



# Heartlander

South Central Florida Chapter  
February 2024



## South Central Florida Chapter of MOAA



P.O. Box 7841  
Sebring, FL 33872



### Chapter Officers

**President:** Bob Brooks, tel. 863-381-4176  
**Vice President:** Glenn West, tel. 614-296-5881  
**Treasurer,** William (Bill) Thacker, tel. 863-273-0695  
**Secretary:** Linda Tuthill, tel. 863-273-0766  
**Chaplain:** Ken Kirk, eMail: [ken@wejoysing.com](mailto:ken@wejoysing.com)  
**Recruiting/Retention:** Gilbert Uribe, tel. 703-216-78  
**Legislative Affairs:** David Loy, tel. 540-664-9734  
**Personal Affairs:** Linda Tuthill, tel. 863-273-0766  
**Newsletter:** Bob Brooks, tel. 863-381-4176 [gatorrnbg@gmail.com](mailto:gatorrnbg@gmail.com)  
**Past President:** Mike Borders, tel. 703-795-8776

**Our Web Site:** [www.scfcmoaa.org](http://www.scfcmoaa.org)  
**Florida Council of Chapters website:** [www.moaaf.org](http://www.moaaf.org)  
**Take Action. MOAA Legislative Action Link:**  
<https://moaa.quorum.us/>

**7 February 2024.** Board Meeting: 4:30 pm. Business Meeting, 6:00 PM. Venue: Sea Services Museum, 1402 Roseland Ave., Sebring, FL 33870, (corner of Kenilworth and Roseland, about a mile east of Sebring High School).

**2 March 2024. 5th Annual Gala:** 1730 (5:30 PM) at the Island View Restaurant at Sun N' Lake clubhouse, 5223 Sun N' Lake Blvd, Sebring. **Be sure to submit your reservation form (attached) with meal choices and payment for the GALA.**

### WHO CAN JOIN MOAA?

MOAA membership is open to all officers, commissioned or warrant, whether on active duty, retired, former, reserve or national guard of all the eight uniformed services, including the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Public Health Service. To join our chapter, click the join us button on our Chapter's home page at <https://moaaf.org/Chapters/SCFCMOAA/JoinUs.aspx>.

### Membership Renewal:

Chapter Members, it's time to "REUP" for 2024. Please bring to the next meeting \$20 in cash, or a check made out to SCFC of MOAA in the same amount. Surviving Spouses and folks over 90 years-old pay no dues. If you would like to mail it to us the address is: SCFC of MOAA, PO Box 7841, Sebring, FL 33872. Scholarship donations are also appreciated.

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

**NOTE: Our chapter again earned the 5 Star Level of Excellence Award**

Our last meeting was at the 3 Gens restaurant. The food was excellent, but it did take a while for the food to be delivered. The meeting room was quiet and was a good place for the event. There was a problem with parking and I understand some people did not attend as they could not find a parking space. We are interested in hearing your feedback.

Mike, Linda, Peggy, and myself attended the Florida Council of Chapters Leadership Conference in Orlando, Jan 26-27th. Linda, myself, and Peggy (my wife) attended the session on Spousal Affairs. It was extremely informative and Linda and I will be preparing a presentation on Surviving Spouse issues for a future meeting.

Five of our members received Leadership Awards and they will be presented at our February meeting. We also received the 5 Star Level of Excellence award. A large emphasis at the meeting was support of the legislative items on MOAA's agenda. It appears that only 22 of our members have signed up for the Thursday morning blast from MOAA. You are encouraged to go on the [www.moaaf.org](http://www.moaaf.org) site and sign up for the newsletters that come once a week on Thursdays. This will keep you informed of MOAA activities.

Remember that there is a "TAKE ACTION" link here on the front page. PLEASE click on it, fill in the data on the prepared letters, and send them to our two senators and our representative. There is also a QR Code on page 7 you may use. This support of MOAA Legislative Action priorities is very important. The more emails and letters that our legislators receive, the higher the chance that they will be aware of and support these actions. These issues have an impact on a strong national defense and the military required to support it. We don't just concern ourselves with benefits for the "old-timers." Every year, a key focus is the pay for active-duty troops. This impacts recruiting and retention, which in turn impact the strength and overall "health" of our military. It's all connected.

Our membership is now at more than 85 members. We have done very well considering that 5 of our members passed away this year. Anytime you meet an active duty, former or retired officer, invite them to one of our meetings and then to join our chapter.

It was suggested to add a section for social items to our newsletter. This would include items you wish to share with other members. If you have input for this section, please send me an email with your contribution.

