President’s Message
LTC Marc Oliveri, USAR (Ret)

Once again Florida is gearing up for its annual "Storming the Hill" campaign. On April 13th, 2016 MOAA Council Presidents throughout the 50 states will be gathering in Washington D.C. for the sole purpose of advancing the two main issues of concern. They will be meeting with their congressional representatives or the congressional legislative staff. As your President, I will have the honor of participating in the Florida contingent. Joining me for this year’s “Stormers” are General Robertson, Lt Col Jim Conner, Dottie Conner, Jenine Oliveri, Joyce Harte, LTC Schneider and CAPT Bob Silah. We have confirmed appointments of all 27 representatives and the two (2) Senators. We believe our meetings will be as fruitful as they were last year.

To ensure our success and demonstrate our strength in numbers, I am asking each Chapter Legislative Chair and or Chapter President to read Robert Bienvenue’s message outlining these issues and the required action needed.

The issues are:

- **Reject Disproportionate TRICARE Fee Hikes and Program Changes**
- **Eliminate the widows’ Tax**

PLEASE SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH YOUR CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP!

From Robert Bienvenue:

“You can check this link periodically to look for the Call for Action on this subject when it is released: [http://capwiz.com/moaa/home/](http://capwiz.com/moaa/home/)

and then do your part to make Storming The Hill a successful campaign!”

The two major issues:

- **Reject Disproportionate TRICARE Fee Hikes and Program Changes**
- **Eliminate the widows’ Tax**

Robert Bienvenue, the Council Legislative Chair, has worked very hard to provide the Council and Chapters with the needed information and now I ask that you do your part by going to the link and showing your support.

Why your support is needed? As an advocacy organization, MOAA’s influence relies on its members. As Admiral Ryan said,” it is all about numbers in Washington as numbers...
President’s Message (continued)

gain you access to Congress and the Administration.”

I will report back to you in May, at our annual Convention, and also in our next Communique’ issue in June.

On May 13th – 15th the Imperial Polk County Chapter will be hosting our annual meeting in Lakeland, Florida. Please make every effort to register and attend. There will be a lot of fun things to do so make sure you “Save the Date”. I am trying to find my old Utilities to wear to the canteen. I hope I can still fit into them, Yea!

See you in May.

Northeast Florida Chapter Donates to NJROTC
Richard T. Chadwell, CWO2, USN, (Ret)

Military Officers Association of America, NE Florida Chapter (FL-18) members CWO5 Wayne Elliott USN (RET) and CWO2 Richard Chadwell USN (RET) presented a check, Friday 26 February, for $250.00 to the Fleming Island High School NJROTC Unit Air Rifle Team. Receiving the donation check is CWO4 David Keller, Fleming Island High School NJROTC Unit Senior Navy Instructor. Also, shown are Air Rifle Team Captain CADET Aaron Parker and Shannon Beechum.

PHOTO Courtesy of Fleming Island High School Student: Reganne Chadwell.
Chaplain’s Message
Chaplain (Col) Charles Caudill, USAF, (Ret) Religious Activities

America Thanks You!

March 29, 2016 saw many overdue ceremonies across the United States to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War honoring Vietnam veterans and their families for their sacrifice, service and valor during this horrific war. Our nation sent over 2,700,000 military personnel to fight the Viet Cong. There were over 58,000 casualties and 75,000 returned severely disabled. Over 1,000 sustained multiple amputations and 1,621 Americans are still unaccounted for. After 50 years untold numbers still suffer from the effects of the war.

The Sarasota Chapter of MOAA helped sponsor the “America Thanks You!” event at Patriot Plaza in Sarasota National Cemetery. I have been involved in many functions to praise our veterans, but none so filled with emotion and well deserved closure as this one welcoming home our vets.

The day of commemoration was filled with severe thunderstorms. Torrential rain and wind surrounded us with lightening filling the sky; and yet, 1,400 people came from miles around to attend the service. Just minutes before the ceremony commenced the rain stopped, the sky cleared and sunshine filled the plaza. It was as if God was sending his blessings.

Our keynote speaker was Col. Bill Knisely, US Army (Ret.) who was a Medevac pilot in Vietnam. While he was attempting a helicopter rescue mission his aircraft was shot down by a rocket propelled grenade. He and his copilot evaded capture without food or water for three days. The Lieutenant Special Operations team leader, whose 5-man team endured multiple firefights with the North Vietnam Army during the rescue, was recommended for the Congressional Medal of Honor.

