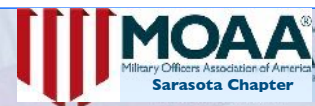


THE SARASOTA BREEZE



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. 3 MOAA 4-Star Chapter 2003/2008/2019; MOAA 5 Star Chapter 2004-2007, 2009-2018, 2020-2024 March 2026

FEBRUARY 2026 PROGRAM - National Park Service - DeSoto National Monument

Ranger Daniel Stephens of the National Park Service, and a seventh generation Floridian, has been stationed for 20 years at the De Soto National Memorial in Bradenton. He could have served at other National Parks but chose his love of this area over advancement.

Ranger Stephens provided an energetic and enlightening history lesson on Spanish Conquistador Hernando De Soto and the De Soto National Memorial on the bank of the Manatee River.

After a lifetime of dangerous travel and expeditions throughout the Caribbean, Conquistador Hernando De Soto, in May 1539, and his army of soldiers, hired mercenaries, craftsmen, and clergy sailed from Cuba and made landfall in Tampa Bay. They were met with fierce resistance of the indigenous people protecting their homeland. De Soto's quest for glory and gold would be a four year, four-thousand-mile odyssey of intrigue, warfare, disease, and discovery across what is now Georgia, North & South Carolina, Tennessee and Mississippi that would form the history of the United States.



We were fortunate to have a gifted NPS ranger such as Ranger Stephens and a National Park celebrating this level of United States history so close to us.

As a follow up we have organized an outing to the Memorial on Saturday, February 28th. See details in the YAHOO article on Page 8. Looking forward to seeing you there.

MARCH 2026 PROGRAM - Southwest Florida Honor Flight

Our 20 March luncheon program will feature a presentation by the Southwest Florida Honor Flight organization.

As stated on their website, "The sole purpose of Honor Flights is: To safely transport our Veterans to Washington, DC, to be honored at their memorials and receive the welcome home they deserve."

The Southwest Florida Honor Flight, established in 2007, is a local hub – one of the 130 hubs across the United States that form the Honor Flight Network. To-date 275,000 veterans have flown on a network honor flight, with the local unit having flown over 2,300 veterans – free of charge – to the Washington DC area to visit and reflect at the memorials built in their honor.

The local Honor Flight organization serves all U.S. veterans in Charlotte, DeSoto, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Manatee and Sarasota Counties (and immediate surrounding areas) in Southwest Florida. Applications for Veterans and Guardians who accompany the honorees are available at www.SWFLHonorFlight.org.



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Receive the Breeze via email or view it on our website www.sarasotamoaa.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
Legislative Committee	Michael Lindquist
Vets Affairs/Commission	Peter Dering
Marketing & Communications Committee	
Chairperson	Richard Greenspan
Editor-Newsletter	Len Friedlander
Web Site	Vacant
BLOG/Social Media/Photo	Vacant
Membership Committee	
Recruiting & Retention	Len Friedlander
Recruiting & Retention	William F. Lawyer
Reporting & Records	Christa I. Friedlander
Personal Affairs Committee	
Surviving Spouses Liaison	Vacant
Chaplain	Michael Lindquist
Programs Committee	
Chairperson	Christopher Nind
Luncheon Programs	Christopher Nind
Young at Heart [YAHOO]	Ron Wozniak
YAHOO Coordinator	Linda Wozniak
Meet & Greet	Peggy O'Connell
Luncheon Committee	
Chairperson & Coordinator	Mary Gordon
Greeter	Peter Dering
50-50 Manager	Jonathan Gordon
Scholarship Committee	
Chairperson	William F. Lawyer
Member	Brenda Moy
Member	Len Friedlander
Member	Mary Gordon
Member	Linda Wozniak
Member	Art Hillman
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****Steven L. Carnes**

The beginning of February was a busy time for MOAS. We just returned from the annual Leadership Training Seminar and Convention of the Florida Council of Chapters (FCoC). Joining me in Orlando were First Vice President Wes Moy and his wife Brenda, FCoC Secretary Jon Gordon and his wife Mary, and former FCoC President Len Friedlander and his wife Christa. We heard from the state staff covering numerous topics as to what was transpiring at the state level and suggestions as to how to improve our local chapters. There was also a large contingent from national MOAA including the President & CEO, Lt. General Brian Kelly. General Kelly gave us a view of what is transpiring at the national level with an emphasis on legislative action.

