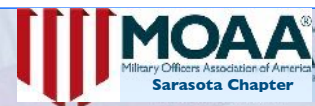


THE SARASOTA BREEZE



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. 6 MOAA 4-Star Chapter 2003/2008/2019; MOAA 5 Star Chapter 2004-2007, 2009-2018, 2020-2025 June 2026

MAY 2026 PROGRAM - Scholarship Luncheon

Rachael O'Dea, Deputy Superintendent, Chief Academic Officer, Sarasota District Schools

The speaker for the scholarship awards luncheon, Mrs. Rachael O'Dea was introduced by Captain Bill Lawyer, chair of the Scholarship Committee. He began by thanking all those on the Committee for their difficult task selecting this year's scholarship winners.

Mrs. Rachael O'Dea thanked everyone for attending and the MOAA Sarasota chapter for their very generous scholarship support of \$51,000 to 17 Sarasota-area High School students going on to college or university. The list of the scholarship awardees can be found on Page 5.

Mrs. O'Dea's talk was factual, beginning with her ties, through her family, to the military going back over 100 years. She then highlighted the importance of what the students had achieved and what they could achieve on their onward education. She gave them encouragement for the future, saying, "you are more capable than you may think, and remember you are never alone. Lead with integrity." It was an inspiring talk and her final words were, "Go do great things."

Students then received their awards from Mrs. O'Dea, the committee and MOAS 1st VP, Colonel Wes Moy.



JUNE 2026 PROGRAM - Dogs Inc.

Representatives from Dogs Inc (formerly Southeastern Guide Dogs) will be attending the June 19th MOAA luncheon to give members an inside look at what it takes to prepare a dog for a life-changing partnership, and to discuss how you can get involved.

Joining the meeting will be; Amber Watt, Managing Director of Philanthropy, Marisa Blanco, Director of Mission Awareness, and Astro, our incredible demonstration dog. Marisa and Astro will showcase a variety of guide dog and service dog skills our instructors teach, highlighting the ways our dogs support people with vision loss and veterans with disabilities.

Amber Watt has spent 13 years working to fund the mission and ensure that these exceptional guide dogs and service dogs are available at no cost, for people who need them. She has seen the positive impacts of a service dog firsthand, when her husband received one of his own, from Dogs Inc.

Marisa Gerlach has spent the past 23 years with Dogs Inc (formerly Southeastern Guide Dogs), starting out in the kennels before becoming an instructor and now she is a dual-certified instructor focused on both training and outreach.

Luncheon attendees will see firsthand how these carefully taught skills translate into greater independence, safety, and freedom in everyday life.



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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)	Vacant
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	Vacant
Editor-Newsletter	Len Friedlander
Web Site	Len Friedlander
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**

I could not be with you at the May Scholarship Luncheon as I was on a MOAA sponsored trip. I hope all went well, and you enjoyed the occasion - one of the highlights of the year.

Our Sarasota Military Officers Foundation, a 501(c)3 charity, has been able, because of your generosity and that of a private benefactor, to donate more than \$95,200 to deserving recipients since the beginning of this year. We awarded twelve Merit Scholarships and five JROTC scholarships at \$3,000 each to outstanding seniors graduating from high schools in the Sarasota area. We supported five JROTC programs by recognizing their top cadets with \$100 leadership awards, provided funds for JROTC team projects, and, in addition to the monetary awards, purchased medals and plaques for display at the students' schools.

Additionally, this year, we provided \$44,000 to local colleges and technical schools to support need-based financial assistance for honorably discharged veterans attending those schools.

2025 was also a busy year for us, as we awarded a total of \$87,425 in student scholarships, veterans' financial assistance, and donations to other worthy causes.

Members of our chapter attended the Dogs Inc. campus where the Florida Council of Chapters presented them with a \$5,000 grant. Our chapter then donated an additional \$1,000 to Dogs Inc. (formerly Southeastern Guide Dogs) to help train dogs for veterans. This is a long-term relationship as we have supported them for several years, have toured their facility, and one of our members hosted a puppy-in-training for one year. Dogs, Inc representatives have spoken to our chapter on several occasions, and they will be featured at our June luncheon.