**Did you Know? Our New Officers for 2024-2025 Were Installed by Col Gary Nolan, USAF (Ret) at the January 11th Meeting.**



**President:** Robert N. Brooks  
**Vice-President:** Glenn West  
**Secretary:** Estelle L. (Linda) Tuthill  
**Treasurer:** William (Bill) K. Thacker  
**Membership Chair:** Gilbert (Gil) A. Uribe  
**Legislative Affairs:** David G. Loy  
**Surviving Spouse/Personal Affairs:** Secretary Linda Tuthill is dual-hatted  
**Chaplin:** Kenneth Kirk  
**Webmaster:** Michael R. Borders  
**Newsletter Editor:** President Brooks is dual-hatted.

**Our 5th Annual Gala is coming on March 2, 2024 at the Island View Restaurant .**

Be sure to submit your reservation form (attached on the last page) with meal choices and payment for the GALA. There was also a reservation form attached to the email sending out this newsletter.

**February Birthdays:** 7 Feb: Lowell Fricker  
22 Feb: Frank Everett  
27 Feb: David Loy

**Editor's Note:** If your birthday is not recognized, it is because you did not include it on your application form. Please contact our Secretary, Doug Tait at 863-385-1763, and provide the same.

**RETIREMENT SERVICES OFFICERS (RSOs)**

Do you have questions about benefits, SBP, Retiree Appreciation Days, or anything else retirement-related? Then contact the RSO for your area or go to the Army Retirement Services website <https://soldierforlife.army.mil/Retirement/contact-us>.  
In Central and West Florida: MacDill AFB  
(813) 828-0163 [army.rso@us.af.mil](mailto:army.rso@us.af.mil)  
For rest of Florida, see Ft Stewart, GA

**Chapter Calendar**

**7 February 2024.** Board Meeting: 4:30 pm. Business Meeting, 6:00 PM. Venue: Sea Services Museum, 1402 Roseland Ave., Sebring, FL 33870, (corner of Kenilworth and Roseland, about a mile east of Sebring High School).

**2 March 2024. 4th Annual Gala:** 1730 (5:30 PM) at the Island View Restaurant at Sun N' Lake clubhouse, 5223 Sun N' Lake Blvd, Sebring.

**3 April 2024.** Board Meeting: 4:30 pm. Business Meeting, 6:00 PM. Venue: Sea Services Museum, 1402 Roseland Ave., Sebring, FL 33870, (corner of Kenilworth and Roseland, about a mile east of Sebring High School).

**7 May 2024.** Board Meeting: 4:30 PM. Dinner/Social with spouses/better halves/significant others: 6:00 PM, Restaurant to be determined.

**5 June 2024.** Board Meeting: 4:30 pm. Business Meeting, 6:00 PM. Venue: Sea Services Museum, 1402 Roseland Ave., Sebring, FL 33870, (corner of Kenilworth and Roseland, about a mile east of Sebring High School).

**Did You Know 2? From: Glenn West, President, Veterans Council Highlands County**

Your Veterans Council of Highlands County is creating a Guest Speakers Bureau. Many of the orators will be those who have spoken to MOAA.

Many of you have an appropriate story to tell these Veteran groups. If interested in becoming a speaker, send me a short resume and synopsis of your subject(s). I will publish that information to all of the county veteran organizations.

You choose whether you're available when they want you to come. Every subject does not have to be about a military experience. You might create a specific talk tailored to the group. Also, if you're like Doug Tate, and you want to do a comical act or bring your favorite dummy along. Or if you are a tax expert. Historical, informative, but not politically dividing please.

Send your info to [glenn\\_west@sbcglobal.net](mailto:glenn_west@sbcglobal.net)



Taps: Kay Whitton

**Nametags:** If you don't have and DO want a chapter nametag, please let us know. We need your info as you want it to appear on the tag: Name, Rank, Service. Spouse/significant other's name. The cost is \$10.00 each. Here is an example:



**If you want to sign up for a range of updates from MOAA**

**National:** Go to: [http://moaa.highroadsolution.com/moaa\\_preference\\_page/EmailSearch.aspx](http://moaa.highroadsolution.com/moaa_preference_page/EmailSearch.aspx) and follow the prompts. It gives various options for the type of information desired, as well as the frequency you may wish to receive it. Don't miss out on this valuable resource!

## Did You Know 3? Defense Department Expands ID Card Renewals by Mail to US-Based Retirees, Dependents

Military.com | By [Amanda Miller](#)

Published January 16, 2024 at 5:42pm ET

Military retirees and their dependents based in the U.S. may now renew their military ID cards online and receive them by mail, relieving them of a trip to the on-base ID card office.