I have discussed legislative action in my previous messages, and this remains MOAA's top priority. We now have 182 registered members in our local chapter, but only 39 members are registered advocates in the Legislative Action Center. This is only 21.4% of our membership. In 2025, these 39 members filed 128 actions in the Legislative Action Center. I thank these 39 members for their support of MOAA's most important program, and I urge everyone else to sign up as advocates in the Legislative Action Center and let our legislators know of our support for legislation supporting our military and veteran communities.

An important area of concentration at our Orlando Meeting was Surviving Spouses. Pat Green is the FCoC Surviving Spouse Liaison and President of the MOAA Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter. Pat informed the surviving spouses present that new ID cards are required in 2026 even if your card says Indefinite Expiration Date.

Pat talked about the Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter, which connects surviving spouses throughout the US and across the world. Virtual meetings are held monthly except in November and December. These are ZOOM Meetings on your home computer conducted on the third Tuesday of the month. Topics that are discussed include legislative updates, health care issues, financial planning, and other issues important to surviving spouses. These sessions can help new surviving spouses through their time of grief and keep long-term surviving spouses up to date on the latest changes in benefits. To join the Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter, simply send an email to: mssvc02@gmail.com. I urge all our surviving spouses to join and take advantage of this excellent resource,

On a lighter note, on Friday February 6th, twenty-two MOAS members participated in a YAHOO-organized private tour of the new Mote Science and Education Aquarium (Mote SEA). The MOAS contingent was broken up into two groups of eleven for ease of movement. The new three-story facility is a beautiful presentation of various types of sea life from around the world. From large sharks to colorful south pacific coral fish, to playful sea otters, to lazy manatees. A good time was had by all thanks to the efforts of Linda & Ron Wozniak who set up the tour. Check *The Breeze* for the next YAHOO outing. Please come out and enjoy these social opportunities.



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 February 2, 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 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 1402. The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer led by Chaplain Michael Lindquist.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Carnes (Pres), Wes Moy (1VP), Chris Nind (2VP), Peter Dering (Sec'y), Christa Friedlander (Treas), Bill Lawyer (Dir), Len Friedlander (Dir), Michael Lindquist (Dir), Richard Greenspan (Dir) & Dave Downer (IPP)

COMMITTEE CHAIRS & VISITORS PRESENT: Jon Gordon, & Ron Wozniak.

PRESIDENT'S ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

- The next MOAS luncheon meeting will be on Friday, February 20, 2026 with a speaker from National Park Service.
- Recap of 2026 FCOC President's Mtg, Leadership Seminar, Annual Mtg, and Convention 29 Jan – 1 Feb, Rosen Center, Orlando.
- Possible FCOC/MOAA luncheon speakers:
 - FCOC Surviving Spouses
 - Veterans Health representative
 - Frank Michael, Senior Director, Affiliated Councils & Chapters
 - MOAA vacation trips

1st VICE PRESIDENT: (Wes Moy)

1. Nomination Committee process proposal forwarded to chapter president about two weeks ago. Would begin in May with an email about the personal benefits of nonprofit board service. Nominating Committee would be formed around then. This past year we started too late.

2. Program ideas. Have reached out to the following:

- Sarasota Orchestra: New music center development and the orchestra generally. Interest confirmed.
- Nathan Bendersen Park developments. Possible attendance at a rowing race as a YAHOO event (no cost). Interest confirmed.
- Tunnels2Towers development of the Bradenton Veterans Village for homeless veterans. They're interested in discussing. Chair should have a strong understanding of members and the organization.
- MaryElizabeth Mock willing to connect us with a ballet event.

3. Received the MOAA National generated list from Membership. Looking at possible email merge for marketing. Need examples of past mailings but will use AI to update materials.

With the number on that list plus our own membership, we might want to consider adopting something Constant Contact or MailChimp to manage the communications process.

It would be desirable to develop a communications plan for both

chapter members and non-members (but MOAA members). Might be worth emailing the newsletter to the MOAA list. The mailing programs have opt out features. Drafted MOAS BOD Onboarding plan (attached). Needs work but it's a start.