Our chapter donated \$500 to Patriot Paws, another organization that provides service dogs to needy/disabled veterans, and \$300 to our local Big Brothers/Big Sisters organization after their presentation at one of our monthly luncheons. We donated \$2,500 to the SW Florida Honor Flight, which provides free trips to Washington DC for veterans to visit the World War II Memorial and other monuments in our national capitol. Additionally, we donated \$250 to the Florida Medal of Honor Memorial, \$300 to the Anna Maria Island Turtle Watch (adopting a sea turtle nesting site which subsequently produced hatchlings), and \$500 to the Florida Council of Chapters to help support the MOAA Foundation's Crisis Relief Program.

We have done outstanding work over the years; however, we are about to enter a crisis. For many years, a small group of members have been the core of this organization and have provided the impetus to propel the organization forward.

Now, over half of our membership is over the age of 80! Many of this core leadership are now retiring next year! We

will need a new Treasurer, a new person to put together our award-winning newsletter, “The Breeze”, a new membership chair, a new scholarship chair (the heart of our charitable program), and a new Secretary. We have not had a webmaster since Craig Hullinger died almost two years ago!

Many of these individuals have served in these positions for years and have dedicated themselves to MOAS over and over again. We need to replace our “Old Guard.” New and younger members must step up and take an active part in our organization (younger means 75 and below!). Please help NOW! If you are willing to serve on the Board as an officer or Director, please step forward and volunteer to serve next year. Our top three officers are all newer and younger members,

First VP Wes Moy, Second VP Chris Nind, and me; but after us, we are in trouble.

We also need new members to revitalize MOAS. We need to bring in new and younger members or MOAS may cease to exist merely due to attrition. If you know of any former or retired officers, or current reserve or guard officers, please talk to them about MOAS or send us their names and contact information and we will follow up with them. We are entering into a critical time in our chapter, and we are going to need everyone’s collective brain and involvement if we are going to successfully navigate this challenging time in our organization and succeed.

Together, we must save MOAS.



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 Tuesday, May 5, 2026 at the Meadows Meadows Lifestyle & Wellness Facility. Issues of significance are addressed below. NOTE: The complete minutes and financial reports will be on the MOAS website www.sarasotamooa.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 1202. 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) & Dave Downer (IPP)

COMMITTEE CHAIRS & VISITORS PRESENT: Jon Gordon, Mary Gordon

PRESIDENT’S ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

- The next MOAS luncheon meeting will be the scholarship luncheon on Friday, May 15, 2026.
- Get nominating committee going.

1st VICE PRESIDENT: (Wes Moy)

- I completely concur with Michael's proposal that we allocate time for a review of the importance of supporting MOAA legislative priorities. The Legislative Action Center process is easy to use and fast. Note that furtherance of the MOAA legislative and other objectives is the second stated purpose of MOAS as listed in the constitution and bylaws.
- Other venue possibilities: Gecko’s on Clark & Honore, Marina Jack.
- Bush Gardens Vets event: 2026 Veterans **Special Offer**
 - **Complimentary Admission:** Veterans receive free admission for themselves plus three (3) guest tickets.
 - **Registration Deadline:** Tickets must be claimed between April 20 and May 10, 2026.

- **Visit Deadline:** Tickets are valid for a single visit through June 30, 2026.
- **Additional Tickets:** Veterans can purchase up to six (6) additional tickets at 50% off.
- Partner with other organizations for upcoming MOAS events.
- Access younger officers to increase membership.

