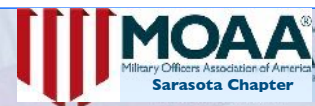


# THE SARASOTA BREEZE



## 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 2015/2017-2025; 4 Star 2016; Website 5-Star 2015-2025  
Vol. XXXVII No. 5 MOAA 4-Star Chapter 2003/2008/2019; MOAA 5 Star Chapter 2004-2007, 2009-2018, 2020-2025 May 2026

### **APRIL 2026 PROGRAM - Florida Sheriff's Youth Ranches - Mike Kiel**

Mr. Mike Kiel gave an interesting and informative presentation at Friday's luncheon. Mike is the Donor Relations Officer for the Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches. There are 3 Ranches in Florida, all devoted to providing residential care to as many needy and deserving youth as funds will allow. This is achieved by housing children in cottages which all have cottage parents, or foster parents, who are married and administer and run the cottages.

At the ranches the children attend their own charter school, and the aim is to graduate high school and then go onto apprenticeships or college. There is also a strong and vibrant Alumni program for the "Ranchers" as they are known. The Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches also run summer camps where campers can get to know Law Enforcement officers and realize they are friends to help, not hinder their development.

Over 168,000 children have attended the ranches since they opened their doors in 1958. The motto of the Ranches is "Mending Lives, Healing Hearts" and they achieve this by Work, Study, Play and Pray. All the youth can work on the ranches, earn pay, attend school, enjoy sport and recreation, and begin every morning with a prayer.

The Ranchers come from homes where parents or a parents are not able to cope or give their children the love they deserve, or they are referred by social services. Their stay can be months or years, but what is very apparent is that this program works and this is reflected by the success rate of graduating students who go on to positive, successful and happy lives with families of their own.

Mike received a donation for the Ranches from the chapter President and a donation from a 50/50 raffle. He offered to host a visit by our membership to the Safety Harbor ranch in the summer - dates to be decided.

Overall, an excellent program and an excellent presentation from Mike Kiel. Thank you.

### **MAY 2026 PROGRAM - Scholarship Luncheon - Rachael O'Dea, Deputy Superintendent, Chief Academic Officer, Sarasota District Schools.**

The May luncheon is our annual scholarship awards luncheon where we celebrate the outstanding young women and men from the Sarasota area high school system selected for a MOAS scholarship. These 17 recipients demonstrated their academic, leadership, and community service excellence, and are truly deserving of this year's MOAS scholarships.

Our luncheon speaker and scholarship presenter for this occasion is **Rachael O'Dea**, Sarasota County Schools Deputy Superintendent & Chief Academic Officer, where she leads the district's academic vision and instructional strategy in support of student success. With a strong commitment to excellence in education, she oversees curriculum development, assessment, professional learning, and school improvement initiatives across all grade levels.

Mrs. O'Dea brings extensive experience in educational leadership, having served in a variety of roles that include classroom instruction, school administration, and district-level leadership. Particularly focused on strengthening literacy and mathematics achievement, expanding college and career readiness pathways, and known for her collaborative leadership style, she is deeply committed to ensuring that every student in Sarasota County Schools is prepared for success in an ever-changing world.

#### **WHAT'S INSIDE**

<b>Officers, Directors &amp; Committees ..</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>President's Message.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Secretary's Corner.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>From the 1VP.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Chaplains Corner.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>SMOF.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Legislative Update.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Luncheon Photos.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>ForYour Information.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>YAHOO.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Luncheon Reservation.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>MOAS Calendar.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Membership Application.....</b>	<b>12</b>

Receive the Breeze via email or view it on our website [www.sarasotamoaa.com](http://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)	Vacant
Director (Legislative)	Michael Lindquist
Director (Membership)	Len Friedlander
Immediate Past President	David Downer
<b>Legislative Committee</b>	Michael Lindquist
<b>Vets Affairs/Commission</b>	Peter Dering
<b>Marketing &amp; Communications Committee</b>	
Chairperson	Vacant
Editor-Newsletter	Len Friedlander
Web Site	Len Friedlander
BLOG/Social Media/Photo	Vacant
<b>Membership Committee</b>	
Recruiting & Retention	Len Friedlander
Recruiting & Retention	William F. Lawyer
Reporting & Records	Christa I. Friedlander
<b>Personal Affairs Committee</b>	
Surviving Spouses Liaison	Vacant
Chaplain	Michael Lindquist
<b>Programs Committee</b>	
Chairperson	Christopher Nind
Luncheon Programs	Christopher Nind
Young at Heart [YAHOO]	Ron Wozniak
YAHOO Coordinator	Linda Wozniak
Meet & Greet	Peggy O'Connell
<b>Luncheon Committee</b>	
Chairperson & Coordinator	Mary Gordon
Greeter	Peter Dering
50-50 Manager	Jonathan Gordon
<b>Scholarship Committee</b>	
Chairperson	William F. Lawyer
Member	Brenda Moy
Member	Len Friedlander
Member	Mary Gordon
Member	Linda Wozniak
Member	Art Hillman
<b>JROTC Liaison</b>	William F. Lawyer
<b>Support Our Troops [SOT]</b>	Ron Wozniak
<b>Awards Board Chair</b>	Jonathan C. Gordon