At the conclusion of Col. Knisely’s speech all Vietnam Era Veterans or families representing them were presented with Vietnam War Veteran lapel pins. Many veterans, fighting back tears, rendered a salute when they received their pins. We ended with a wreath laying ceremony to honor the fallen and the sounding of Taps. This recognition by a grateful nation helped bring closure to numerous veterans, including me.

I’d like to share the prayer I gave for the Invocation of “America Thanks You!”:

“...We come before You to open our hearts to the memories of the Vietnam War that happened 50 years ago and still has influence upon our lives today.

We remember returning home from the horrors of war after sacrificing our youth and losing many of our friends in battle. It still hurts recalling how we were shunned by our countrymen and how isolated we felt. And yet You remained our guiding Light to show the way.

When we came home, we tried to make successful transitions and inspire our nation to honorably protect and defend the Constitution.

Thank You for sending all the support personnel to Vietnam who always went the extra mile with us and uplifted our morale.

Especially: The Medics and Nurses who bandaged our wounds and gave us encouragement when so many had lost limbs and became disabled.
Chaplain, Continued

The Air Evac personnel who rescued us from combat and took us to the medical facilities; saving our lives and holding our hands when we hurt.

The Chaplains who prayed assuring us of Your love and care. They comforted and inspired us to continue, and ministered to our families in their time of need.

And we must never forget our families who had their own battles to fight while we were separated; and were patient with us when we returned.

We pause to ask for closure for that which has haunted us and Your guidance as we continue to defend our Constitution....

Kingdom of the Sun Events

Arlo Janssen, LTC, USA, (Ret)
President, Kingdom of the Sun Chapter (Ocala)
KOS Publicity Chair

Joint Meeting with Citrus County Chapter of MOAA

The Kingdom of the Sun (KOS) Chapter held its 5th annual joint meeting with the Citrus County Chapter on Thursday, April 7th at Stumpknockers on the River in Dunnellon.

40th Anniversary Luncheon is Planned

The Kingdom of the Sun (KOS) has announced that it will hold its “40th Anniversary Luncheon” at the Elks Club and Lodge on Thursday, June 2, 2016. The Anniversary Luncheon will start at 12:00 PM. There will be a Color Guard from Westport High School, and the keynote speaker will be retired Air Force Lt Gen Dana Atkins, President of MOAA.

Advanced reservations will be required. The Elks Club is located at 702 NE 25th Avenue, Ocala, FL.

If you have any questions on the 40th Anniversary Luncheon, please contact Carol Walker on her cell phone at 352-875-1332 or email to Kapuahi77@aol.com.

Tim Holme, President of the Citrus County Chapter, and Arlo Janssen, President of the KOS Chapter, bring their members together at a joint luncheon in April.

Tim Holme presents a MOAA Certificate of Appreciation to Barbara Mills for her work with the Honor Flights and for her talk to the joint chapters.
Legislative Affairs
Lt Col Bob Bienvenue, USAF (Ret), Legislative Chairman

Storming the Hill – What is Your Role?

On April 13th, after Congress returns from their Easter recess, MOAA representatives from all 50 states will be meeting with their respective state’s congressional delegation to discuss our concerns with the future changes to the Military Health Care System and the unfair financial treatment of currently serving military members and their families when it comes to pay, housing and threats to commissary funding. Our state Council President LTC Marc Oliveri, USA ret, has set up appointments with all 27 Florida Representatives and both Senators. He will lead three teams of MOAA Board members, MOAA staff and members of MOAA advisory boards on this very important mission. We will hear his feedback at the Council Convention meetings in mid-May.

The past several years, MOAA has sent Chapter leaders and members a Call for Action in the weekly Legislative Update immediately preceding the Storming event. The prepared MOAA cap-wiz message linked in that email will essentially urge our individual Representatives to support the MOAA positions on these matters as they proceed through the legislative process. MOAA has found that this timely communication from the grass roots reinforces the message from the Florida MOAA Teams our Representatives and/or their Congressional staff members will hear on April 13th.

You can check this link periodically to look for the Call for Action on this subject when it is released:

http://capwiz.com/moaa/home/

...do your part to make Storming The Hill a successful campaign!

Did you know the following regarding the selection of Delegates from Florida to the two National Conventions?