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT & PROGRAMS: (Chris Nind)

1. I met with Richard Buchanan, Manatee MOA chapter president. Aim was to ensure free communication between chapters. He requested that 2 or 3 of his Board members join us for our June meeting. Steve has agreed to verbally invite them.
2. I contacted Hugh Porter, Port Charlotte Chapter President again to open communications. May is their awards event on May 11 and then they are not holding meetings until October.
3. I have contacted the Navy League VP and hope for improved communications.
4. Up to 6 members were invited to the Sheriffs Ranch awards dinner on May 19. If no Board members are attending, we can open to our general membership.
5. Can I ask that if any of the Board have contact between our neighboring chapters and mil organizations that information is passed on.
6. Can I ask for confirmation that these organizations are on our newsletter distribution list.
7. I would like to suggest that we invite one JROTC permanent staff member and their partner to our luncheons on a monthly basis as we need to improve the relationship between our JROTCs and our chapter.
8. An alternative to 7 would be to invite them to our Christmas luncheon on Dec 8.
9. On Memorial Day at 1000 hours at Oak Ridge cemetery, Arcadia, 23 RAF pilot cadets will be remembered. All are invited to attend. I will be attending.

Upcoming Programs

- 15 May Scholarships, Rachael O’Day, Dep School Superintendent,
- 19 June Dogs Inc, Amber Watt, Marisa Blanco & Astro
- 17 July Ms Stacey Santos from Veterans Healthcare
- 14 Aug Ms Amy Tardif from WUSF,

MONTH	BOARD	LUNCHEON
May	Tuesday 5	Friday 15
June	Tuesday 2	Friday 19
July	Tuesday 7	Friday 17

	LUNCHEON PROGRAMS
May	Scholarship Awards Luncheon
June	Dogs Inc.-Amber Watt, Marisa Blanco, Astro
July	Veterans Healthcare - Stacey Santos

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18 Sept Sarasota Orchestra, speaker Syndey Lemelin
 16 Oct MOAA Affiliated Councils and Chapters, Dena Kilgore, Program Director
 20 Nov John MacCarth, VP/Regional History, Selby Gardens
 13 Dec Winter Military Gala (?), Luncheon (?)
SECRETARY'S REPORT: (Peter Dering) The April 2026 BOD Meeting Minutes were approved unanimously.
TREASURER'S REPORT: (Christa Friedlander) The April 2026 Treasurer's Reports were approved unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

MEMBERSHIP: (Len Friedlander) Current membership is 190.
RECRUITING - Emails sent to potential chapter members - minimal response. Still working the catchment area zip codes with FCOC and MOAA.
BREEZE NEWSLETTER: (Len Friedlander) January issue was published and emailed to 241 addressees. Twenty (20) copies were printed and mailed to members.
WEBSITE: (Len Friedlander) Removed the GIVING CHALLENGE Banner as donation period is closed. Requested assistance with Board member review of ALL website content for corrections & updates.
JROTC, MCJROTC: (Bill Lawyer) Art Hillman or I have attended all the JROTC outstanding cadet events to present certificates, checks and medals.
LUNCHEON REPORT: (Mary Gordon) Our April luncheon had 35 reservations. SMOF received \$55 from the 50/50 drawing.
 • All attendees at the May luncheon will be assigned a table; that way all members will have a chance to meet and talk with at least one scholarship recipient.
LEGISLATIVE: (Mike Lindquist) MOAA's Advocacy in Action needs the full support of the members of the Sarasota Chapter. I propose that time be set aside during an upcoming general meeting to discuss how important acting with our legislators is and to demonstrate how easy it is to make your voice heard.
MOAA's 2026 Issues
 • Ending the 'Wounded Veteran Tax'
 • Protect Pay of ALL Who Serve During Federal Shutdowns
 • Protect Veterans From 'Claim Sharks'
 • Improve Access to Care at Military Facilities
MEET & GREET: (Peggy O'Connell): The next Meet and Greet will be Wed, May 13, at 5:00 PM at Art & Central.
VETERANS' AFFAIRS: (Peter Dering)
 • Attended the SC Veterans Council meeting April 14, 2026.

• **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 honorably discharged veterans who have passed away in the area without family.