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



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Steven L. Carnes

### VA Cemeteries and the Veterans Legacy Memorial Site

The VA and Florida honor our deceased veterans. We have several VA cemeteries and several state veteran cemeteries in Florida. We are lucky to have a beautiful and reasonably new VA cemetery right here in Sarasota.

In fiscal year 2025, more than 43,000 veterans were buried in grant funded cemeteries, with 124 cemeteries supported since the program began in 1980. Over the years, grants provided over \$1 billion to state cemeteries with the goal of providing burial access within 75 miles of home to 94% of all veterans.

As an added benefit, veterans who are buried in VA grant cemeteries are also included on the Veterans Legacy Memorial site ([www.vlm.cem.va.gov](http://www.vlm.cem.va.gov))

The VLM is an online memorial with the records of over 10 million veterans who are buried at VA National Cemeteries, VA grant funded cemeteries, US Park Service National Cemeteries, and many others. The Legacy page for each veteran is a place for family members, friends, and military comrades to add their own memories of the veteran.

To find a veteran's page, search the VLM website using the veteran's first and last name. You can fine tune your search by adding year of death, the cemetery you want to search, the branch of service and other information.

If you want to add details to your veteran's legacy page, first look at other pages for an idea of the possibilities. You can add awards and decorations, career details, military timeline, biography, PDF documents that can include newspaper clippings, photos and much more.

To learn more about the VA's burial and memorial benefits, go to [www.cem.va.gov/burial-memorial-benefits](http://www.cem.va.gov/burial-memorial-benefits).

### Sarasota National Cemetery

With the passage of The National Cemetery Expansion Act of 2003, Congress directed the Department of Veterans Affairs to establish six new national cemeteries. A demographic study of the nationwide veteran population identified the Sarasota area as lacking burial options. The land was purchased in 2007.

Construction of the first phase is complete and provides for nearly 18,200 full casket gravesites, including 15,200 pre-placed crypts, 9,000 in-ground cremains and approximately 7,200 columbarium niches. This also includes an administration and public information center, cemetery entrance, two committal shelters, roadways and landscaping.

Sarasota National Cemetery was formally dedicated in 2008 and opened for burials the following year. It is the sixth national cemetery established in Florida and the 127th in the national cemetery system. The 295-acre national cemetery in the Sarasota area will serve veterans' needs for the next 50 years.

The 2,800-seat ceremonial amphitheater "Patriot Plaza," donated by The Patterson Foundation, was completed June 28, 2014.



**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 April 6, 2026 at the Meadows Meadows Lifestyle & Wellness Facility. Issues of significance are addressed below. NOTE: The complete minutes and financial reports will be on the MOAS website [www.sarasotamoaa.com](http://www.sarasotamoaa.com) following approval of the Board of Directors. The information below should be considered unofficial as the meeting minutes are not yet board approved.

**CALL TO ORDER:** President Steve Carnes called the meeting to order at 1400. 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)

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Dave Downer (IPP)

**COMMITTEE CHAIRS & VISITORS PRESENT:** Jon Gordon, Linda Wozniak, Ron Wozniak, Peggy O'Connell

**PRESIDENT'S ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:**

- The next MOAS luncheon meeting will be on Friday, April 17 with a Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches speaker (Mr. Mike Kiel).
- Inputs are needed ASAP to start the nominating committee for the 2027 Board of Directors officers.