4. Attended the FCOC meeting in Orlando 29 Jan to 1 Feb
FCOC comments -

- A good overview, Leaders Resource Manual, Presentation slides.
 - Social media - Platforms, One-way/two-way, Demographics
 - Presentation - naming convention
 - MOAA Vacations, My Warrior's Place, Learning tracks
5. Sarasota MOAA Facebook page
- Taking over as administrator
 - Changing to a nonprofit organization

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT & PROGRAMS: (Chris Nind)

- I agree with Wes's notes re: communications.
- I have also agreed with Bill Lawyer to visit some high schools with him prior to my departure. He is discussing with Dr Burkett the possibility of the District School Superintendent being available for the scholarship luncheon.

Future Programs

20 February: National Park Service

20 March: Southwest Florida Honor Flight

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

15 May: Scholarship Luncheon

SECRETARY'S REPORT: (Peter Dering) The January 2026 BOD Meeting Minutes were approved unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT: (Christa Friedlander) Required Annual Reports submitted and accepted by the FL Dept of State. The January 2026 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 1/26 - 160 Renewals; 8 Resignations; 4 Moved; 31 No Response.

Request Board members assist in contacting members who have not yet renewed their membership.

RECRUITING - Received an Excel spreadsheet from national MOAA with the names & contact information of 589 MOAA members within the MOAS zip code "catchment area" for chapter to use to recruit new members. Chapter President Carnes received the spreadsheet as well. The listing contains many inaccuracies Addressing this list of potential chapter members as a recruitment effort is a major undertaking and will require the entire Board's support and resources.

JROTC, MCJROTC: (Bill Lawyer) All Senior Military Instructors have been sent the details of this year's scholarship program. In person visits will be ongoing through March.

LUNCHEON REPORT: (Mary Gordon) There were 38 reservations made for the Jan 16 luncheon (37 attended) The 50/50 added \$130 to the scholarship fund, combining the \$64 MOAS share with all three prizes donated, totaling another \$66.

At the request of the Scholarship Chairman Bill Lawyer, we changed the May luncheon date to Friday May 15 for the annual scholarship luncheon to work better with students' schedules.

It was also suggested that we make a tentative luncheon date request for December in case the plans for the Gala are changed

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

	LUNCHEON PROGRAMS
February	National Park Service - DeSoto Monument
March	Southwest Florida Honor Flight
April	Florida Sheriff's Youth Ranches

again. That date, only reasonable available from MoE, is Tuesday, December 8 (till have the Gala date of Dec 13 on the calendar).

LEGISLATIVE: (Mike Lindquist)

- One of the more significant challenges facing DoD is the Congressional threat to again fail to pass the 2026 Appropriations bill. This will have an adverse effect on Active-Duty soldiers.
- A second threat is the possibility the President sends Federalized soldiers into American cities without Congressional approval.
- Please refer to the Breeze for the full report.

MEET & GREET: (Peggy O’Connell): The next Meet and Greet will be Wed, Feb 11, at 5:00 PM at Evie’s Tavern & Grill on Main

BREEZE NEWSLETTER: (Len Friedlander) January issue was published and emailed to 220 addressees. Twenty (20) copies were printed and mailed to members.

WEBSITE: (Len Friedlander) A NEW website has been developed using information from the existing site. The site is offline, undergoing continuing updates and edits. The site is projected to “go-live” prior to Feb 15th when the Scholarship Application program for 2026 will start. (The Scholarship application segment is complete). Would appreciate assistance with Board member review of ALL website content for corrections & updates.

VETERANS’ AFFAIRS: (Peter Dering)

- VA resources at the [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

Sarasota County Honors Veterans - Monthly Ceremony

At 9:00 AM on the 2nd Wednesday of every month, at the Sarasota National Cemetery, Sarasota County honors those honorably discharged veterans who have passed away in the area without family. Please join this important Monthly Ceremony.

YAHOO: (Ron & Linda Wozniak)

Past Events/Outings

- Saturday 10 Jan Florida Medal of Honor Memorial - Sebring. Jon & Mary Gordon, Dave Downer and Ron & Linda Wozniak attended. Mike Borders and his Team did a wonderful job creating & maintaining the Memorial. A fantastic tribute to these Florida American Heroes. Everyone who cares about their American Freedom needs to visit the FL MOH Memorial and understand firsthand the sacrifices these Heroes made. A most informative tour, we learned about the Florida Medal of Honor Memorial, gardens, and visitor center - a moving tribute to the 24 courageous Floridians who received the Medal of Honor— for acts of valor performed “above and beyond the call of duty.”