YAHOO: (Ron & Linda Wozniak)

Past Event - 5th Annual Picnic - Sunday April 12, 2026

No events/outings scheduled for May

SARASOTA MILITARY OFFICERS FOUNDATION, INC

SCHOLARSHIP REPORT: (Bill Lawyer):

- A big THANK YOU to the scholarship committee for analyzing 38 applications, and ranking and choosing the final 17. (Mary Gordon, Linda Wozniak, Brenda Moy, Art Hillman, and Len Friedlander)
- We will be awarding 5 JROTC and 12 Merit Scholarships.
- We will have nine scholarship recipients joining us at the May 15th luncheon. Each of the five high schools has at least one student who will receive an award.
- For the students who have a conflict and can't attend the luncheon, we have made presentations in person.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Begin planning Spring 2027 event
- Scholarship Expenditure

NEW BUSINESS:

- Dombrowski Grant application.
- Donation to Dogs Inc., for Heroes Challenge.
- Payment for SMOF Scholarship application technical support rendered by Danny Friedlander in the amount of \$300..

BOARD APPROVED ACTIONS/MOTIONS:

- The board unanimously approved a donation of \$500 to Dogs Inc., in support of their Heroes Challenge initiative to be presented at the June luncheon, when Dogs Inc. will provide our program.
- The board unanimously approved \$51,000 for scholarship winners.
- The board unanimously approved \$598.93 for D&O insurance.
- The board approved (7-0, 2 abstentions) the expenditure of \$300 to Danny Friedlander for his SMOF Scholarship technical support.
- The board unanimously approved applying for a Dombrowski Grant. Michael Lindquist will prepare the application.
- Bill Lawyer to contact/invite JROTC instructors to luncheons.
- Steve Carnes to invite RADM Buchanan to the June Luncheon.

The Meeting adjourned at 1324.

NEXT MEETING: The next Board meeting will be **Tuesday, June 2, 2026 12:00 pm** at the Meadows Fitness & Wellness Facility 3350 Longmeadow .



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

We are currently seeking a chair for our **2027 Nominating Committee**. We've been informed that we have several board positions that are likely to be vacant. Getting our Nominating Committee going sooner rather than later is vital to forming a strong board for 2027 and beyond.

As a note, the **Communications Director** position is currently gapped, and we are actively searching for someone to take up this role.

Supporting MOAA National efforts, especially its legislative priorities, is one of the core purposes of our organization. Using the MOAA Legislative Action Center makes this easy and fast. There are numerous priorities that support those currently serving, retirees, surviving family members, and separated officers on a broad range of issues. Make your voice heard by using this capability at <https://moaa.quorum.us/>. As a bonus, if you sign in to the MOAA.org website, our chapter gets credit your efforts.

Busch Gardens Tampa is currently offering up to four free tickets to military personnel and veterans. The offering is effective now and the tickets must be used by June 30th. An additional six tickets may be purchased at a 50% discount. Claim your tickets here <https://buschgardens.com/tampa/tickets/veteran-discount/> and you'll need to verify your eligibility through the id.me link on the Busch Gardens website.

The **Tampa Bay Rays** will be offering free and discounted tickets to military personnel and veterans throughout the season. You can sign up to receive notifications about availability here <https://www.mlb.com/rays/tickets/specials/salute-to-service>. You'll need to verify your eligibility through the id.me link on this Tampa Bay Rays website.



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Michael Lindquist

June: A Season of Light, Renewal, and Celebration

On June 21, 2026, we will experience the longest day of the year, with the sun rising at 6:36 a.m. and setting at 8:28 p.m. This provides approximately 13 hours, 52 minutes, and 3 seconds of daylight.

June has long carried rich symbolism associated with light, abundance, transformation, and renewal. Across many cultures and traditions, this month represents fertility, love, prosperity, and the fullness of life. In many religious traditions, light symbolizes truth, justice, wisdom, and life itself.