The Defense Department [announced Tuesday](#) that it's expanding a pilot program that [began in 2023](#) and initially allowed certain dependents' Uniformed Services Identification cards, or USID, to be renewed by mail.

Portions of the renewal process have previously been available online. However, the pilot program allows online ordering from start to finish. While in the past the renewed card had to be retrieved in person at a local ID card facility, it will instead be delivered by mail under the pilot program.

After first offering the renewals by mail to dependents whose sponsors held a Common Access Card -- generally active-duty dependents -- the DoD will now allow the renewals for additional [USID holders](#), who include U.S.-based retirees, their dependents and reservists.

Out of the 4.5 million IDs of all types that the department issues every year, about 1 million are the USIDs of people based in the U.S., according to the news release announcing the pilot program expansion.

The opportunity is only for people who already have a USID and need to renew it. Those applying for the first time will still need to go to an on-base office of the Real-Time Automated Personnel Identification System, or RAPIDS.

Further expanding the new renewal process to USID holders outside the U.S. in the future is "in the works," according to the news release.

Sponsors and cardholders may request renewals at the [ID Card Office Online website](#). At the site, the sponsor must verify the dependent's identifying information and digitally sign a new Form DD 1172-2 to receive the renewed ID by mail.

Eligibility requirements:

- The USID card being renewed is active (not expired).
- The card recipient has a photo in the [Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System](#) (DEERS) taken in the last 12 years.
- The card recipient has an email address saved in DEERS for communication.
- The card recipient has a physical address (not a post office box) saved in DEERS in the continental U.S., Alaska or Hawaii.

The Defense Manpower Data Center will create and mail the new card, emailing both the sponsor and cardholder when it has done so. An email will also be sent if the online renewal wasn't successful.

## Did You Know 3? Defense Department Expands ID Card Renewals by Mail to US-Based Retirees, Dependents (Cont.O

Once the card arrives, the sponsor must log back in to the ID Card Office Online website to acknowledge receiving it. Since military ID cards are considered government property, users are asked to return their old, replaced ID cards either by dropping them off at a local ID card office or by mailing them to:

DMDC- DSC  
Attn: USID Card Returns  
2102 E. 21st Street N.  
Wichita, KS 67214.

**Note the eligibility requirements. A photo has to have been taken in the last 12 years to qualify.**

## Did You Know 4? How TRICARE Covers Ambulance Services

By TRICARE Communications FALLS CHURCH, Va. –

In some [emergencies](#), an ambulance could be the difference between life and death. Fortunately, your [TRICARE plan](#) covers [ambulance services](#) in these situations.

"TRICARE covers ambulance services when medically necessary, based on the condition of the beneficiary receiving the service," said Elan Green, chief of TRICARE Health Plan's Medical Benefit and Reimbursement Section at the Defense Health Agency. "It's good to know how TRICARE covers these services before you have an emergency. This can help you avoid surprise costs."

If you have [TRICARE For Life](#), you must follow [Medicare's rules](#) for ambulance services. This doesn't apply if you live outside the United States and U.S. territories.

For other plans, read on to learn how TRICARE covers ambulance services.

### Outpatient and inpatient ambulance services

Your location plays a role in the type of ambulance service you receive.

**Outpatient ambulance service** happens when an ambulance takes you from your home, an accident scene, or another location to a hospital.

**Inpatient ambulance service** happens when an ambulance takes you from one hospital to a hospital more capable of providing the care you need.

These services have out-of-pocket costs based on:

- Your TRICARE plan
- Your beneficiary group
- Whether you go to a network hospital or a non-network hospital
- Whether the ambulance service is inpatient or outpatient

You can find these costs with the [Compare Costs](#) tool. Call your [regional contractor](#) to learn more.

### Treat-and-release service

Treat-and-release service is when an ambulance treats you for an emergency but doesn't take you to a hospital

TRICARE covers treat-and-release when:

- The services you receive are medically necessary.
- You don't need to go to a hospital.
- You refuse transport after being treated.

(Cont.)

## Did You Know 5? How TRICARE Covers Ambulance Services (Cont.)

### Air and boat evacuation

Emergency transport by air or boat may be medically necessary. TRICARE covers air or boat evacuation only if:

- A regular "land" ambulance can't get to you.
- The nearest facility is far away or there are other obstacles.
- You must be seen quickly for your medical condition.
- You can't safely get the care you need in your location.
- You're taken to the nearest hospital with appropriate facilities.

### Ambulance services overseas

The TRICARE Overseas contractor, International SOS, provides 24/7 support if you need emergency care. Call International SOS to confirm your coverage before you receive ambulance transport. On the [Contact Us](#) page, choose where you're located to see a list of contact numbers, including Medical Assistance numbers. As noted in the [TRICARE Overseas Program Handbook](#), you should only call Medical Assistance numbers to coordinate emergency care.