Future Events/Outings

- Friday 6 Feb MOTE SEA 2-hour Guided Tour 9:00AM
- Saturday 14 March Smugglers Cove Mini Golf 5:30 PM

SARASOTA MILITARY OFFICERS FOUNDATION, INC

SCHOLARSHIP REPORT: (Bill Lawyer): The website will go live on 15 Feb, two weeks earlier than in past years. The students will be able to save their work and return to finish the application. Previously, they had to complete the application in one sitting.

All counselors have been contacted via email, and in-person visits will start in the next few days.

We are working to get Terry Connor, Sarasota Schools Superintendent, to be this year’s speaker.

OLD BUSINESS: None **NEW BUSINESS:** None

BOARD APPROVED ACTIONS/MOTIONS: The Board approved an expenditure of \$500 to fund the annual MOAS recruitment picnic in April. More information to follow.

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



**FROM THE
1st VICE PRESIDENT
Wes Moy**

I am pleased to announce that the [Sarasota MOAA Chapter](#) once again has a **Facebook** presence. Our new page will allow us to communicate more effectively with members, share timely legislative updates, promote chapter events, highlight community service activities, and reach prospective members—particularly officers from more recent generations who rely on digital channels

for personal and professional engagement.

To support this effort, we are seeking a volunteer to serve as our Social Media Communications Lead. The role will focus initially on managing our Facebook page and assisting with the launch of a Sarasota MOAA LinkedIn page. The position does not require social media expertise. Training resources are readily available online, and one-on-one guidance will be provided to ensure a smooth onboarding process. The objective is consistency, accuracy, and professional tone—not high-volume content production. This is an opportunity to help position our chapter for sustained relevance and growth.

In addition, I would like to address board service more broadly. Serving on a nonprofit board of directors offers meaningful professional and personal benefits. Board members gain governance experience, strategic planning exposure, financial oversight insight, and community leadership credibility. Board service strengthens networks, develops executive judgment, and contributes to mission-driven impact—particularly important for those who value continued service after military careers.

Serving specifically on the Sarasota MOAA board provides the additional benefit of advancing advocacy for uniformed services members, retirees, surviving spouses, and their families. It allows officers to continue leading within our values-based organization while shaping the chapter’s future direction. As a note, several of our long-serving board members have indicated a desire to transition their roles. We are therefore actively identifying successors to ensure continuity and stability. Structured transition support and training will be available to facilitate an orderly handoff and preserve institutional knowledge.

If you are interested in supporting our communications efforts or exploring board service, I encourage you to contact me directly at wrmoy11@gmail.com. Your experience and leadership remain essential to the continued vitality of our chapter.



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER Michael Lindquist

The Power of Prayer

Prayer is a central practice across many of the world's religious traditions. While the how, where, when, and why of prayer vary, most faiths understand prayer to connect with the Divine. Whether offered individually or in community, prayer creates a bridge between the human and the sacred.

Why We Pray -

Across religions, prayer is an intentional act—an expression of devotion, gratitude, hope, or transformation.

- **Christianity** - Christians pray to seek God's guidance, ask for blessings, intercede for others, and repent. Prayer is understood as a conversation with God and an affirmation of faith.
- **Judaism** - Jewish prayer emphasizes unity with God, gratitude through blessings (*berakhot*), and requests for divine help. Prayer is also central in moments of celebration and mourning. Traditional Jewish practice includes structured daily prayers known as *Shacharit*, *Mincha*, and *Ma'ariv* (Jewish Virtual Library; My Jewish Learning).
- **Islam** - Prayer (*salat*) is the first pillar of Islam and is performed five times daily as an act of worship, discipline, and remembrance of Allah. Muslims also offer personal supplications (*du'a*) at any time to express need or gratitude (Islam Q&A).
- **Eastern Religions** - In many Eastern traditions—such as Hinduism and Buddhism—prayer focuses on personal transformation, cultivating compassion, and fostering harmony among all beings.

