlet is unclear.

HASC ranking member Adam Smith, D-Wash., told Military Times he is skeptical about another large, targeted pay boost in 2026. “I think it's just wildly speculative at this point,” he said. “If you've got a new administration that wants to cut \$2 trillion out of a \$6.5 trillion budget and defense is 13% of that, that's a bit of a math problem. That math is not going to add up.”

The 4.5% pay raise for all troops next year is below the 5.2% boost military families saw at the start of 2024, but marks the third consecutive year of salary hikes over 4%.

UNKNOWN DONOR - Sarasota Military Officers Foundation (SMOF)

Our SMOF Scholarship Fund recently received a very generous donation from a financial institution. However, the donor's name was not provided.

We wish to provide the donor with a receipt and a “thank you” letter, and would therefore ask that you email or call our treasurer with your contact information.

Christa Friedlander

ladyhawk9306@gmail.com

941-927-0996



YAHOO
Young At Heart Organization
Linda & Ron Wozniak

**Looking for Your Ideas & Volunteers to Organize
 Future YAHOO Events**

We have other YAHOO Events/Outings in mind and would like to see other MOAS Members and/or spouses come up with suggestions and hopefully volunteer to assist and/or organize an event/outing. Linda and Woz will assist you along the way. It is fun and you will be glad you were able to make MOAS an even better organization.

PAST EVENTS & OUTINGS

**Navy vs USC Football Game @ Raymond James
 Stadium**

Craig Hullinger & Jerome Goodin carpooled with Woz.
 Good game and good weather.

Final Score: Navy 28 USF 7

Saturday 7 December

Military Heritage Museum & Lunch Punta Gorda

Informative displays and exciting simulators were enjoyed by all. Beautiful weather and a great lunch.

Fourteen (14) Attended

Tour & Lunch = Ron & Linda Wozniak,
 Dave Downer, Craig Hullinger, Bill Lawyer,
 Wes & Brenda Moy,, Ron & Polly Watkins,
 Estrella Engelhardt & Art Hillman.

Tour only = Chris Nind, Carl Sofranko & son Nick.

**Tuesday 10 December Inshore Fishing
 Freedom Boat Club Dock, Bradenton**

Woz & Craig Hullinger fished the Bulkhead for Spotted Sea Trout. Although the weather was perfect, the fishing was really slow, so we only stayed out for 2 hours.

Nothing caught for dinner.

FUTURE EVENTS & OUTINGS

Friday 3 January 0800

Offshore Fishing

Freedom Boat Club (FBC) Dock

12300 Manatee Ave W., Bradenton 34209

4 boat spaces available.

Contact Woz *NLT Wednesday 1 January*

To reserve your spot (See fishing note below)

**Wednesday 8 January 1630-1830
 Sunset Gathering Siesta Key Beach
 (Sunset 1752)**

Siesta Key Beach, 948 Beach Road, Sarasota.

BYO chairs, food and drink. Dress for the weather. It can get cool towards sunset.

From the pavilion look towards the beachhead for the US USMC & POW/MIA Flags flying. The other Services are welcome to bring their flags. If you do not have a pole contact Woz.

Glass containers not allowed on the beach.

Handicap accessible. Plenty of parking/restrooms

Please let us know if you are coming.

Sunday 26 January Sarasota Polo Club Match

1st Match starts @ 1300

8201 Polo Club Ln, Sarasota, FL 34240

Be sure to wear your Military Branch apparel.

Chris Nind is again organizing this event. He already has paid \$545.70 to reserve 3 tailgate spaces. Pay Chris \$23 for each member in your party.

Please notify Chris *NLT Monday 20 January* at

CVNind@comcast.net and Cc RonWozniak13@gmail.com

if you are coming & provide the # & names in your party. BYO chairs, food & drink. Feel free to bring a dish to pass. Chris & Woz will have the 2 MOAS tents erected NLT 1200. Dress comfortably & for the weather. Remember, you will be walking on grass. Well-socialized dogs are welcome on a leash, so long as they are attached to their human at all times.

Go to <https://sarasotapolo.com/> to learn about the sport before you go.

The match should last about 2 hours.

Wednesday 29 January 0800

Inshore Fishing

Freedom Boat Club (FBC) Dock.