## Did You Know 6? CHAPTER SENIOR THEMES

In the November MOAA magazine, page 62 has an article on Tricare Pharmacy costs for 2024. Actually the magazine has a whole Tricare guide, which is pretty informative. Of course everything is going up. Mail order which includes Express Scripts beginning January 1, 2024

90 day supply (mail order).

Generic \$13

Brand name \$38

Nonformulary \$76

I use mail order Express Scripts and I shopped around as we order Nonformulary from express scripts. What I found was on the express scripts web page a comparison of costs for other pharmacies for the drugs you take. I checked out Public Foods Pharmacy using GOOD RX, and by golly for the same meds I only pay \$12 instead of \$68 (2023 prices for 90 days).

As we discussed at the November meeting other prescriptions are found at other pharmacies for lower cost.

My point is that shop around for your meds because of the raising cost and the possibility of high rate increases in the future. Lots of us are on Fixed income and every penny counts. STAY WELL

## The MOAA Store is Now Open?

**Would you like to buy a MOAA polo shirt or some other MOAA item?** Go to the MOAA "Store," click on the following link to the store: [MOAA Store](#) You can also call them at 1-717-396-7100. From apparel to headwear and much more, we are excited for you to show your MOAA pride! They have everything from men's and ladies' polos, coffee cups, hats, you name it.



**Scan with your phone to Register for Property Fraud Alerts** with the Highlands County Clerk's office to receive notice in case any action is taken on your property.

## Did You Know 7? Black History Month at the Museum - Special Exhibit in February, by Fred Carino



The history of Black Americans serving in the Armed Forces of the United States will be featured in a Special Exhibit in the Flag Room of the Military Sea Services Museum in February. Books, correspondence, photos and video will highlight the contributions of African American service men and women in defense of our country, often against the preferences of government officials and military officers. Although black Americans stood shoulder to shoulder with the soldiers and sailors of the Revolutionary War, their acceptance and use in combat units was spotty all through the 18th and 19th and into the 20th centuries. Not until President Franklin Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802 on June 25, 1941 were the Army, Navy and Marine Corps ordered to accept African Americans as recruits. The U.S. Coast Guard accepted African Americans much before this order. Despite this, substandard training, barracks, weapons and duties were doled out to hundreds of thousands of patriotic black men and women who served faithfully, courageously and with dignity in World War II. The Special Exhibit will open on Thursday, February 1, 2024 and conclude on Saturday, February 24, 2024. Members of the Highlands County community are encouraged to share personal memoirs, correspondence, photos and stories of family members who have been veterans of America's many wars. For further information, contact Fred Carino at 863-385-0992 (office) or 863-381-3636 (cell). The Military Sea Services Museum is located at the corner of Kenilworth Blvd and Roseland Ave, one mile east of Sebring High School. We are open from noon until 4 p.m. every Wednesday through Saturday. Admission is always free. School age children and school groups are especially encouraged to visit. Tours during other times may be arranged by calling the office. The Military Sea Services Museum is, "Where history comes alive!"

## The MOAA Florida newsletter,

**The Council Communiqué** is available on the Council website at [www.MOAAFL.org/Communique.aspx](http://www.MOAAFL.org/Communique.aspx). Find out the happenings going on state-wide of interest to MOAA members, including state and local Legislative Advocacy efforts, activities of the State's 39 Chapters (including our own!), and much more. *The Council Communiqué* is published on-line every other month (October, December, February, April, June, and August) to keep Florida MOAA members updated and engaged on events and activities across the state.

## Did You Know 8? Help MOAA Make a Difference for Surviving Spouses

From MOAA Newsletter, By: Kevin Lilley January 17, 2024  
Lawmakers have received more than 12,000 messages from MOAA's [Legislative Action Center](#) on behalf of three bipartisan bills to improve surviving spouse benefits – legislation critical to MOAA's ongoing work to ensure these members of our uniformed services community get the support they deserve.

If you've sent one (or more) of those messages, thank you – your grassroots efforts keep these issues on the [minds of staffers](#) and give MOAA's advocates a louder voice when we reach out to legislative offices on Capitol Hill.

But whether you've been previously involved in these campaigns or you're new to the movement, now is the time to act – the more focus MOAA can put on these bills, the greater the chance of their inclusion in the FY 2025 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which is already coming together in congressional meeting rooms and hallways. You can learn more about that process [at this link](#).

Please consider sending (or resending) a prewritten message to your House member and senators using the links below.