How We Pray

Prayer takes many forms, from spontaneous personal expressions to highly structured rituals shaped by centuries of tradition.

- **Christianity** - Christians may pray silently or aloud, individually or in groups, standing, sitting, or kneeling before an altar.
- **Judaism** - Jewish prayer can be individual or communal. A group of ten adults, known as a *minyan*, is traditionally required for certain prayers and rituals (JewFAQ.org).
- **Islam** - Muslims perform the five daily prayers with specific physical movements and recitations, either individually or in congregation. Personal prayers (*du'a*) may be offered at any time.

When We Pray

- **Christianity & Judaism** - Both traditions encourage prayer at any time—morning, evening, or whenever the heart is moved. Daily prayer is seen as a way to maintain a living relationship with God.
- **Islam** - The five daily prayers occur at set times shared by Muslims around the world, each aligned with the position of the sun. Worshippers face Mecca during prayer.

Where We Pray

Individual prayer has no boundaries. People pray in their homes, outdoors, at work, or wherever they feel called. Communal prayer, however, often takes place in sacred spaces:

- Christians gather in churches and cathedrals.
- Jews gather in synagogues or temples.
- Muslims gather in mosques for congregational worship. These spaces serve as centers of spiritual life, community, and tradition.

Blessings on your journey,

Michael



Sarasota Military Officers Foundation (SMOF)

Bill Lawyer

Many of you who have given so generously to our Sarasota Military Officers Foundation last year probably wondered what your Board of Directors has done with all the money.

Your donations and a grant from a private Trust Foundation allowed us to award \$87,425 to students, veterans, and community groups in 2025.

Here are the recipients of SMOF funds.

Scholarship Assistance to honorably discharged veterans:

State College of Florida Sarasota/Manatee	\$12,000
University of South Florida Sarasota/Manatee	\$12,000
Ringling College of Arts and Design	\$10,000
Manatee Technical Colleges/East-West	\$10,000
	\$44,000

Merit Scholarships to Graduating High School Seniors

Awarded 12 at \$3,000 each **\$36,000**

JROTC

Leadership Awards to 5 JROTC Cadets at \$100 each	\$ 500
JROTC Training Support	\$2,375
	\$2,875

Community Assistance

Dogs Inc/Veteran' Program	\$ 1,000
Patriot Paws/Service Dogs	\$ 500
Big Brothers/Big Sisters	\$ 300
SW Florida Honor Flight	\$ 2,500
FL Medal of Honor Memorial	\$ 250
	\$ 4,550

Total awarded in 2025 \$87,425



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Michael Lindquist

MOAA News Highlights

(To read the entire article click on the *highlighted* title)
[This Scam Could Threaten TRICARE Users' Personal Data](#) Learn the warning signs to protect your health information from fraud.
[MOAA Life Member, 100, Will Receive Medal of Honor](#) Capt. Royce Williams, USN (Ret), shot down four Soviet jets in a then-secret Korean War air battle.
[Stop VA Claim Sharks: Help MOAA Protect Earned Benefits](#) The GUARD VA Benefits Act is designed to prevent unaccredited actors from taking advantage of veterans and survivors.

MUST READ

Breaking Down the Disability Compensation Process
 By: Paul Frost

Military service can pose hardships on the body, which in turn can disadvantage a veteran competing for employment. The VA's disability compensation program is supposed to make up for that disadvantage.

Veterans can submit a claim as early as 180 days prior to a known separation/retirement date to many decades later. The closer the claim is submitted to a period of service, the easier it is to prove a nexus to service (NTS).

Your first VA claim is called the "original claim." If submitted within a year of separation/retirement, the award date will be the date you leave or left service. Disabilities diagnosed within a year of separation are automatically considered connected to your service; accidents and injuries incurred after you leave service are not.

After a year, the onus is on the veteran to show NTS. Subsequent claims are either a supplemental or an increased rating request for a current disability. The medical NTS that the VA is looking for is either:

- Direct (occurred or diagnosed while serving).
- Aggravation (a disability you had prior to entering service was worsened through service).
- Secondary (a service-connected condition caused another condition).
- Presumptive (an illness or disability the VA automatically presumes to be connected to service in a particular location during a specific period).