**1st VICE PRESIDENT:** (Wes Moy)

- **D&O E&O Liability Insurance** - Analysis sent April 4; Questions for the brokers/agents
- **Nomination Committee** - Need to start looking now; Need to look beyond the usual suspects; Important to articulate the value of nonprofit board service generally and MOAS in particular; Need to look at creating value for participation by younger generational cohorts. The current value to them is limited.
- **Offsite—Planning for 2027** Instead of a July or August general membership meeting? Membership Meetings (Day/Time, Location-Alternative restaurant, Member country club); Meeting topics and relevance; Board skills and experience matrix; Discuss SWOT Analysis; Scenario Planning; Force field analysis; Fundraising: Sources and uses of funds; Technology.
- **Meeting Discussion** - Creating attendance capability using Zoom, MS Teams, or GoToMeeting; Target audience; speaker topics; locations; Summer meetings (July and August); December meeting or Gala
- **Scholarship Committee and Process** -Evaluation rubric, Scoring Guide & Calibration Manual, Potential use of AI to evaluate & rank order candidates, Consider use of a video rather than an essay because of the ease of AI creation, Downside—Accusations of racial discrimination, Need for Open-Source AI Chatbot

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

- Speakers are being arranged. Should have complete list within a month.
- Are we to have a lunch program in July and August. Support in those months, in previous years, has been low and lunches have had to be cancelled.
- Need to decide if we have a Dec Gala/Dinner as it has had to be cancelled for the last 2 years due to lack of support. If no evening

event, do we want to hold an informal luncheon?

- Do we want to hold a formal dinner night or evening event in 2027, if so, I suggest a shared event possibly with the Navy League in Feb to coincide with Valentines Day. A small committee will be needed, and I am prepared to coordinate the event.

**Upcoming Programs**

- 15 May Scholarships, Rachael O'Day, Dep School Superintendent,
- 19 June Dogs Inc, Amber Watt, Marisa Blanco & Astro
- 17 July TBD
- 14 Aug TBD (Are we having an August luncheon meeting?)
- 18 Sept FCOC Surviving Spouse, Ms. Pat Green
- 16 Oct MOAA Affiliated Councils and Chapters, Deana Kilgore, Program Director
- 20 November TBD

13 December Winter Military Gala- No Program (?)

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

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** (Christa Friedlander) The March 2026 Treasurer's Reports were approved unanimously.

- Christa announced that she will not seek reelection when this term ends December 31, 2026.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**MEMBERSHIP:** (Len Friedlander) Current membership is 186. Member Renewals = 179, New members = 7.

2026 Membership Directory published & mailed (3/24/26)

**RECRUITING** - Emails sent to potential chapter members using both the Spreadsheet of MOAA members in the catchment area (500+)(Wes) and the Near Realtime (NRT) report (50+) (Len). Result has been four new members.

Still working the catchment area zip codes with FCOC and MOAA.

**BREEZE NEWSLETTER:** (Len Friedlander) January issue was published and emailed to 236 addressees. Twenty (20) copies were printed and mailed to members.

**WEBSITE:** (Len Friedlander) Removed the scholarship application link as submission period is closed.

Added a "GIVING CHALLENGE" banner to the website --plan to direct members to it prior to start of campaign April 15th.

I would appreciate assistance with Board member review of ALL website content for corrections & updates.

- Len announced he is resigning as Membership Director, Newsletter Editor, Website Coordinator and scholarship committee member at the end of the current term (December 31, 2026) - or earlier if replacements are available prior to that date.

**JROTC, MCJROTC:** (Bill Lawyer) All five schools have scheduled their awards nights. Art Hillman attended the Riverview HS event and presented a \$100 check to the outstanding Senior cadet and a certificate with medal to the outstanding Junior cadet We will attend future ceremonies in the coming weeks.

**LUNCHEON REPORT:** (Mary Gordon) Our March 20 luncheon had 38 reservations (37 paid). There were two no-shows, one member and the guest speaker. COL Linda Gould, USA (ret), filled in for our speaker and was able to talk about both the Southwest Florida Honor Flights and the upcoming Giving Challenge.

- Board members were sent a list of tentative 2027 luncheon dates made with Michael's, (most are on the third Friday of the month). Any needed changes should be addressed by the Board soon.

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

**MEET & GREET:**(Peggy O'Connell): The next Meet and Greet will be Wed, April 8, at 5:00 PM at Grillsmith.

MONTH	BOARD	LUNCHEON
April	Monday 6	Friday 17
May	Tuesday 5	Friday 15
June	Tuesday 2	Friday 19

	LUNCHEON PROGRAMS
April	Florida Sheriff's Youth Ranches
May	Scholarship Awards Luncheon
June	Dogs Inc.-Amber Watt, Marisa Blanco, Astro

**VETERANS' AFFAIRS:** (Peter Dering) See Report in Breeze.

- The next SC Veterans Council meeting will be April 14, 2026, at 3:00 PM, at Gold Coast Eagle Distributing, 7051 Wireless Court, Sarasota, FL 34240. [sarasotacvc.org](http://sarasotacvc.org)
- **Sarasota County Honors Veterans - Monthly Ceremony**  
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)