12300 Manatee Ave W., Bradenton 34209

4 boat spaces available.

Contact Woz *NLT Monday 27 January*

To reserve your spot

(See fishing note below)

Sunday 9 February Super Bowl LIX Party

Venue TBD

We are looking for someone to host it.

For information on cancellations, changes in venue, dates & times, go to the MOAS website Calendar & Blogs at <https://www.sarasotamoaa.com/> or text Ron Wozniak: 941-779-5448 or e-mail: RonWozniak13@gmail.com or Linda at 941-779-5447 or NauticalEffect@msn.com.

NOTE: Ride Sharing - If you need a ride please check the MOAS online Calendar for folks already signed up nearby. Contact them to inquire about getting a ride to an event or outing. We do not want to preclude folks from attending for lack of transportation. If all else fails contact Woz or Linda.

For all Fishing Outings - Start & quit times are flexible. Cost: fuel & tip for dockhand. Bring your own food & drink & Woz will provide tackle if you do not have any. Recommend you wear appropriate loose-fitting clothing to protect you from the sun and bring plenty of sunscreen. Rubber soled shoes required aboard all boats. Florida Saltwater fishing license required unless a FL Resident 65 or older.

Receive the Breeze via email or view it on www.sarasotamoaa.com or blog sarasotamoaa.blogspot.com



**Wednesday January 15, 2025
@ 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

Salisbury Steak

“Kicked Up” for this Generation with a Rich Red Wine Caramelized Onion & Mushroom Gravy served with Smashed Potatoes, Steamed Broccoli & Steamed Carrots

VEGETARIAN

Eggplant, Roasted Red Pepper & Fresh Mozzarella Rollatini

DESSERT

Lemon Mousse Cake

Moist, Lemony Sponge Cake & Light Lemon Mousse, Topped with Whipped Cream & White Chocolate Shavings

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 (Peggy O'Connell). 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.*
4. 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 \$39.00/person (Tax & Gratuity incl.) (Note new price)

Enclosed is a check for \$ _____

Name	Meal (E /	Comment

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

Please mail reservation form and check payable to **MOAS**

to:

PEGGY O'CONNELL

1100 Imperial Drive #303, Sarasota, FL 34236-2465

Questions? (312) 982-1374 or email: pegoconnell12@gmail.com

NAME TAGS

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

Deliver to Len Friedlander at a luncheon or mail to

First Name _____ Last name _____

Rank (Abbreviated) _____ Service _____ Status _____

Example

First Name Henry Last name O'Connell

Rank (Abbreviated) LCDR Service USNR Status Ret



JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2025



DATE	EVENT	TIME
Friday, Jan 3	YAHOO: Offshore Fishing - Details on Page 10	8:00 a.m.
Monday, Jan 6	MOAS/SMOF Board Meeting - Meadows Wellness Center	2:00 p.m.
Wednesday Jan 8	YAHOO: Sunset @ Siesta Key Beach - Details on Page 10	4:30 p.m.
Friday, Jan 15	MOAS Luncheon - Michaels on East - SCF President's String Quartet	11:30 a.m.
Fri/Sat Jan 17/18	FCOC Leadership Training & Convention - Details on Page 6	
Wednesday, Jan 22	MOAS Meet & Greet: Mattison's on 41 - Details on Page 6	5:30 p.m.
Sunday, Jan 26	YAHOO: Polo Match - Details on Page 10	1:00 p.m.
Wednesday Jan 29	YAHOO: Inshore Fishing - Details on Page 10	8:00 a.m.
Monday, Feb 3	MOAS/SMOF Board Meeting - Meadows Wellness Center	2:00 p.m.
Friday, Feb 21	MOAS Luncheon - Michaels on East - NOAA	11:30 a.m.

MEMBERSHIP

Chapter Membership Renewal forms for 2025 were mailed to all members early in November. Please review and correct the form (if necessary) and mail it to the chapter with your 2025 dues as soon as possible. We encourage ALL current members to use the application form below when encountering fellow officers in the Sarasota area, and direct them to our website for additional chapter information. www.sarasotamoaa.com

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 or blog sarasotamoaa.blogspot.com