Florida Republican Party Convention Delegate Selection Process:

“The Republican presidential candidate receiving the highest number of statewide votes at the Florida Presidential Preference Primary shall be awarded all delegates (including the 3 party leaders, the National Committeeman, the National Committeewoman, and the chairman of the Florida's Republican Party) to the Republican National Convention. [Florida has 99 delegates and 96 Alternates]

“Delegates and alternate delegates will be elected at duly-called meetings of the Republican Party of Florida’s Executive Board and its Congressional District Caucuses held between March 22 and June 3, 2016. All meetings to consider the election of delegates and alternate delegates must be called [scheduled] by the Chairman of the Republican Party of Florida

“National Convention Delegates [from Florida] are bound through the 3rd ballot unless the candidate withdraws or releases his/her delegates. The Chairman ... shall be bound to ... cast all Delegate at Large votes ... during the first three convention ballots…”

and then do your part to make Storming The Hill a successful campaign!
**Florida Democratic Party Convention Delegate Selection Process:**
Florida uses a *proportional representation system* based on the results of the Presidential Preference Primary for apportioning delegates to the 2016 Democratic National Convention.

Florida is allocated 140 Congressional District (CD) level delegates elected at caucuses on May 7th by vote of any registered democrats who reside in the CD and attend this event.

These 140 CD delegates will convene later in the month to elect 46 At-Large delegates, 28 Party Leader pledged delegates and 18 alternates. And in addition there are 31 unplugged Party Leader and Elected Officials who become delegates based on their official positions.

“No delegate at any level of the delegate selection process shall be mandated by law or Party rules to vote contrary to that person’s presidential choice [based on their pledge statement] as expressed at the time the delegate is elected.”

**Hold-Up on Major House Spending Bill**
*Summarized from news reports in The Hill e-news.*

House Republicans departed Washington on March 23rd for a two-week recess without moving any closer to a consensus on how to resolve their months-long budget battle.

Speaker Paul Ryan will now have just four days to bridge wide gaps within the GOP on a trillion-dollar spending blueprint when members return for business on April 12th. Although spending levels for FY 2017 were set in last year’s budget agreement negotiated by Ryan and the administration [in order to avoid a government shutdown] disagreements on competing Republican proposals and threats by fiscal hawks to hold firm against those levels negotiated with President Obama have stymied a vote on the Budget Committee Bill.

With the clock ticking until the April 15 budget deadline, House Republicans are increasingly sounding the alarm about winding up with a major spending brawl right before the fall elections. If GOP leaders can’t find a compromise with the House Freedom Caucus (a Tea Party 40-member voting bloc) the Budget Committee Bill would fail on the House floor, potentially leading to a government shutdown.

**HR 1594 The Military Surviving Spouses Equity Act**
In 2008, Congress authorized a Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA) as partial recompense for the SBP-DIC inequity. The then House Armed Services Committee Chairman, Rep. Ike Skelton (D-Mo.), expressed the intent to continue increasing the SSIA and ultimately phase out the widow's tax. SSIA is $275 per month in FY16, and will rise to $310 per month in FY17, covering about 25 percent of the SBP-DIC offset. *This offset (known as the Widow’s Tax) affects approximately 5700 surviving spouses here in Florida.*

However, the legal authority to pay SSIA expires on Oct 1, 2017. Unless Congress repeals the SBP-DIC offset or extends the SSIA authority this year, SBP-DIC survivors will suffer the additional loss of the SSIA, totaling $3,700 annually.

**MOAA believes the SBP-DIC offset should be repealed.** However the reality is that because of the current budget environment, securing sufficient funding for a total repeal - approximately $6.5 billion - will be difficult. *If full and immediate repeal is not feasible, SSIA should be extended and increased to continue the path toward phasing out the offset.*

Click this link to see if your Congressperson is a co-sponsor of H. R. 1594 “Military Surviving Spouses Equity Act” which would eliminate the dollar for dollar offset of Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) from VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC).

**NOTE:** Only 14 out of our 27 Florida Representatives have signed on as co-sponsors!

http://capwiz.com/moaa/issues/bills/?bill=64926801&cs_party=all&cs_status=all&cs_state=FL

You can send a message direct from that page by clicking on the icon (envelope) to the right of your Congressperson’s name. The letter that you will see either thanks them for their co-sponsorship or urges them to sign on to enact this legislation. Please edit the last two paragraphs to read:

*Over 60,000 military survivors are currently affected by the offset which includes 5700 here in Florida.*

**Please do all you can to enact this legislation before the Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance expires and surviving spouses see another cutback to their “guaranteed” annuities.”*
Surviving Spouse Advisory Committee (SSAC)
Joyce Harte, MOAA Print & Digital Media Committee

A number of Florida Council of Chapters members will be visiting Capitol Hill on April 13 to "Storm the Hill" to advocate:

- that hikes in Tricare fees are reasonable and in proportion to raises in health care fees of federal civilian workers;
- to support the continuation of the SSIA (Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance) and to eventually eliminate the so called Widows’ Tax, SBP/DIC (Survivors Benefit Plan/Dependents Indemnity Compensation).