In the Jewish tradition, light serves as one of the enduring metaphors for God, as written in the Book of Psalms: *"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?"* — Psalm 27:1–3

In the Christian tradition, the New Testament speaks of light as a reflection of faith and good works:

"You are the light of the world... let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:14-16

In the tradition of Islam, the Qur'an shares, *"Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth."* — The Qur'an, Surah An-Nur 24:35

And in eastern religions such as Hinduism, is beautiful and widely quoted passages comes from the Upanishads,

"Lead me from darkness to light."—
Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1.3.28

June is also widely recognized as a popular month for weddings. This tradition is often linked to Juno, the Roman goddess of marriage, childbirth, and family, for whom the month is named.

Historically, June weddings also had practical origins during the Middle Ages:

- Seasonal Bathing Traditions – Bathing was infrequent, and many people traditionally bathed in late spring, making early summer an appealing time for celebrations.
- Abundance of Flowers – Fresh flowers were plentiful, providing fragrant bouquets and beautiful decorations for wedding festivities.
- Victorian Customs – Brides often wore floral wreaths as symbols of purity, beauty, and new beginnings.

Today, June remains a favored month for marriage because of its warm weather and the wide availability of fresh flowers from around the world.

Historically, the Christian Church also prohibited weddings during Lent, which often occurred in late spring. This tradition continues to be observed in some religious communities, particularly in parts of Europe.

As we enjoy the warmth and extended daylight of June, may this season remind us of the importance of hope, renewal, fellowship, and the light we bring into the lives of others.

Blessings on your journey,

Michael



Sarasota Military Officers Foundation (SMOF)

Bill Lawyer

At the May luncheon we honored the Merit & JROTC Leadership scholarship awardees. An event that could not have occurred without your support on many levels; your direct donations to our Sarasota Military Officers Foundation (SMOF), your support of SMOF through the Giving Challenge, and finally, your donating funds to cover the luncheon costs of the awardees

and their parents. **THANK YOU!!!!**

As stated in previous newsletters, from the forty-seven (47) submitted applications, the committee selected a total of seventeen (17) scholarships; twelve (12) Merit and five (5) JROTC Leadership scholarships. Each student received a \$3,000 scholarship.

The scholarship awardees and their schools are:

MERIT

Pine View School - Mira Carpenter, Kathryn Domian

Riverview High School - Max Klingenberg

Sarasota High School - Charlotte Crowder

Booker High School - Alix Leinweber

Venice High School - Ryan Freddolino, Melanie Kersten, Mia Kieffer, Olivia Lee, Mirand Miller, Mia Myburgh,
Viviana Serrano

JROTC LEADERSHIP

Sarasota Military Academy - Edwards, Mallory

Sarasota High School - Cassidy Forrar, Jake Yeager

Venice High School - Lucas Ogle, Mackenzie Shockey



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.

Latest Information

On April 15, 2026, MOAA executed its signature advocacy event, [Advocacy in Action](#). Presenting key issues important to you represents a key effort to fix real problems affecting service members and their families, and each one is within reach with sustained pressure from constituents like you.

This year's Advocacy in Action delivered results on two fronts — in person on Capitol Hill, and across the country through a coordinated digital campaign. Here's what our community accomplished:

- 160 MOAA volunteers participated in the Capitol Hill event.
- Over 300 in-person office visits were conducted across both chambers.
- More than 50 meetings held directly with lawmakers.
- Nearly 25,000 constituent messages sent to lawmakers by MOAA advocates from all 50 states ... the most ever during a campaign.

Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) latest Information

The April 2026 Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W), released May 12, was 326.541, 2.9% above the COLA baseline of 317.265. May 2026 figures are scheduled to be released June 10.

Updates

I previously reported Commissaries will 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)

The Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) has stopped charging for single-use bags, reversing a month-old policy that took effect April 6. Reusable bags will remain available for purchase throughout the commissary system.

There are 23 key issues that need your support. Six of these issues are directly related to the retired Officers and their spouses. Several of these issues have been addressed in previous Breeze Newsletters.