**Future Events/Outings**

- Sunday 12 April Annual Picnic & Recruiting, Phillippi Estate Park — 1:00 PM
- Saturday 25 April Sunset Gathering, Siesta Key Beach - 6:00 PM

**SARASOTA MILITARY OFFICERS FOUNDATION, INC**

**SCHOLARSHIP REPORT:** (Bill Lawyer): The application window closed as of 2400 Mar 29, 2026.

- We currently have 31 Merit and 7 JROTC applications that meet the requirements to be considered. The scholarship committee is currently evaluating them and a final decision will be made at a meeting on 13 April.
- SMOF also awards scholarship funds to veterans attending local colleges. We have presented \$10,000 checks to Ringling College of Art & Design and Manatee Technical College. USF Sarasota Manatee and SCF checks will be presented in the coming weeks.

**OLD BUSINESS:** D&O Insurance

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- Loan of MOAS Property -The Board needs to decide if members of our chapter are allowed to borrow MOAS property. I am referring to tents which were purchased a couple of years ago for polo. In March, a member wanted to borrow one of the tents for

an event he was planning. His request was denied. Personally, I felt this decision did not reflect well on this chapter, as it was a chapter member requesting the loan and that he had lent this chapter his tent in Dec for our polo event.

Our property is purchased with MOAS funds, and our members pay into the chapter thru dues. Therefore, with due safeguards for damage and replacement, I recommend that members be allowed to use/borrow such items.

- June Meeting Date

**BOARD APPROVED ACTIONS/MOTIONS:**

- As a result of Wes's investigation of possible insurance plans for MOAS, a motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved to accept the proposal from USLI.
- A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved to change our Board meeting day and time to the first Tuesday of the month at 12:00-2:00 to make the meetings more accessible to MOAS members who otherwise cannot attend. Zoom capability will now also be available. Pending approval of our meeting schedule request to the Meadows Community Association, (MCA), the schedule change will take effect for the May meeting.
- A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved to donate \$200 to The Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranch.
- Should the Board decide to lend certain MOAS property items to requesters, a form will be developed to be used in the event someone has a need to borrow materials or equipment from the chapter.

**The Meeting adjourned at 1552.**

**NEXT MEETING:** The next Board meeting will be **Tuesday, May 5, 2026 12:00 pm** at the Meadows Fitness & Wellness Facility 3350 Longmeadow .



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

**MOAS Leadership Opportunities**

Serving on the MOAS board or a committee offers meaningful personal and professional benefits. Members expand leadership and governance experience, strengthen professional networks, and contribute to initiatives that support fellow officers and their families. Participation also provides a renewed sense of purpose and service beyond active duty. With several board vacancies approaching, this

is a timely opportunity to shape the organization's future while gaining valuable skills and connections. We anticipate that three to five board members will be rotating out of their positions at the end of this year.

**Exploring Meeting Venues**

MOAS periodically looks for different venues for both our monthly meetings as well as other types of gatherings and events. Recently, Col. Steve Carnes attended a Bradenton MOAA meeting at a Bradenton area country club and noted that it was a quality venue with good food, a professional atmosphere, and the cost was just \$25 for the lunch. If you're a member of a country club or similar association with meeting facilities we would be interested in exploring it as an option. As an added bonus, a single lunch meeting could potentially cover your food and beverage minimum for the year.

**Free Artificial Intelligence Training from AARP**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) touches our lives on a daily basis. The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) offers a free course on AI for members through June 30, 2026. Artificial intelligence\* (AI) is a field aimed at performing jobs that require skills like planning, learning, problem-solving, and language processing. Every time you purchase something online, search for information online, or watch a show on a streaming service, you interact with a form of AI. There are many applications of AI, and the abilities of AI tools will only continue to grow. Learning about AI can not only help you understand the ways in which this technology improves our lives, but it can also protect you from those who abuse it for personal and financial gain. Further information on the course is located at: <https://help.aarp.org/s/article/ai-course>.

**Legislative Advocacy**

There are numerous veterans' issues currently before Congress, and I join Michael Lindquist in strongly urging you to make your voice heard with our Congressional delegation. The easiest way to do so is through the MOAA Legislative Action Center (LAC) at <https://moaa.quorum.us/>. There, you can select the issues most important to you, and the Quorum system will guide you through contacting your representative and senators directly. You can reach the LAC using the link at the bottom of the HOME page of our chapter website [www.sarasotamoaa.com](http://www.sarasotamoaa.com). Please also remember to sign in when you do — it helps demonstrate the collective impact of our chapter's advocacy.