The disability must also be chronic versus acute; it does not have to be associated with combat, wartime, or training. However, the issue must not be the result of the veteran's misconduct.

[HAVE MORE BENEFITS QUESTIONS? [Ask MOAA's Experts](#)]

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. 2392: Veterans' [Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2025](#). (Retirees/Veterans 11/25/25 Presented to President.)

H.R. 530: [ACES Act Retirees/Veterans](#) 05/06/25 Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

S. 201: [ACES Act of 2025 Retirees/Veterans](#) 08/14/25 Signed by President.

H.R. 3578: [Improving Veterans' Experience Act of 2025](#) Retirees/Veterans, VA Health Care 12/19/25 Referred to the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

H.R. 2102: [Major Richard Star Act Retirees/Veterans](#) 04/04/25 Referred to the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs.

S. 1032: [Major Richard Star Act Retirees/Veterans](#) 03/13/25 Introduced in Senate

H.R. 210: [Dental Care for Veterans Act VA Health Care](#) 02/06/25 Referred to the Subcommittee on Health.

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

LEGISLATIVE ACTION PROCESS

Open your browser and go to www.moaa.org
 STEP 1 Click **Log In** and enter your MOAA username and password (**OR you may skip this step if not a member**)

STEP 2 From the top menu, click **Advocacy**

STEP3 Select **Legislative Action Center** from the dropdown

STEP 4 Browse the list and choose a campaign you support "**IF responding to a "Take Action" Alert, the campaign will appear on screen.**"

STEP 5 Review the pre-written message and personalize if desired

STEP 6 Click **Send** to submit your message to Congress

STEP 7 Look for the confirmation screen - your action is complete

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

— Michael

February Luncheon Photos



Mary Gordon & Bill Lawyer



(L-r) Michael Lindquist, Wes Moy & Steve Carnes



Art Hillman (l) & Rich Greenspan



Ilene & Paul O'Connell



Ralph & Jinny Scheffert and Debra Sandberg (r)



Mae Miller (l) & Linda Brent



Kathy Strauss & Francine King



Larry Woodmansee (l) and Kay & David Purviance



Debby Harvey & her son Reid



Joe & Blanche Barresi



(l-r) Sylvia Barber, Bobbie Hamilton, Mary Lou & Carl Morris



Speaker Daniel Stephens (l)
& Steve Carnes



June Wolgemuth & Ed Dupree



Paul Kaufman
& Kathy Strauss

Florida Council of Chapters Leadership Training Seminar & Convention



FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Check out the NEWLY Updated Chapter Website — WWW.SarasotaMOAA.com

MOAS is now active on Facebook — www.facebook.com/sarasota.moaa/

And LinkedIn — <https://www.linkedin.com/>

VA halts implementation of controversial disability rating rule following backlash

by Patricia Kime 2/19/26

The [VA has retreated from enforcing a controversial regulation](#) it rolled out on Feb 17th that required medical examiners to factor in the effects of medication when weighing disability ratings decisions.

In a [post on X](#), VA Secretary Doug Collins said the VA will continue collecting public comment on the rule but it “will not be enforced at any time in the future” because of the veteran community’s reaction to it.

The VA issued the regulation with “immediate effect,” meaning that it applied to veterans filing disability claims or appeals on and after Feb. 17 and those seeking any changes to their disability ratings after that date.

Under the regulation, those conducting medical exams for disability assessments were instructed to look at a veteran’s “actual level of functional impairment” and include any effects of medication or treatment.

The rule was written in response to several court cases dating to 2012 that interpreted the VA’s existing regulations as limiting the consideration of medication’s effects. Those cases stipulated that the VA could issue a regulation with strict parameters on including medication as part of the instructions for assigning disability ratings.

In the rule, Collins wrote that the court decisions would force adjudicators to make assessments based on hypotheses if a veteran’s disability was left untreated, a standard he called “unquantifiable, hypothetical [and] unwarranted.” But the announcement — and the way it was initiated, as a final decision — infuriated veterans and advocacy groups, drawing criticism from individual veterans online and organizations such as the VFW, DAV, PVA and American Legion.

In the first 60 hours of posting, the comments section on the Federal Register drew more than 10,000

responses. Veterans also [filed at least one lawsuit](#) calling for a review of the rule.