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

S. 264: Improving Veterans' Experience Act of 2025 VA Health Care 01/28/2025 Introduced in Senate [External Link](#)

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

S. 201: ACES Act of 2025 Retirees/Veterans 01/23/2025 [External Link](#)

H.R. 530: ACES Act Retirees/Veterans 05/06/2025 Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. [External Link](#)

S. 2448: Health Care Fairness for Military Families Act of 2025 DoD Health Care 07/24/2025 Introduced in Senate [External Link](#)

H.R. 4768: Health Care Fairness for Military Families Act of 2025 DoD Health Care 07/25/2025 Introduced in House [External Link](#)

Your letters to your Legislators in Washing D.C. count. 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.

Stay Connected and Informed

To ensure uninterrupted access to your MOAA account, please confirm your email address is up-to-date on the MOAA new online member portal. Call 1-800-234-6622 if you need assistance with your record.

Thank you for standing with MOAA and for helping ensure Congress keeps faith with those who serve and their families.

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

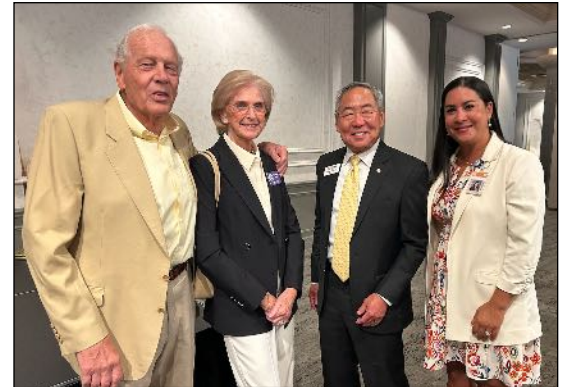
May Luncheon Photos



Rachel O'Dea & Chris Nind



Estrella Engelhardt & Ricky Malone



(l-r) Barry & Suzanne Birch, Wes Moy & Rachel O'Dea



Grant Krueger & Peg Dunham



Joe & Blanche Barresi flank Linda Wosniak



MAY BIRTHDAYS
Bill Lawyer, Linda Gould & Grant Krueger



Wes Moy (l), Dr Sarah Burkett, & Chris Nind



Rachel O'Dea (c) with the Scholarship Committee [Bill Lawyer, Art Hillman, Mary Gordon & Linda Wozniak]



Awardee Mackenzie Schocky with Lisa & Chris Schocky



Awardee Cassidy Forrar with COL Linda Gould, William Vale & Heather Hill



Awardee Lucas Ogle & Camile Gracey-Ogle



Awardee Charlotte Crowder with Doug & Hannah Miller, & Bill Lawyer (R)



Awardee Mallory Edwards with Bill Edwards & Alissa Shulman



Awardee Olivia Lee with Robert & Robyn Lee



Art & Cindy Hillman flank (l-r) Leslie Kieffer, Theresa Estes & Awardee Mia Kieffer



Awardee Jake Yeager with Jessica & Shannon Yeager



Awardee Mira Carpenter flanked by Heather & Paul Carpenter & Chris Nind (r)



Venice JROTC SMI Capt Dean Krom, Mackenzie Schocky & Lucas Ogle



Venice HS Students unable to attend the luncheon (l-r) Melanie Kersten, Mia Myburgh, Ryan Freddolino, & Viviann Serrano received their awards from Bill Lawyer.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

TAPS

*Our heartfelt sympathy is extended
to the family and friends of
Thomas E. DuPree, LTC, USA (Ret)*

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**

NEW MEMBER

Burtner, Shona K. Mrs. SSM
6092 Wilshire Blvd
Sarasota, FL 34238-2574
941-925-0462 skburtner@hotmail.com

June - December 2026 Luncheon Programs

June 19 – Dogs Inc - Amber Watt, Managing Director of Philanthropy, Marisa Blanco, Certified Instructor & Astro, Guide dog

July 17 – Ms Stacey Santos, Veterans Healthcare - a veterans-focused organization that shares how Medicare Advantage plans can enhance Medicare coverage. Neighboring chapters will be invited.

August 21 – Ms. Amy Tardif - WUSF Public Media newsroom editor, Pulitzer winner. We will also be invited to visit WUSF studios in Tampa.