That's a lot of alphabet soup to digest. An article written by Kathy Prout follows and gives a succinct summary of the problem. Please read and then contact your congressional representative and senators to ask for their support. With our visits and your back up letters, we'll have a real chance of winning this year.

Thanks, Joyce

Storm the Hill
April 13

Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA)
By Kathy Prout, Surviving Spouse Advisory Committee advisor

The Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA) was established in October 2008 as a first step toward eliminating the Survivor Benefit Plan/Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (SBP/DIC) offset. SBP is an annuity purchased upon retirement to ensure the spouse will continue to receive income (55 percent of the retiree’s elected amount of coverage) in the event the retiree pre-deceases his or her spouse. SBP also is awarded automatically to:

- surviving spouses of retirement-eligible servicemembers (i.e. with 20-plus years of service) who died on active duty before Sept. 11, 2001;
- surviving spouses of all servicemembers (regardless of length of service) who died on active duty after Sept. 11, 2001.

If the servicemember’s death was caused by a service-connected illness, then the surviving spouse is eligible for DIC from the VA in the amount of $1,254 per month. DIC is deducted from SBP dollar-for-dollar, up to the full amount of SBP. Congress agreed this offset was wrong but was unable to come up with the funding to fully eliminate the offset. They instead created SSIA. It was a 10-year allowance, which started at $50 a month, is currently $275 a month, and will increase to $310 by 2017. The problem is current statutory authority to pay the SSIA is set to expire Oct. 1, 2017.

It is important for SSIA to be extended and increased in this year’s Defense Authorization Bill if the funds to eliminate the SBP/DIC offset are not found. Otherwise, 63,000 surviving spouses affected by the SBP/DIC offset will see a $3,720 reduction in compensation in 2017.
Two bills, H.R. 4519 and H.R. 4493, were introduced by Rep. Alan Grayson (D-Fla.) in the House of Representatives to increase and extend SSIA as follows:

- **H.R. 4519** would increase SSIA over five years: $400 in 2018; $475 in 2019; $600 in 2020; $700 in 2021; and $800 in 2022.

- **H.R. 4493** would increase SSIA to $400 a month for one year in 2018. This bill is a backup bill to H.R. 4519 in case funding for the five-year bill cannot be found. SSIA then would end in 2019 and again have to be addressed if the offset was not eliminated.

If monies to eliminate the SBP/DIC offset cannot be found, it is imperative SSIA not only be extended but also increased. Pursuing SSIA increases does not remove the goal to eliminate the SBP/DIC offset completely. SSIA’s principal purpose is twofold: (1) to provide at least partial, immediate reimbursement to SBP/DIC survivors until full repeal of the offset can be achieved, and (2) provide an additional option to attain repeal of the offset through a phased-in approach, with steady increases to the annual SSIA amounts.

Please support the elimination of the SBP/DIC offset by asking your congressional representatives to cosponsor H.R. 1594 in the House and S. 979 in the Senate. Also, seek support for H.R. 4519. Use the toll-free Capitol Hill line (866) 272-MOAA (6622) to call your congressional representatives today.

For additional information regarding the SBP/DIC offset, visit the [Survivor Advocacy Issues](http://www.militaryofficersassociation.org) section of MOAA’s Web base.
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—LtCo Richard & Karen Sturtevant, USAF(Ret)

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Convention Agenda Highlights

Friday, May 13, 2016
- Historic Summerlin Military Academy founded in 1887 as the first public high school located in Bartow, Florida, and attended by 500 high school cadets.
- Sun ‘n Fun campus & Central Florida Aerospace Academy.

Saturday, May 14, 2016
- Breakfast Lodwick Field Chow Hall.
- Polk Academies Displays & Demonstrations. Community support displays. Lunch.
  - 1940’s, 1950’s, 1960’s Hangar Canteen Event—Swing Band, Swing Dancers, and more. Dig out your old uniforms!!!