Personalize the message to make an ever greater impact, and keep up with [MOAA's Advocacy News page](#) to see the progress of these bills and others during this election year.

### Caring for Survivors Act

**What:** Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) for surviving spouses works out to about 43% of what a 100% service-disabled veteran would receive from the VA. Federal survivor programs offer beneficiaries 55% of a federal worker's final pay under similar calculations. This bill would put DIC on par with the federal benefit.

**Why:** The current system is unfair to the survivors of uniformed servicemembers, many of whom supported these members through deployments, military moves, and other hardships not faced by the bulk of federal dependents.

**Take Action:** [Ask Your Lawmakers to Support the Caring for Survivors Act](#)

### Love Lives On Act

**What:** This bill would remove restrictions on when a surviving spouse could remarry and retain their benefits, to include Dependency and Indemnity Compensation. Current law prevents spouses who remarry before age 55 from receiving this benefit, as well as access to educational assistance and other programs.

**Why:** This arbitrary timeline is not imposed on most surviving spouses of other federal employees. Surviving spouses of servicemembers should not face the threat of financial ruin as they move forward in their lives.

**Take Action:** [Urge Your Legislators to Support Remarriage Legislation for Surviving Spouses](#)

### Respect for Grieving Military Families Act

**What:** The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) recoups the final month's pay of a retired servicemembers immediately upon that member's death. This action can create financial challenges for new surviving spouses; this legislation would end the practice and set up a procedure for spouses to gradually repay the amount.

**Why:** This recoupment can destabilize a surviving spouse's finances at the worst possible time, leading to potential overdraft fees. A simple fix – the bill is [less than three pages long](#) – would make a world of difference during a time when survivors need the most support.

**Take Action:** [Urge Your Legislators to Support the Respect for Grieving Military Families Act](#)

## Did You Know 9? What Does Participating in SBP Mean?

You chose to provide an income to your family after you pass away by electing to participate in the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP), which will pay your SBP beneficiary a monthly annuity.

What happens if the beneficiary you chose for SBP is no longer eligible?

Even if your SBP beneficiary is no longer eligible, you are still considered a participant in the plan unless you terminated your coverage in one of the ways allowed under title 10, chapter 73, subchapter II of the United States Code.

For example, if you chose child coverage at retirement and your children have reached the age where they are no longer eligible beneficiaries, your coverage is suspended, and no additional child SBP premiums are being deducted from your retired pay. However, you are still a participant in the plan. If you have or adopt another child, that new child would be covered under the plan (you do need to notify us).

Please remember to report any change of life events. Some changes to Survivor Benefit Plan coverage must be made within one-year of the life event, so it is very important that you notify DFAS promptly. We do not get notified through DEERS or other government channels. We need to hear from you.

Learn more about SBP at: <https://www.dfas.mil/changesbp>

Sincerely, DFAS Retired & Annuitant Pay--Delivered by Defense Finance and Accounting Service

## Did You Know 10? Famous Female Veterans. She Was the First Black Female US Naval Academy Plebe



**Janie L. Mines was the first Black female plebe at the U.S. Naval Academy. (Courtesy of Janie L. Mines) Department Of Defense | By Terri Moon Cronk Published October 06, 2020**

In 1976, when she arrived in Annapolis, Maryland, the atmosphere of the [U.S. Naval Academy](#) "was mutually exacerbating for everyone who was there," said Janie L. Mines, who went on to become a [Navy](#) lieutenant in the supply corps and one of the first women to serve on a Navy ship.

"The academy wasn't ready for [women]," Mines said. "It just happened quickly, and it needed to be done. The academy considered itself to be a combat school, and [women] were not allowed to serve in combat. So, we were seen as taking up spots for good combat officers that were needed, because we 'couldn't do the job.' Additionally, there was a general belief that as Black women ... I would not be able to lead in what was at that time a white-male Navy."

Despite that belief, she said, all women had to be able to become professional naval officers -- mentally, morally and physically. (Cont.)

## Did You Know 10? Famous Female Veterans. She Was the First Black Female US Naval Academy Plebe

"Part of [the academy's] process was to weed those out who they perceived as not able to cut the mustard in leading the Navy of the future," Mines said.

Most all-male upperclassmen did not accept women of the charter class, and strife and dissension existed in many forms, she recalled. Yet on graduation day, an upperclassman who had given Plebe Mines "challenges" left a single rose in a vase with a note on her desk that read, "I'm sorry."

And once, after an injury, Mines was trying to pass a physical test, and the male athletic staff cheered for her, she said.

"I'd never experienced that before," she added. "So I grew, the academy grew, and that's why I said it was a mutual frustration for everybody -- but we kind of grew together and we got past it."