Sep 18 - Sarasota Orchestra, Syndey Lemelin, will the present and future of the Orchestra and their new location. Members will also receive event tickets and a tour of the new facility when open.

Oct 16 - Ms Dena Kilgore, National MOAA Program Director - Chapters & Councils Update. Neighboring chapters will be invited.

Nov 20 - John MacCarthy, VP for Regional History at Marie Selby Gardens. Talk on Native American settlements in Sarasota County.

Dec 8 – Santa visits and distribute gifts. Seasonal music will be played during lunch. Attendees will be asked to bring a wrapped gift they would like to receive, valued at \$25. Each parcel marked with a M or F. [Possible display and introduction by The International Ballet of Florida performing from the Nutcracker. Dancers will assist Santa and then join tables to speak about ballet.]

May 28 MOAA Webinar:

Advance Approval for VA Burial Benefits

Understanding Your Military and Veteran Burial Benefits

End-of-life decisions can be difficult, but MOAA strongly encourages our members to address your wishes with your loved ones.

Join MOAA's financial and benefits professional – Capt. Paul Frost, USN (Ret), AFC® – for a free comprehensive review of this important subject, including details on finding a national cemetery, VA burial eligibility and services, Arlington National Cemetery eligibility, etc.

Can't make the May 28 webinar? No problem. Register now and we'll send you a link to the recording.

[Learn More Register Now](#)



YAHOO

Young At Heart Organization
Linda & Ron Wozniak

UPCOMING EVENT

Sunday 7 June 0915-1115

Kayak Tour at De Soto Memorial
8300 De Soto Memorial Highway,
Bradenton, FL 34209

De Soto National Park Ranger Guided Tour.
Kayak & all equipment provided.

Limit 10 people - 2-person kayaks COST: \$1.00.
Contact Woz [RonWozniak13@gmail.com or
941-779-5448] **NLT Monday 1 June** if you intend
to participate.

Lunch to follow at Floriday's Woodfire Grill
overlooking Anna Maria Sound & Pier 77 Marina
(12300 Manatee Ave W, Bradenton, FL)
See the Events Calendar for additional details.



MOAS MEET & GREET

Wednesday June 10th
5:30pm to 7:30pm

Grillsmith

6240 S Tamiami Trail
Sarasota, FL 34231

<https://www.grillsmith.com/sarasota>

**Please let Peggy O'Connell know by Monday
June 8th if you will be attending**

pegoconnell12@gmail.com

or (312) 982-1374

SECDEF supports bill eliminating offsets for combat-disabled military retirees

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has thrown his support behind proposed legislation that would give combat-wounded service members who are medically retired from the U.S. military their full retirement pay and Veterans Affairs disability compensation.

During a hearing April 30th on the DoD's \$1.5 trillion fiscal 2027 budget request, Hegseth said he supports the *Maj. Richard Star Act* — a bill that would give roughly 54,000 veterans their retirement pay and VA disability concurrently.

"As I have said in the past to other organizations, we support the Richard Star Act," Hegseth said during questioning by Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn.

Blumenthal is a lead sponsor of the bill who repeatedly has tried to pass the legislation, most recently, calling in March for a Senate vote. The legislation has the support of 79 Senators and 323 House members.

But it has been blocked by some Republicans over concerns of funding. In March, Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Wisc., objected to Blumenthal's call for a floor vote, saying the legislation would cost more than \$70 billion over the first 10 years of enactment.

The \$70 billion Johnson cited is the total estimated cost of eliminating the offset for all 250,000 military medical retirees, and according to the Senate VA Committee, the Richard Star Act only applies to medical retirees eligible for Combat Related Special Compensation. Under those requirements, the committee estimates it would cost \$11 billion over 10 years.

The legislation, named for Army Reserve Maj. Richard Star, who died in 2021 from lung cancer after being exposed to burn pits in Iraq and Afghanistan, is a top priority for major veterans groups including the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans & the Military Officers Association of America.