Sunday, May 15, 2016
- Veterans Park Memorial
- Salute to Veterans Sculpture

Gary Clark, Colonel USAF ret.
Convention Chair

Details and information visit:

Gary@CPAlliance.com, 863-688-1725

MOAA Florida Council of Chapters Convention 2016
Florida Council of Chapters
2016 Annual Conference
13-15 May 2016

Registration Form

Member Full Name:__________________________________ Rank:______ Service:____________________

Mailing Address:__________________________________ City/State/Zip:____________________________

Email:___________________________________________ Phone:____________________

Chapter:_________________________ Spouse/Guest: (First and last name):__________________________

Name on Badges: Member:________________________ Guest:________________________

Will Attend/Participate at Friday Summerlin Military Academy Cadet Review/Discussion   Yes___   No___

Event Costs

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<td>Hangar Canteen</td>
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OR

Save $20 with Inclusive Convention Package   $140.00          

Total Convention Cost   $__________

Convention shirts: $35.00  Ladies: SM M L XL  #_______ Mens: SM M L XL 2XL  #_________

Grand Total (Convention and shirts)   $__________

Make checks payable to:
Imperial Polk County Chapter MOAA, 2016 Convention, PO Box 3911, Lakeland, FL 33802

Hotel Reservations

- To make reservations call hotel directly or follow the link:
- Indicate MOAA special rate.
- Rooms will be held until the cutoff date April 17th, 2016
- Mary Babylon, Sales Manager,
  Hampton Inn & Suites, Lakeland South-Polk Parkway
  3630 Lakeside Village Blvd, Lakeland, FL 33803
  Tel: 863 603 7600   Fax: 863 603 7601
Courtyard by Marriott has set aside a block of 15 rooms on 30 day courtesy hold for any attendees that wish to stay over while attending the MOAA event. The rooms are at the rate of $89.00 for the dates of May 13th – May 15th, 2016. This is hotel is adjacent to the Hampton Inn.

You will find the information for your online reservation link below. If you have questions or need help with the link, please do not hesitate to ask. We appreciate your business and look forward to a successful event.

**Book your group rate for MOAA Florida Council**

Contact:
DENISE BUSHOVER  
General Manager  
o 863.802.9000  f 863.802.5300

Courtyard Lakeland, FL  
3725 Harden Blvd  
Lakeland, FL 33803

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| Sunday  |       |       | Registration                      | Hampton Inn                     |
| 15-May  | 0600  | 0800  | Breakfast at Hotel                | Hampton Inn                     |
| 15-May  | 0840  | 1000  | Bus to Veterans Park              | Hampton Inn                     |
| 15-May  | 0900  | 1100  | Memorial Ceremony                 | Veterans Park                   |
| 15-May  | 0930  | 1200  | Sculpture Unveiling               | Veterans Park                   |
| 15-May  | 1100  | 1200  | Bus to Hampton Inn                | Veterans Park                   |
| 15-May  | 1100  | 1200  | New Board Meeting                 | Hampton Inn                     |
Broward County Chapter Kicks off First Scholarship Award Process

From Steve Bettner, LTC, USA, (Ret)
President, Broward County Chapter

In January, the Broward County Chapter announced “kicking off” the process for JROTC students of the County high schools to win a Chapter Scholarship to college.

The scholarship is the first one the chapter has ever done. It will amount to a three-year scholarship for the student who wins. There will be a selection process that will review entries and select the most deserving young man or woman and a Runner-up. The will be awarded a $4000 scholarship and Runner-up a $500 Grant. The Award ceremony will be on May 15 at the LHPYRC. The chapter has worked hard for three years to get the resources and the plan together to do this. There is a lot of excitement in the Chapter and Community about this program. This has been done with the full cooperation, guidance and participation of the Broward County School District.

We intend this to be a long-term program and will continue to gather resources to support it. This is our flagship program in terms of what we do as a Chapter in the Broward County community to “Preserve National Security”. Continued Chapter growth will facilitate this effort.

Many thanks to all who participated and helped in making this happen.

In order to sustain the resources for this program we have a plan for donation of funds and will include both members of the Chapter and sources outside the Chapter. We intend to have that plan done within the next month. To validate interest, we have 27 entries for the Selection Board to process from the 30 Public Schools program.

Clearwater Chapter is setting attendance records for 2016 Luncheons.

Keith Kurber, 1st Lt, USMC, (Ret)
President, Clearwater Chapter

The Chapter January, February and March luncheons each had over 60 members and guests in attendance as membership continues to grow.