Why would Mines attend the Naval Academy when she had been accepted to every Ivy League school where she'd applied, as well as to an [ROTC](#) program at the University of California at Berkeley?

"[The academy] was a personal calling," she said. "When the academy called and said I would be the only Black woman who would be admitted, I felt it was something I had to do."

Mines' charter freshman class in 1976 included only 81 women -- about 10% of the freshman class. In 2019, the class had grown to 72% male and 28% female graduates, according to Naval Academy officials.

Today, Mines mentors midshipmen and young Navy officers almost daily. And after 38 years of encouragement from those around her, she published a book in 2019 titled "No Coincidences: Reflections of the First Black Female Graduate of the United States Naval Academy." It contains 25 vignettes based on questions she's commonly asked by junior officers about the challenges she overcame at the academy.

"Probably 95% of my friends are male Naval Academy graduates," Mines said. "In terms of preparing me for life, you just couldn't beat the Academy experience. I learned from the many challenges I faced at the Naval Academy and in the Navy, so I was not afraid to step forward and take charge of a lot of the challenges I faced in civilian life."

Her busy life is also filled as a member of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS). The 70-year-old organization's members came to the academy when she was there to help support female students, Mines said, so she wants to "pay it forward ... and be there for others."

## THE ROLE OF AIRCRAFT IN WWI

By Bill Muckler, Captain USMC

Both sides of The Great War, between the Central Powers, which included Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and the Ottoman Empire, and the European Allied Forces quickly recognized the advantages of creating air superiority which was not known before 1914. They worked relentlessly throughout the world to develop bigger, faster, and deadlier fighters and bombers. The airplane had only existed for about a decade before the outbreak of World War I but winning the war in the skies became a tactical necessity by the end of the confrontation.

Reconnaissance was the main military role of aircraft in World War I. Hot air balloons had been deployed by the military for more than a century, including during the Civil War, to get a panoramic view of the battlefield. However, fixed-wing aircraft with a pilot, and an observer up front manning the binoculars and taking notes, provided the ability to fly far behind enemy lines to map terrain and track troop movements.

British Royal Flying Corps reconnaissance planes alerted British and French commanders in 1914 of German troops preparing for a siege of Paris through Belgium. This enabled the Allied armies to outflank the Germans, resulting in the critical victory of the Battle of the Marne.

Handwritten drawings and on-the-fly observations weren't always accurate but proved critical in some early operations. Soon thereafter cameras were mounted to reconnaissance planes, taking dozens of aerial photos that would be developed and stitched together to create panoramic battlefield maps. Those increasingly sharp and zoom-in images presented field commanders with unprecedented intelligence for positioning artillery and planning troop movements.

In the beginning reconnaissance planes were such a novelty that enemy pilots would wave at each other as they crisscrossed the front lines. It didn't take long for the strategic importance of spy planes to sink in. This created a need to shoot the enemy's aircraft out of the sky. Fighter planes didn't exist until 1915. After the Marne, military commanders began to take seriously the idea of eliminating enemy spy planes. Early on, slow-moving reconnaissance planes would take potshots at each other with service pistols and rifles. Ground crews mounted machine guns for the observers but they were difficult to aim around the propeller, wings, and struts. (Next month: the big breakthrough.)



Brigadier General Billy Mitchell in Cockpit of a Thomas Morse Pursuit Plane

## PURPOSES OF THE MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is a not-for-profit corporation that is operated exclusively to further the interests of the nation and its uniformed services personnel, their family members, and survivors.

### From the preamble to the Bylaws of The Military Officers Association of America

- To inculcate and stimulate love of country and flag;
- To defend the honor, integrity, and supremacy of our National Government and the Constitution of the United States;
- To advocate military forces adequate to the defense of our country;
- To foster the integrity and prestige of uniformed service;
- To foster fraternal relations between all branches of the various Services from which our members are drawn;
- To further the education of children of Service personnel;
- To aid personnel of the Services from which our members are drawn, and their family members and survivors, in every proper and legitimate manner; and
- To present their rights and interests when Service matters are under consideration

**We unite to form THE MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA**

**TAKE ACTION!!**

<https://moaa.quorum.us/>

## MOAA's Top Legislative Priorities for 2024

### MOAA's Legislative Priorities for the New Congress

Legislative Advocacy is one of our primary missions. This year, MOAA is keeping up the momentum for existing priorities such as the Major Richard Star Act, which would help tens of thousands of combat-injured veterans and had the support of two-thirds of Congress at the end of last session. Here are the 2023 MOAA priorities to address the challenges facing our uniformed service community. MOAA also remains active on other issues not listed here and priorities will be shaped throughout the year depending on successes or emerging issues that warrant an all-hands approach. Additionally, we share interests with The Military Coalition, other veteran and stakeholder groups and leverage those relationships to expand our reach on Capitol Hill.