**Make your voice heard!**



### CHAPLAIN'S CORNER Michael Lindquist

#### Spring Has Sprung

The Vernal Equinox historically marks the beginning of something new. For many spiritually minded individuals, spring represents renewal, growth, and fresh beginnings. It is a season when rain nourishes the earth and daylight stretches longer with each passing day. Animals emerge from hibernation, flowers bloom, and new life appears across creation—birds lay eggs, fish spawn, and land animals such as elephants, bison, and giraffes bring forth their young.

Seasonal observances such as Lent, Passover, and Ramadan encourage reflection and reassessment. This concept of “spiritual spring cleaning” extends beyond any single faith tradition, offering an opportunity for

all to pause, reflect, and realign.

Spring also reminds us to reconnect with the gifts God has given each of us. These include love—bringing people together to build families; wisdom—guiding us along the paths we are meant to follow; and appreciation—taking time to enjoy the blessings of nature, from gardens in bloom to the songs of birds and the steady rhythm of oceans and rivers that sustain life.

More than a season of change, spring serves as a quiet reminder that personal and professional growth is always within reach. There is always an opportunity to begin again, to grow, and to flourish.

We are each on a spiritual journey in pursuit of the life-giving truths found in God’s Word. This journey goes beyond a religious experience—it calls us to integrate heart and soul, strengthening our faith in God’s presence within us and all around us.

**Blessings on your journey,**  
*Michael*



### Sarasota Military Officers Foundation (SMOF) Bill Lawyer

Over the past month, the Scholarship Committee comprised of Bill Lawyer , Mary Gordon, Linda Wozniak, Brenda Moy, Art Hillman & Len Friedlander worked diligently to evaluate the forty-seven (47) scholarship applications received by the committee.

From that group of applications, we selected a total of seventeen (17) scholarships; twelve (12) Merit and five (5) JROTC Leadership scholarships. Each student will receive a \$3,000 scholarship.

**Please sign up to attend the High School scholarship luncheon on Friday May 15th and help us honor these exceptional students.**

As usual, we invite our scholarship recipients with two members of their family to the luncheon. If you would like to sponsor one or more of the students or families, simply add luncheon reservations for the number of scholarship guests you wish to support and send it to Mary Gordon (see Page 11).

Again, a big thank you for making these scholarships possible, as well as the scholarships below supporting veterans attending local universities and colleges, through your donations to our Sarasota Military Officers Foundation (SMOF) charity.



Presented a \$12,000 check to the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee to aid their veteran students. Marrie E. Neumer, Assoc. VP, University Advancement; Carlos Moreira, Director of Campus Engagement for Veteran Success and Alumni Affairs; Bill Lawyer, MOAS Scholarship Chair; & Dr. Brett Kemker, USF Regional Chancellor.



Presented a check for \$10,000 to Cynthia Ruiz, Financial Aid Specialist and Veterans Representative. These funds are to be disbursed to veteran students who require financial assistance while pursuing their education at Manatee Technical College.



Presented a \$12,000 check to Lori Stephens Tominson, Director of Grants & Scholarships at the State College of Florida to support veteran students at the college.



Presenting a check for \$10,000 to Lora Wey, AVP for Strategic Philanthropy to provide financial assistance to veteran students attending the Ringling College Art & Design.



## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE Michael Lindquist

**MOAA has a long history of working with your legislators to ensure Military Service Members and their families are treated fairly.**

One area that MOAA monitors is Cost of Living Allowance (COLA). The 1985-86 legislative cycle was far from the last time elected officials looked to decrease your earned COLA and MOAA remains vigilant to ensure your earned retirement benefits continue to keep pace with inflation.

Despite higher prices at the gas pump and the largest month-over-month increase in a key inflation tracker this fiscal year, predictions for the year-end cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) in military retirement pay, VA disability benefits, and Social Security payments have not budged. (*Where Will Your COLA Land in 2027* by: Kevin Lilley March 24, 2026)

Petroleum products have risen more than 30% in the past three months. Gasoline you put into your cars is over \$4 a gallon in most states, the price of diesel is more than \$5 a gallon, while for those of us who were Aviators, Jet Fuel has risen even faster. The price of gas has affected the military by impacting its budget for fuel, impacting on the cost of training and on-going operations.