President, Col. Dave Apt, US Army Retired, welcomes the members to each luncheon. A Coffee for Surviving Spouses and Auxiliary was held to coincide with the March Chapter Board meeting. The Board broke away from their session to give a presentation and answer questions of the Coffee attendees. 17 ladies attended this high energy event hosted by Violet Smith and Pat Hughes. Pictures by LTC Dave Mason, USA Retired.
Sarasota Chapter's Patriotic Performances

Brian McCarthy, LT, USN, (Ret)
1st Vice President, Sarasota Chapter

"You're a Grand Old Flag" performance will be held on Flag Day, June 12th at Patriot's Plaza in The Sarasota National Cemetery. The Military Officers Association of Sarasota will join the Pops Orchestra for Bradenton and Sarasota to celebrate the 239th birthday of our nation's flag. Everyone will enjoy a stirring 90-minute FREE concert of patriotic music by the Pops and choral selections by Gloria Musicae. A special feature of this event will be a formal Flag Retirement and Retreat Ceremony overlooking the impressive features of Patriot Plaza.

“A Tribute To America’s Veterans” will be performed on Veterans Day weekend at the Riverview and Neel Performing Arts Centers. USO shows started in 1941 for deployed troops to provide a connection to their families, along with entertainment and relaxation. Our USO-type event will honor local veterans and their families. Headlined by Las Vegas Bob Hope impersonator, Bill Johnson, the two-hour performance will recall the music, entertainers, and celebrities who traveled overseas to produce shows for American servicemen and women during World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the Gulf Wars.
The Veterans’ Club
of University Village

Meetings are held
2nd Monday of each month
at University Village
Please call to RSVP at (800) 524-5020

Tampa’s Superior Life Care Retirement Community offers spacious apartments and villa homes on 36 acres with resort style amenities and services. University Village is located just blocks away from the James A. Haley Veteran’s Hospital and in close proximity to the MacDill Air Force Base.

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R. Steven Murray, Lt Col, USAF (Ret)
Communications Director, Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs

Here is a quick summary of surviving veteran-related legislation resulting from the 2016 Florida Legislative Session, which began Jan. 12, 2016 and ended March 11, 2016.

**Note:** Governor Rick Scott will “sign” three veteran-related bills into law during the April 7 Governor’s Veterans Service Award presentation in Pensacola -- HB 799, HB 1157 and HB 7023 (see below.) The ceremony begins at 10:30 Central Time at the Pensacola National Guard Armory, 8790 Grow Drive.

**Florida House of Representatives**

- **HB 439 - Relating to Mental Health Services in Criminal Justice System** (Rep. McBurney) - Expands eligibility for military veterans & servicemembers for certain programs. Expanding the definition of “veteran,” for the purpose of eligibility for veterans’ court, to include veterans who were discharged or released under a general discharge. Effective Date: July 1, 2016. – **Approved by Governor Scott on 3/25/16.**

- **HB 799 - Relating to Out-of-State Fee Waivers for Active Duty Service Members** (Rep. Avila) – Provides that active duty members of Armed Forces of U.S. residing or stationed outside of this state may receive out-of-state fee waivers; requires tuition & fees charged to such students to be below specified amount & for annual report of all out-of-state fee waivers for such individuals. Effective Date: July 1, 2016. - **Approved by Governor Scott on 3/25/16.**

- **HB 1157 - Relating to Postsecondary Education for Veterans** (Rep. Raburn) - Directs DOE to award postsecondary course credit for specified training, education, examinations & tests; revises residency requirement for certain tuition waivers for recipients of specified military decorations; provides that specified programs & test scores meet certain educator certification requirements. Effective Date: July 1, 2016. - **Approved by Governor Scott on 3/25/16.**

- **HB 821 - Relating to Reimbursement of Assessments** (Rep. Rooney) - Prohibits agent or attorney representing claimant from directly or indirectly requesting, receiving, or obtaining reimbursement from claimant for assessments charged to agent or attorney by U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; provides penalties. Effective Date: July 1, 2016. Sent to Governor Scott for signature on 3/30/16. He has until 4/14/16 to take action.

- **HB 941 - Relating to Department of Health** (Rep. Gonzales) - Creating & revising reporting requirements for specified research programs; providing licensing requirements for military members & their spouses; revising provisions relating to regulatory activities of DOH & certain boards; revising education requirements for certain health professions to qualify for license renewal. Effective Date: July 1, 2016. Sent to Governor Scott for signature on 3/30/16. He has until 4/14/16 to take action.

- **HB 1219 - Relating to Veterans’ Employment** (Rep. Raburn) - Requires state agencies, & authorizes political subdivisions of state, to develop & implement veterans’ recruitment plan; requires DMS to collect specified data & include such data in its annual workforce report & on its website; provides applicability. Effective Date: October 1, 2016. – **Approved by Governor Scott on 3/24/16.**
HB 7023 - Relating to Ad Valorem Tax Exemption for Deployed Servicemembers (Rep. Trumbull, Finance and Tax Committee) - Expands military operations that qualify certain servicemembers who receive a homestead exemption & were deployed during previous calendar year to receive additional ad valorem tax exemption on that homestead property; provides procedures for grant of exemption. Effective Date: upon becoming a law. (See SB 160.) – Approved by Governor Scott on 3/8/16.