[Go here on the MOAA website for more information](#) and click on the links below to learn more about the issues:

- [Compensation and Service-Earned Benefits](#)
- [Military Housing](#)
- [Health Care for Currently Serving and Retirees](#)
- [Health Care and Benefits for Veterans](#)
- [Service Families](#)
- [Survivors](#)
- [Guard and Reserve](#)

*Have you signed up to TAKE ACTION on the MOAA Legislative Action Page? If not, go to <https://moaa.quorum.us/> and sign up today!*

The Heartlander is published monthly by members of the South Central Florida Chapter of Military Officers Association of America, P.O. Box 7841, Sebring, FL 33872. The Chapter is an apolitical and not-partisan, non-profit organization affiliated with National MOAA and the Florida Council of Chapters, MOAA, not associated with the Department of Defense. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of MOAA, the Florida Council of Chapters, the Chapter or DOD. This newsletter can be accessed electronically on our website: [www.scfcmoaa.org](http://www.scfcmoaa.org), is emailed electronically to members, and can be sent hard copy to members not on the Internet.



## Be An Advocate!

MOAA's Legislative Action Center is your destination to:

- Learn about MOAA's legislative priorities.
- Communicate directly with your legislators.
- Join thousands of others in or outside the Uniformed Services Community — Anyone can sign up through this link!

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# Our Members in Action

**Bob receiving Leadership Awards and our Level of Excellence Award at the FCOC Leadership Conference**



**Col Gary Nolan, USAF (Ret) Installing Our New Board Members**



**Mike Presenting Gary With a One-of-a-Kind Mug**



**Cindy Nolan With Her Gift from Our Chapter**



**Gary Presenting Bob With a MOAA Medallion**








Former, Active, Retired Military Officers, Warrant Officers & Surviving Spouses

**JOIN A FLORIDA CHAPTER**

- Advocacy from the National to the State and Local levels
  - Philanthropy and Community Service
  - Comradery with a Purpose

**NEVER STOP SERVING**

Find a chapter at [www.MOAAFL.org/Membership.aspx](http://www.MOAAFL.org/Membership.aspx)

**MOAA Chapters: Where the rubber meets the road!**

As Military Officers, our shared experience of service forms a bond like no other. And while MOAA is based in Washington, D.C., the heart and soul of our organization lies in local communities served by local chapters. where members pledge to "Never Stop Serving".

MOAA chapters unite active duty, former, and retired officers and warrant officers from every branch of service, including the National Guard and Reserve, as well as their spouses. Membership in a chapter provides an opportunity to connect with fellow officers, networking, grassroots advocacy, community service, philanthropy, and much more.

Connect with other, like minded officers committed to keeping our military strong and ensuring promises made to veterans are kept. There are 39 MOAA Chapters in Florida. Join a Florida MOAA Chapter now by visiting our website at: [www.MOAAFL.org/Membership.aspx](http://www.MOAAFL.org/Membership.aspx)