“All this does is provide a perverse incentive for veterans to forego treatment,” said Paul Jennings, an Army veteran and attorney for MilVet Law Firm, one of the plaintiffs. “It’s the VA — they’re there to take care of us. ... So, it’s quite unexpected when you get a rule published with immediate effect stating it’s an emergency because the VA has taken the approach that this will result in veterans getting higher ratings.” “The VA is not tasked with protecting taxpayers. They are tasked with protecting veterans. The VA’s goal is not to seek out victories — their goal is to ensure that veterans are properly compensated for their injuries.”

“Treatment to alleviate symptoms of a service-connected condition, including medication, should not be used in a way that decreases compensation for that disability. Such a notion could set up a slippery slope where a veteran with a spinal cord injury could be considered less disabled simply because he or she is able to use a wheelchair to ambulate,” Paralyzed Veterans of America CEO Carl Blake said.

Before he announced he was pulling back from implementation, Collins fought back on the criticism, calling it “fake news.”

According to the regulation, the change was needed because the VA faced re-adjudicating 350,000 claims decisions, retraining its medical examiners, generating administrative costs and increasing VA expenditures because the department would pay out additional disability compensation “based on levels that “veterans are not actually experiencing.” But veterans saw the rule as a betrayal of trust.

The rule had the potential to have an economic impact of \$100 million a year. It would have affected 350,000 claims and more than 500 conditions.

Sarasota County Veterans Service Officers

Updated January 2026

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Darrell Butler, CVSO, Aretha Gipson, OVSO
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Aliya Bunn, Admin Specialist

Suicide Rate Slightly Increased - latest report

Fewer veterans took their own lives in 2023 than 2022, a pace of roughly 17.5 deaths per day, a statistic Veterans Affairs officials say they are working to change given that the rate of veteran suicides continues to be twice that of the U.S. non-veteran population.

The VA’s [annual suicide prevention report](#) found that 6,398 veterans died by suicide in 2023, down from 6,442 in 2022. But with the overall population of veterans declining, the suicide rate among the nation’s veterans increased, from 34.7 per 100,000 veterans in 2022 to 35.2 per 100,000 in 2023.

The suicide rate for non-veteran U.S. adults in 2023 was 16.9 per 100,000 Americans.

[The report noted several unique veteran populations](#) that the VA should consider targeting for prevention.



YAHOO
Young At Heart Organization
Linda & Ron Wozniak

PAST EVENT/OUTING

Friday 6 February

MOTE Science Education Aquarium (SEA)

The 2-hour guided group tour turned out to be **NO COST**.

Thank you, Mote SEA! 22 Attended: Ron & Linda Wozniak, Jon & Mary Gordon, Len & Christa Friedlander, Susan Stockwell, June Wolgemuth, Brenda & Wesley Moy, Ken & Jodi Esteban, Mike & Judy Mason, Grant & Peggy Krueger, Jeff Wortman, Dennis & Meryl Ciborowski, Mae Miller, Rachel



Taylor & Bill Lawyer.

We were broken up into 2 groups of 11. We were able to tour the rest of the aquarium on our own after the tour. **What a fantastic facility!** Our guides were very informative, sharing tidbits of info with us that were not readily evident if we were visiting Mote on our own.

UPCOMING EVENTS/OUTINGS

Saturday 28 February 10:00 a.m.

DeSoto National Memorial Time

8300 De Soto Memorial Hwy, Bradenton, FL

This is a FREE Outing

Located on the bank of the Manatee River. This is a follow-up YAHOO outing after Ranger Daniel Stephens' enlightening program at his 20 Feb MOAS Luncheon.

"Living history" allows visitors to get in touch with history with interactive displays of Indigenous and European replica artifacts. There is an armor table you can try out and be a member of De Soto's expedition. There will be scheduled programs and demonstrations at 10:00am, 12:00pm, & 2:00pm. The Programs are free and family fun. Type of Events: Children's Program, Cultural/Craft Demonstration, and Living History Performance.

The Visitor welcome area is open daily (9:00am to 4:45pm). Park grounds are open dawn to dusk, but the parking lot gates close at 5:00pm. **Contact Woz NLT Wednesday 25 February** [RonWozniak13@gmail.com or 941-779-5448] to let us know you are coming. Bring the kids, grandchildren and/or a prospective MOAS Member. Let's meet at the entrance at 1000 by the Weapons Demonstration.