The cost of shopping is going up as Commissaries charge 5 cents for plastic, and 10 cents for one use bags. (*Commissaries Will Begin Charging for Bags in April* by: Kevin Lilley March 23, 2026)

*This Bill Would Support Grieving Military Families. It Has Reached a New Milestone in Congress* by: Stephanie Rose March 27, 2026. The article announces an update to the Love Lives On Act. MOAA supports the Love Lives On Act (H.R. 1004 | S. 410) which, as written, would allow surviving spouses to

maintain certain benefits, including Dependency and Indemnity Compensation and Survivor Benefit Plan payments, regardless of the age at which they remarry. Current law revokes these benefits if the spouse remarries before age 55, leaving many young spouses a stark choice: Restore a two-parent household or maintain financial security. The article that explains the bill's purpose, its progress, and why MOAA considers it essential for military families can be read in full at MOAA - [This Bill Would Support Grieving Military Families.](#)

**Advocacy: [Write to your legislators](#) today and support MOA initiatives and goals**

**S. 607:** Improving Veteran Access to Care Act VA Health Care 12/19/2025 Message on Senate action sent to the House. [External Link](#)

**H.R. 6038:** Improving Veteran Access to Care Act VA Health Care 11/20/2025 Referred to the Subcommittee on Health. [External Link](#)

**H.R. 5401:** Pay Our Troops Act of 2026 Currently Serving 09/16/2025 Introduced in House [External Link](#)

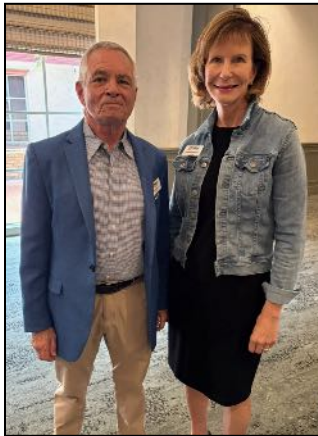
**S. 1861:** Servicemember Healthcare Freedom Act of 2025 DoD Health Care 05/22/2025 Introduced in Senate [External Link](#)

**H.R. 3547:** Servicemember Healthcare Freedom Act of 2025 DoD Health Care 05/21/2025 Introduced in House [External Link](#)

Your letters to your Representatives in Washington D.C. count. As Chapters compete for recognition, one category is the number of chapter members who have actively contacted their representatives. It is easy for you to reach out to your Senators and Representative. Click this link [TAKE ACTION](#) and begin the process. MOAS provides a precomposed (editable) letter and contacts for you based on the zip code you enter on the form.

What are you waiting for? You are just a few clicks away from reaching out to your Congressional Representatives (House and Senate) and voicing your support for legislation that is important to you.

# April Luncheon Photos



Ricky & Rosemary  
Malone



New Members  
Carol & Ed Carnes



Phil Conover & Mike Kiel



Chris Nind (I) & Mike Kiel



Jon & Mary Gordon at our reception desk



Mary Lou Morris, Peggy O'Connell  
& Bobbie Hamilton



President Steve Carnes  
presents honorarium to  
Mike Kiel (I)



Mae Miller (I) Karen Olson  
& Rachel Taylor



Paul & Ilene O'Connell  
flank Chris Nind



(l-r) Art & Cindy Hillman, Kevin Cukrowicz & Cynthia Loessing, and Bill Lawyer



Ed & Carol Carnes (l)  
With Steve Carnes



Linda Wozniak  
& Michael Lindquist

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

*Thank You*



To all our members, families and friends who donated to the Sarasota Military Officers Foundation during this year's Giving Challenge campaign



### MOAA Awards



MOAA recently announced the 2025 Levels of Excellence and Col. Marvin J. Harris Communications Award recipients.

Our Sarasota chapter once again received the **5-Star Level of Excellence Award** recognizing our chapter's performance excellence over the past year.

Additionally, our chapter was recognized for excellence in communicating with our members and community with two **5-Star Col. Marvin J. Harris Communication Awards** - for our website [sarasotamoaa.com](http://sarasotamoaa.com) and our newsletter, *The Breeze*.

Thank you to our membership for your support - a major contributor for these successes.