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Air Force Retiree Services: (800) 531-7502; [www.retirees.af.mil](http://www.retirees.af.mil)  
Arlington National Cemetery: (703) 607-8000;  
[www.arlingtoncemetery.org](http://www.arlingtoncemetery.org)  
Armed Forces Retirement Home: (800) 422-9988; [www.afrh.gov](http://www.afrh.gov)  
Army & Air Force Exchange Service: (214) 312-2011;  
[www.aafes.com](http://www.aafes.com)  
Army Retired Services: (703) 571-7232;  
<https://soldierforlife.army.mil/retirement>  
Burial at Sea Information: (866) 787-0081;  
Combat Related Special Compensation:  
[www.va.gov/resources/combat-related-special-compensation-crsc/](http://www.va.gov/resources/combat-related-special-compensation-crsc/)  
DEERS: (800)-538-9552, Fax: (831) 655-8317;  
[www.tricare.osd.mil/deers](http://www.tricare.osd.mil/deers)  
Defense Commissary Agency: [www.commissaries.com](http://www.commissaries.com)  
DAS Casualty Assistance Branch: (800) 321-1080 or (216) 522-5955; (For Reporting a Retiree's death, option #1)  
Fleet Reserve Association: (703) 683-1400; [www.fra.org](http://www.fra.org)  
Gulf War homepage: [www.gulflink.osd.mil/retired\\_activities/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.gulflink.osd.mil/retired_activities/Pages/default.aspx)  
I.D. Cards Benefits and Eligibility: (866) 827-5672;  
Internal Revenue Service: (800) 829-1040; [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)  
Marine Corps Retired Affairs: (800) 336-4649; [www.usmc.mil](http://www.usmc.mil)  
(Hover over "Marine Services" then click on "Retired Services")  
Medicare: (800) 633-4227. TTY: (877) 486-2048; [www.moaa.org](http://www.moaa.org)  
<http://www.moaa.org/>  
Military Officers Assoc. of America: (800) 234-6622; [www.moaa.org](http://www.moaa.org)  
National Burial Services: (800) 697-6940  
Navy Reserve Personnel Management (PERS 9): (866) 827-5672;  
Navy Casualty Assistance: (800) 368-3202  
After duty hours call (901) 634-9279 for Casualty Watch Officer  
Navy Retired Activities: (866) U-ASK-NPC (866-827-5672)  
Email: [MILL\\_Retired\\_Activities@navy.mil](mailto:MILL_Retired_Activities@navy.mil)  
Navy Retired Activities Offices  
Navy Uniform Shop: (800) 368-4088; [www.navy-nex.com/uniform](http://www.navy-nex.com/uniform)  
Report the Death of a Retiree: (800) 321-1080  
Reserve Component SBP: (866) 827-5672 ask for PERS-912  
Retiree Dental - Delta Dental: (888) 838-8737; [www.trdp.org](http://www.trdp.org)  
Servicemembers Group Insurance (SLI): (800) 419-1473;  
[www.insurance.va.gov](http://www.insurance.va.gov)  
Naval Historical Center: (202) 433-2210; [www.history.navy.mil](http://www.history.navy.mil)  
Social Security Administration: (800) 772-1213; [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)  
**TRICARE:** [www.mvtricare.com/mtc](http://www.mvtricare.com/mtc)  
**TRICARE East:** [www.humanamilitary.com/beneficiary](http://www.humanamilitary.com/beneficiary)  
AL, AR, CT, DC, DE, IL, IN, KY, FL, GA, LA, MA, MD, ME, MI, MS, NC,  
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**TRICARE Overseas:** (888) 777-8343; [www.tricare-overseas.com](http://www.tricare-overseas.com)  
**TRICARE For Life:** (866) 773-0404; [www.tricare.mil/tfl](http://www.tricare.mil/tfl)  
**TRICARE mail order pharmacy:** (877) 363-1303;  
[www.tricare.mil/pharmacy](http://www.tricare.mil/pharmacy)  
[www.express-scripts.com](http://www.express-scripts.com)

**VA:** [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)  
Regional offices: (800) 827-1000 (overseas retirees should contact the American Embassy/consulate), TDD (800) 829-4833  
**Insurance:**  
VA Regional Office and Insurance Center  
PO Box 7208 (claims inquiries) -ORPO  
Box 7327 (loans) -ORPO  
Box 7787 (payments)  
Philadelphia PA 19101  
(800) 669-8477; [www.insurance.va.gov](http://www.insurance.va.gov)  
**Burial information:** (800) 827-1000; [www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov)  
**GI Bill:** (888) 442-4551; <http://www.gibill.va.gov/s>  
**Records:**  
For replacement DD 214s, service records, medical records, award information:  
Retired prior to 1995:  
[www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records](http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records)  
Retired after 1995:  
**Sister service retiree publications:**  
Air Force Afterburner: [www.retiree.af.mil](http://www.retiree.af.mil)  
Army Echoes: <https://soldierforlife.army.mil/retirement/echoes>  
Coast Guard Evening Colors: [www.uscg.mil/hq/cg1/psc/ras](http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg1/psc/ras)  
Marine Corps' Semper Fidelis: [Semper Fidelis](http://SemperFidelis.com)  
**Pay/SBP Questions:** [www.dfas.mil](http://www.dfas.mil)  
Pay inquiries and update of pay or SP records in case of death, divorce or remarriage:  
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Defense Finance and Accounting Service  
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**RETIRED ACTIVITY OFFICES IN FLORIDA**  
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Email: [centralfloridaRAO2@thevillages.net](mailto:centralfloridaRAO2@thevillages.net)  
**EGLIN**  
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Email: [eglin.rao@us.af.mil](mailto:eglin.rao@us.af.mil)  
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Phone: 813-828-4555  
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Email: [patrick.rao@us.af.mil](mailto:patrick.rao@us.af.mil)  
**To report a Retiree/Annuitant death:** Contact the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) first to report a death. Go to the DFAS website for more information. [Retired Military & Annuitants \(dfas.mil\)](http://RetiredMilitary&Annuitants(dfas.mil))