Because of its cost, under current congressional rules, lawmakers must find a way to pay for it. One proposal set forth by the VFW is to use the federal Military Retirement Fund, which finances military retired pay and has more than \$1.7 trillion in assets.

Since 2004, veterans who earned military retirement for serving at least 20 years and who qualify for VA disability benefits receive full pay for both if they have a disability rating of at least 50%.

But veterans who retired early from service as a result of military injury or illness are subject to dollar-for-dollar offsets in their military disability and VA disability benefits, sometimes amounting to thousands of dollars in lost income.

Blumenthal implored his fellow legislators to support the bill. "It will eliminate this wounded warrior tax."

Thank you Notes from Scholarship Recipients

Bill Lawyer, Our Chapter's Scholarship Chairperson, received the notes below from recent scholarship recipients.

Dear MOAS Scholarship Committee,
I am so grateful for your generous Scholarship! It will help relieve my financial burden so I can focus on my education and career goals. I am so appreciative of your kindness, I will be sure to share my future successes with you!
Sincerely,
Melanie Kersten

Thank you so much for this generous award! I am so grateful for your support of my future endeavors. The kindness of the MOAS Scholarship Committee for believing in me!

- Viviana Serrano ♡

Dear Mr. Lawyer,

I figured you'd be interested in knowing how my first semester at UF has gone. I have a 3.92 GPA and although my courses are hard, I am doing well. I'm on track to be a mechanical engineer. I've met some amazing people and I am having a better time than I expected. Please express my gratitude to those in the military organization who most graciously offered my scholarship. I hope you have a great Easter!

Warm Regards, Nicholas Paredes



SARASOTA CHAPTER

Friday June 19, 2026

@ 11:30am

Michael's On East

1212 S East Ave Sarasota, FL 34239

Dress Code – Casual

MENU

SERVED LUNCHEON

Specialty Bread Basket

ENTREE

**Macadamia Crusted
Mahi-Mahi Piccata**

*served with Roasted Red Skinned
Potatoes with Rosemary, Steamed
Broccoli & Baby Carrots*

VEGETARIAN

Four Cheese Eggplant Rollatini
with Pesto Sauce

DESSERT

Triple-Berry Tart

*Blueberries, Raspberries &
Blackberries Baked in a Cookie Crust
with Frangipane & Cinnamon Streusel*

Served Coffee, Decaf & Tea

Pre-set Iced Water

*Served Iced Tea w/Lemon upon
request*

Please make your luncheon reservation by mail.

Fill out the form below and mail us your check.

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

MEMBER INFORMATION

Name, Rank Service _____

Phone # _____ email: _____

Please reserve ___ seats for the luncheon

Cost \$41.00/person (Tax & Gratuity incl.)

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



MAY-JUNE-JULY 2026



DATE	EVENT	TIME
Monday, May 25	 MEMORIAL DAY 	
Tuesday, June 2	MOAS/SMOF Board Meeting - Meadows Lifestyle & Wellness Building	12:00 p.m.
Sunday, June 7	YAHOO - DeSoto Memorial Kayak Tour - Details on Page 9	9:15 a.m.
Wednesday, June 10	MEET & GREET - GRILLSMITH - Details on Page 9	5:30 p.m.
Sunday, June 14	 FLAG DAY 	
Friday June 19	MOAS Luncheon - Michaels on East – Dogs Inc	11:30 a.m.
Saturday, July 4	 INDEPENDENCE DAY 	
Tuesday, July 7	MOAS/SMOF Board Meeting - Meadows Lifestyle & Wellness Building	12:00 p.m.
Friday, July 17	MOAS Luncheon - Michaels on East –Veterans Healthcare	11:30 a.m.

COLA Watch

The Latest

The April 2026 Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W), released May 12, was 326.541, 2.9% above the COLA baseline of 317.265.

CPI-W figures from the end of the fiscal year (July, August, and September 2026) will be compared with the COLA baseline to calculate the 2027 COLA (see "[How Your COLA Is Calculated](#),"). May 2026 figures are scheduled to be released June 10.

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.sarasotamoa.com