### 2026 MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY MODIFICATIONS

- **2026-2027 Calendar**
  - Change MOAS Board Meetings to Noon on the First Tuesday of each month
- **Update member information as indicated below**

#### *New Members*

**Carnes, Edward L, LTC, USA (Ret) (Carol)**  
7720 Castleisland Drive  
Sarasota, FL 34240-7901  
ed.carnes@verizon.net

**Howard, George W, Col, USAF (Ret)(Diane Bray)**  
301 Quay Commons APT 706  
Sarasota FL 34236-1472  
571-455-8524 waynehoward64@gmail.com

**Patterson, Robert J, LTC, USA(Ret)(Lilli)**  
7126 Sandhills Place  
Lakewood Ranch, FL 34202-2595  
760-449-0360 bobjpatterson@hotmail.com

#### *Member Updates*

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## Advocates Press for VA Benefits & Preventive Programs

With more than 100,000 American veterans incarcerated in the United States, advocates say more investment is needed for the transition from military to civilian life and services for those who have run afoul of the law.

Representatives from specialty courts and veterans' legal organizations pressed Congress last week for expansion of the Veterans Treatment Courts (VTC) system and reinstatement of some VA benefits for imprisoned former service members.

They argued that while not all veterans convicted of serious crimes would benefit, those with other-than-honorable (OTH) discharges or service-connected mental health or substance use disorders should have opportunities to change their lives.

Corey Schramm, an Army veteran who developed PTSD after three deployments to Iraq and later was arrested following a blackout that involved a weapon, said a Kansas Veterans Treatment Court, where he underwent two years of treatment and mentorship, saved his family.

"I was on & off probation before I went to VTC, and when I showed up, I thought I was going to play the system, go through the motions. Boy was I ever wrong. ... VTC is not a shortcut," Schramm said during a hearing before the Senate VA Committee.

The first VTC was established in 2008 in Buffalo, NY, to provide medical treatment, supervision and mentorship to former service members with non-violent criminal convictions related to service-connected addiction or mental health conditions.

Today there are more than 600, and the VA employs hundreds of Veterans Justice Officers to support veterans in jails or who are on parole, probation or in the court system.

But many veterans remain unaware of programs tailored to them or lack access to available services because they were discharged from the military with general or OTH discharges, rendering them ineligible for many VA programs and benefits.

Others may have lost access to their VA benefits when they were sentenced, since disability compensation is reduced when a veteran is convicted of a felony and incarcerated for more than 60 days and VA health care benefits stop when they enter a prison health system.

Rose Carmen Goldberg, director of the Veterans Clinic at the University of Washington School of Law, argued that incarcerated veterans should have access to VA behavioral health care, which provides expertise in combat-related mental health issues, sexual trauma or other service-specific concerns. She proposed that imprisoned veterans have access to VA services through telehealth and supports a bill, the "Get Justice-Involved Veterans Behavioral Assistance and Care for Key Health



## MOAS MEET & GREET

Wednesday May 13th  
5:00pm to 7:30pm

Arts & Central  
611 Central Ave  
Sarasota, FL 34236

<https://artsandcentral.com>

NW corner of 6th & Central  
Parking behind Building

**Please let Peggy O'Connell know by Monday  
May 11th if you will be attending**

[pegoconnell12@gmail.com](mailto:pegoconnell12@gmail.com)

or (312) 982-1374

Outcomes to Maintain Empowerment Act," sponsored by Sen. Angus King, I-Maine & Sen. Pete Ricketts, R-Neb.

Another key to improving outcomes for veterans who leave the service is reforming the DoD Transition Assistance Program (TAP) which panelists argued was ineffective for preparing service members for civilian life.

According to retired Army Brig. Gen. David "Mac" MacEwen, director of the Veterans Justice Commission at the Council on Criminal Justice, the DOD spends billions on recruiting/training but just millions on TAP.

Sen. Jerry Moran, R-Kan., conducted the hearing to better understand how to help veterans in judicial system and prevent them from entering it in the first place. He sponsored a bill approved in January to fully fund VTCs and provided \$4 million to establish a National Center for Veterans Justice.

Yet many jurisdictions do not have a VTC or those in law enforcement or the court system aren't aware of these programs. Former Kansas Supreme Court Chief Justice Lawton Nuss, a former Marine, said more courts are needed, noting that in Kansas, of the 89 veterans who graduated in the past decade from the VTC program, just five have later been arrested, a 95% success rate.

The panelists also pressed for changes to the GI Bill to allow more veterans to access education benefits. According to MacEwen, the original GI Bill called for all veterans except those who received dishonorable discharges to receive education benefits, and that since the original language for the GI Bill was written in 1944, the VA has changed eligibility requirements.

"Congress explicitly wrote that individuals who were not discharged under dishonorable conditions should be eligible for VA care and benefits. However, the VA's implementation has not aligned with this plain text, resulting in the unlawful denial of services to hundreds of thousands of veterans with other than honorable discharges," MacEwen said.