Ranger Stephens said he would give us a Guided Tour. [DeSoto National Memorial](#)

Saturday 14 March 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.
Smugglers Cove Mini Golf

3815 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota.

We have played here several times in the past. Course features 18 Holes of adventure style golf in which you'll navigate through caves, pirate ships, waterfalls and live alligators! **\$16.14/golfer** Retired Military and Veteran rate.

Make your foursome. Bring the kids, grandkids and/or a prospective MOAS Member.

Followed by optional 7:30 p.m. dinner at **Wicked Cantina**, 1603 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, just 1.2 miles South of Smugglers Cove.

RSVP to Woz NLT Wednesday 11 March [RonWozniak13@gmail.com or 941-779-5448] and let us know golf & dinner or just golf.

Sunday 12 April 1:00-5:00 p.m.

5th Annual MOAS Picnic

Phillippi Estate Park Pavilion

5500 S. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota

The MOAS Spring Picnic is one of the first signs of spring, and after the cold snap we've had this year its a great opportunity to be outdoors and to socialize with our MOAS friends.



MOAS covers the cost of the pavilion, Publix fried chicken, hot dogs, hamburgers & buns. Please BYO drinks. For Families, children are welcome. This is a MOAS Recruiting event so please try to bring a prospective member.

Requesting all attendees coordinate with Linda Wozniak on a dish to pass **NLT Friday 3 April** - and contact Woz **NLT Friday 3 April** to let him know you are coming with numbers & names.

We are looking for volunteers to help the Picnic Committee.

If you have any games you would like to bring, like Corn Hole, Bocce Ball, etc., and/or or have a portable grill & charcoals, contact Woz.

Woz will populate a list of who is attending on the MOAS website online [EVENTS Calendar](#).

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



SARASOTA CHAPTER

Friday March 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

Roasted Rosemary Breast of Chicken
with Mushrooms, Sun-Dried Tomatoes,
Kalamata Olives & Pancetta served
with Whole Roasted Golden Creamer
Potatoes & Fresh Herbs, Steamed
Broccoli & Roasted Baby Red Peppers

VEGETARIAN

Curry Vegetable Bundles

An Array of Seasonal Vegetables in a
Yellow Curry Wrapped in a Phyllo
Bundle, Tied with a Scallion, Baked
Until Golden Brown

DESSERT

Malva Pudding

Apricot Infused Pudding with Vanilla
Anglaise and Mango Ice Cream
Garnished with Mint

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 birthdaymonth, 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.)

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

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 - APRIL 2026



DATE	EVENT	TIME
Saturday, Feb 28	YAHOO: De Soto National Monument - Details on Page 10	10:00 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.
Wednesday, Mar 11	Meet & Greet :- Patricks, 1481 Main St. Sarasota	5:00 p.m.
Saturday, Mar 14	YAHOO: Smugglers Cove Mini Golf - Details on Page 10	5:30 p.m.
Tuesday, Mar 17	 ST. PATRICK'S DAY 	11:30 a.m.
Friday, Mar 20	MOAS Luncheon - Michaels on East - Southeast Florida Honor Flight	11:30 a.m.
Monday, April 6	MOAS/SMOF Board Meeting - Meadows Lifestyle & Wellness Building	2:00 p.m.
Sunday, April 12	MOAS Annual Picnic - Phillippi Estate Park - Details on Page 10	1:00 p.m.
Friday, April 17	MOAS Luncheon - Michaels on East - Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches	11:30 a.m.



Save the Date!
APRIL 15-16, 2026
 NOON to NOON

Presented by the Community Foundation of Sarasota County

Celebrating the 10th Giving Challenge

Our **Sarasota Military Officers Foundation (SMOF)** is honored to participate in the Giving Challenge hosted by the Community Foundation of Sarasota County with giving strengthened by The Patterson Foundation.

During the Giving Challenge, when you donate to SMOF, your generosity will be matched by The Patterson Foundation for amounts ranging from \$25 to \$100. This match initiative doubles the impact of your donation and allows us to further our efforts in providing scholarships and support to students and veterans.

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