HB 7099 - Relating to Taxation - Provides a sales tax exemption for sales of food and drink by veterans’ organizations to members of veterans’ organizations. Provides a three-day “back-to-school” sales tax holiday from August 5, 2016, to August 7, 2016, for clothing and footwear costing $60 or less, and school supplies costing less than $15. Effective Date: 7/1/2016. Sent to Governor Scott for signature on 3/30/16. He has until 4/14/16 to take action.

Florida Senate

SB 12 - Relating to Mental Health and Substance Abuse (Sen. Garcia) - Including services provided to treatment-based mental health programs within case management funded from state revenues as an element of the state courts system; requiring assessment findings to be provided to the plan that is financially responsible for a child's care in residential treatment under certain circumstances; specifying certain persons who are prohibited from being appointed as a person's guardian advocate; authorizing county or circuit courts to enter ex parte orders for involuntary examinations; requiring the Department of Children and Families to create a workgroup on the use of advance directives for substance use disorders, etc. Effective Date: 7/1/2016. Sent to Governor Scott for signature on 3/30/16. He has until 4/14/16 to take action.


SB 158 - Relating to Identification Cards and Driver Licenses (Sen. Hutson) - General Identification Cards and Driver Licenses:

Providing for a person’s status as a lifetime freshwater fishing, saltwater fishing, hunting, or sportsman licensee, or boater safety identification cardholder, to be indicated on his or her identification card or driver license upon payment of an additional fee and presentation of the person’s lifetime freshwater fishing, saltwater fishing, hunting, or sportsman’s license, or boater safety identification card; providing a waiver of the replacement fee in certain circumstances, etc. The word “Veteran” shall be exhibited on the driver license of a veteran upon the payment of an additional $1 fee for the license and the presentation of a copy of the person’s DD Form 214, issued by the United States Department of Defense, or another acceptable form specified by the Department of Veterans’ Affairs. Effective Date: 7/1/2016. - Approved by Governor Scott on 2/24/16.

SB 184 - Relating to Military and Veterans Affairs (Sen. Bean) - Requiring the application form for an original, renewal, or replacement driver license or identification card to include a voluntary checkoff authorizing veterans to request written or electronic information on federal, state, and local benefits and services for veterans; creating the Military and Overseas Voting Assistance Task Force within the Department of State; providing legislative findings regarding continuing education for veterans of the United States Armed Forces, etc. Former members of the Florida National Guard would be eligible for induction in the Florida Veterans’ Hall of Fame. Effective date 7/1/16. Sent to Governor Scott for signature on 3/30/16. He has until 4/14/16 to take action.

SB 222 - Relating to Parking for Disabled Veterans (Sen. Detert) - Requiring the governing body of each publicly owned or publicly operated airport to grant free parking to any vehicle displaying specified license plates for disabled veterans; clarifying that such license plates, rather than “DV” license plates, are exempt from certain parking fees charged by a county, municipality, or an agency thereof, etc. Effective Date: 7/1/2016. - Approved by Governor Scott on 3/10/16.

SB 626 - Relating to Consumer Credit (Sen. Gaetz) –Authorizes the Office of Financial Regulation to deny a license or take disciplinary action against a person who violates the Military Lending Act or the regulations adopted under that act in connection with a consumer finance loan under the Florida Consumer Finance Act, etc.
FDVA, Continued

Effective Date: 10/3/2016. – Approved by Governor Scott on 3/30/16.

☐ SB 666 - Relating to Voter Identification (Sen. Legg) - Expanding the list of acceptable forms of identification for certain voter registration applicants to include veteran health identification cards, licenses to carry a concealed weapon or firearm, and certain government-issued employee identification cards, etc. Effective Date: Upon becoming a law. – Approved by Governor Scott on 4/1/16.

☐ SB 772 - Relating to Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (Sen. Richter) - Requires the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to waive fees for certain business licenses and registrations to veterans, spouses of veterans, or certain business entities with majority ownership held by veterans or their spouses. This includes the land surveying and mapping license fee, health studio registration fee, commercial telephone seller license fee, telephone salesperson license fee, interstate mover registration fee, liquefied petroleum gas license fee, pawnbroker license fee, motor vehicle repair shop registration fee, and the seller of travel registration fee. In addition, the initial license fees for certain private investigative, private security and repossession service licenses would be waived for veterans, but does not apply to spouses. This bill would also provide a process to expedite the concealed weapon firearm application process for servicemembers and veterans. Effective date 7/1/16. – Approved by Governor Scott on 3/30/16.