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

**PAST EVENT/OUTING**

**Sunday 12 April 5th ANNUAL PICNIC**  
**Phillippi Estate Park Pavilion**

The weather was perfect, the venue served our needs, the chow was plentiful and delicious, and best of all, getting together with everyone was great. Hope you will come to more MOAS gatherings, outings and events.



The operation was a complete success. 36 signed up & everyone was present and accounted for. Ron & Linda Wozniak, Steve Carnes & Francine King, Len & Christa Friedlander, Martina DeVries (New Member), Joe & Blanche Barresi, Bob & Debbie Sheehan (Guests of Barresi), Paul Kaufman, Jon & Mary Gordon,

Pete & Claudette Dering, Chris Nind, Karen Olson, Ed & Carol Carnes (New Member), Dave Downer, Mike Lindquist & Debra Sandberg, Estrella Engelhardt, Larry & Rhubarb Woodmansee, Jack Waldron (MOAA Member), Jerry & Vicky Goodin, Troy & Elke Scott,



Larry & Anita Olson, James & Sueanne Townley, and Dennis Ciborowski. Thanks to all who came and for bringing all that delicious chow.

Thanks to Picnic Committee Members Mary & Jon Gordon, Len & Christa Friedlander and Joe & Blanche Barresi for assisting Linda in the



planning phase, providing so many essentials, and helping with the set-up and take-down. They can always be counted on year after year!

An extra big thanks to Joe & Blanche Barresi for being the first ones there, last ones to leave, and providing their brand

new never-used grill and all the accessories to go with it. Thanks to Steve Carnes & Joe Barresi for grilling. Job well done! We do not mean the hot dogs & hamburgers because they were just right!

**UPCOMING EVENTS/OUTINGS**

**Saturday 25 April 6:00 - 8:00pm**  
**Sunset Gathering, Siesta Key Beach.**  
**948 Beach Road, Sarasota.**

This is a "No Host Event." BYO chairs, food and drink. It can get cool towards sunset so dress accordingly.

**This is not the usual MOAS location but is in front of the main pavilion.**

**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. **No glass containers allowed on the beach.** Handicap accessible and there is plenty of parking & restrooms. Please let us know if you are coming. Ron 941-779-5448 or [RonWozniak13@gmail.com](mailto:RonWozniak13@gmail.com) and/or Linda @ 941-779-5447 or [NauticalEffect@msn.com](mailto:NauticalEffect@msn.com)

**SEE YOU AT THE BEACH**

**There are no YAHOO Events planned for May.**





**SARASOTA CHAPTER**

**Friday May 15, 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**

**Chicken, Mushroom & Raisin Crepes**  
with a Light Curry Sauce served with  
Lemon & Pistachio Rice Pilaf, Steamed  
Broccoli & Baby Carrots

**VEGETARIAN**

**Portobello Wellington;**  
Portobello Caps Stuffed with  
Mushroom, Spinach, Toasted Pine  
Nuts & Gruyere Baked in a Golden  
Brown Puff Pastry

**DESSERT**

**Chocolate Ganache Torte**  
Classic Layers of Chocolate Cake &  
Mousse Enrobed in Ganache

**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](mailto:JMKPL@aol.com)

**WANTED!!!!!!**







Member donations to support lunches for student Honorees and their parents at the May 15th Scholarship Luncheon. Simply add STUDENT reservations for the number of scholarship guests you wish to support.

**THANK YOU!!!!!!**



APRIL MAY JUNE 2026



DATE	EVENT	TIME
Saturday, April 25	YAHOO: Sunset Gathering at Siesta Beach - Details on Page 10	6:00 p.m.
Tuesday, May 5	MOAS/SMOF Board Meeting - Meadows Lifestyle & Wellness Building	12:00 p.m.
Sunday May 10	 MOTHERS DAY 	
Wednesday May 13	MEET & GREET - Arts & Central - Details on Page 9	5:00 p.m.
Friday, May 15	MOAS Luncheon - Michaels on East – Scholarship Awards Luncheon	11:30 a.m.
Saturday May 16	 ARMED FORCES DAY 	
Monday, May 25	 MEMORIAL DAY 	
Tuesday, June 2	MOAS/SMOF Board Meeting - Meadows Lifestyle & Wellness Building	12:00 p.m.
Wednesday, June 17	MEET & GREET - Location TBD	5:00 p.m.
Friday June 19	MOAS Luncheon - Michaels on East – Dogs Inc.	11:30 a.m.

**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

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

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Revised 11/23

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