☐ SB 1202 - Relating to Discounts on Public Park Entrance Fees and Transportation Fares - Discounts on Public Park Entrance Fees and Transportation Fares; Requiring counties and municipalities to provide a partial or a full discount on park entrance fees to military members, veterans, and the spouse and parents of certain deceased military members, law enforcement officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, and paramedics; requiring certain regional transportation authorities to provide a partial or a full discount on fares for certain disabled veterans, etc. Effective Date: 7/1/2016. Sent to the governor on 3/22/16. Governor Scott has until 4/6/16 to act on the legislation.

☐ SB 7016 - Relating to Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (Military and Veterans Affairs, Space and Domestic Security Committee) - Reenacts provisions of law establishing and implementing the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children and provides for future legislative review and repeal of the Compact on July 1, 2019. The Compact is an agreement between states that is designed to assist member states in uniformly addressing key educational transition issues in enrollment, placement, attendance, eligibility, and graduation. Effective 4/9/16. - Approved by Governor Scott on 3/9/16.

For more information, please contact FDVA Legislative and Cabinet Affairs Director Colleen Krepsstekies at KrepsstekiesC@fdva.state.fl.us or FDVA Legislative Analyst Jessica Kraynak at KraynakJ2@fdva.state.fl.us.

Key Upcoming Events

☐ April 7, 10:30 a.m. Central Time – Governor’s Veterans Service Award Presentation, Pensacola National Guard Armory, 8790 Grow Drive, Pensacola, FL 32514-7057

Important Dates

☐ April 22-24 – North Florida Homeless Veterans Stand Down, Tallahassee
☐ April 30 – Honor Flight Tallahassee (Washington, D.C.)
☐ May 8 – V-E Day (1945)
☐ May 8 – Mother’s Day
☐ May 9-12 – County Veterans Service Officers Association (CVSOA) Training Conference, Safety Harbor
☐ May 21 – Armed Forces Day
☐ May 30 – Memorial Day

Other

☐ The Florida Veterans’ Hall of Fame Council is currently accepting nominations for the fourth annual class of inductees into the Florida Veterans’ Hall of Fame. The nomination period is open until May 31, 2016. Those nominating a veteran will need to complete a nomination packet that can be downloaded from www.floridaveteranshalloffame.org. Nominations are based on established selection criteria including recognizing military veterans who, through their works and lives during or after military service, have made a significant contribution to the state of Florida through civic, business, public service or other pursuits. It is not a traditional military hall of fame, as it focuses on post-military contributions to the State of Florida.

☐ Honor your veteran with a brick on the Florida Capitol Walk of Honor. For more information, call the Florida Veterans Foundation at (850) 488-4181.
Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi has released a Military Consumer Protection Guide. For a printed copy of the guide, call (866) 9NO-SCAM. Online copies of the guide are available at www.myfloridalegal.com/MilCPGuide.

Bulk copies of the book, "Korea Reborn: A Grateful Nation," which honors Korean War veterans, are available through the Florida National Guard. Bulk copies of the free book can be shipped to the nearest Florida National Guard Armory near you. For more information, call Capt. Colleen Krepstekies at (850) 487-1533.

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The FCOC’s primary communication vehicles are our bi-monthly publication, The COUNCIL COMMUNIQUE and our Website www.MOAAFL.org. Ads run for one year.

The COMMUNIQUE is distributed electronically to all our chapters, MOAA Headquarters in Virginia, and our influential contacts across the state of Florida.

The COMMUNIQUE provides a unique forum for businesses to reach a select segment of the population. The membership is patriotic and professional. We encourage your business to reach out to our members by advertising in The COUNCIL COMMUNIQUE.

In appreciation of Businesses that also support the FCOC Annual Convention with Ads in the Convention Souvenir Program Book within the last year the FCOC offers a discount for the same size Ad shown on the following Order Form (pg 17).

Thank you!

FCOC

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Articles can be attached to an email. Microsoft Word works best. You can also type your information into the body of an email where it can be copied and pasted into the newsletter. PDF files can also be used.

Pictures should have a .jpg extension. If you are sending pictures from your chapter, please include the chapter name and the names of those in the picture. A few words on what the event is about will help interest the readers.

If you have questions about your submission, contact

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wb2vyk@gmail.com
336-601-1318
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