



# Heartlander

South Central Florida Chapter  
January 2024



## South Central Florida Chapter of MOAA



P.O. Box 7841  
Sebring, FL 33872



### Chapter Officers:

**President:** Bob Brooks, tel. 863-471-6318  
**Vice President:** Glenn West, tel. 614-296-5881  
**Treasurer,** David Grey, tel. 785-282-5445  
**Secretary:** Doug Tait, tel. 863-385-1763  
**Chaplain:** Ken Kirk, eMail: [ken@wejoysing.com](mailto:ken@wejoysing.com)  
**Recruiting/Retention:** Bob Posthumus, tel.: 757-876-4751  
**Legislative Affairs:** Charley Dye, eMail: [rock10@earthlink.net](mailto:rock10@earthlink.net)  
**Personal Affairs:** Craig Smith, tel. 207-703-3402  
**Newsletter:** Bob Brooks, tel. 863-471-6318 [gatorrnb@gmail.com](mailto:gatorrnb@gmail.com)  
**Past President:** Mike Borders, tel. (h) 863-402-8292; (c) 703-795-8776  
**President Emeritus:** Roy Whitton  
**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/>

**11 January 2024.** Board Meeting: 4:30 PM. Dinner/Social with spouses/better halves/significant others: 6:00 PM, Meeting will be at the **3 Gens Grill**, located at 3400 Sebring Pkwy, Sebring, FL 33870 (1 mile east of Homer's)

**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).

### 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 annual Christmas Party was a tremendous success. Many thanks to Glenn and Pam West for ordering, delivering, and preparing the good food and punch we had. The highlight of the evening was the singing of the National Anthem and then leading us in Christmas Carols by Nelly Ford and her son. Thanks are also extended to Diana, Peggy, and any other wives that assisted with the decorations and preparation. The donations collected paid for the food. We can not use chapter funds for these types of activities.

A nice article in the December 19th Highlands News-Sun by Phil Attinger highlighted our chapter's involvement in the Salvation Army's Toy Drive. A copy of the article is included in this newsletter on page 5. The photo that accompanied the article is located on page 7.

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 a former or retired officer, invite them to one of our meetings and then to join our chapter.

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. 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.

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.

Installation of our new officers will occur at the January 11th meeting.

### 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? Our New Officers for 2024-2025 Were Elected at the November 9th Meeting.**

**Installation of the new officers will occur at our January 11, 2024 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.

**Did You Know 2? Do you know these Congressional facts? by Dave Loy, Legislative Affairs Chair**

When a new Congress convenes, there are two sessions with each session being one year in duration. Since 1935, in accordance with the 20th Amendment to the Constitution, Congresses have begun and ended at noon on January 3 of odd-numbered years, while the second session runs from January 3 to January 2 of even numbered years.

Our current Congress - 118th Congress - convened on January 3, 2023 and will end on January 3, 2025. This Congress is unique in that it also features the first female Senate president pro tempore (Patty Murray); the first Black party leader (Hakeem Jefferies); the longest serving Senate Republican leader (Mitch McConnell); and the longest serving Democratic Whip (Dick Durbin) in the history of Congress.

**January Birthdays:** 4 Jan: Malcolm Johnson  
4 Jan: Fred Carino  
14 Jan: Gil Uribe

**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**

**11 January 2024.** Board Meeting: 4:30 PM. Dinner/Social with spouses/better halves/significant others: 6:00 PM, Meeting will be at the 3 Gens Grill, located at 3400 Sebring Pkwy, Sebring, FL 33870 (1 mile east of Homer's)

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**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 3? 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)

**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:



## Did You Know 4? 2024 Pay Raise: What You Need to Know

From MOAA News December 27, 2023 *Editor's note: This article by Amanda Miller originally appeared on [Military.com](#), a leading source of news for the military and veteran community.*

President Joe Biden signed the annual defense authorization bill into law Friday afternoon, confirming the largest [raise in military basic pay](#) in decades.

The 2024 National Defense Authorization Act, or NDAA, was approved by Congress this month. It backed the increase for active-duty service members and reservists.

Current troops get a big bump in basic pay for the second year in a row starting in January, while veterans will receive an above-average increase as well. Common allowances are also going up.

### 2024 Basic Pay Raise

Active-duty troops and drilling Guard and reserve members will receive a 5.2% pay raise in January, the largest increase since getting a 6.9% raise in 2002.

Set according to an established formula, the 5.2% raise was part of Biden's fiscal 2024 budget request to Congress and was included in the House, Senate and conference versions of the National Defense Authorization Act, or NDAA, before receiving the president's signature.

The 5.2% raise increases the monthly basic pay for an enlisted E-1 with less than two years of service by nearly \$100 to \$2,017. For an officer with the paygrade of O-4 with more than six years of service, the raise amounts to about \$380 a month for a total of about \$7,681. The Defense Finance and Accounting Service will release exact amounts within a dollar of these estimates in January.

### 2024 BAS and BAH Rates

While the raises in basic pay are accelerating in 2024, the year's relative increases in the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) and the Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS) are comparatively modest.

The [Basic Allowance for Subsistence](#), an allotment received by active-duty troops who live outside the barracks, is going up only 1.7% for both officers and enlisted members. In 2023, by comparison, BAS went up 11.2%. In 2024, the monthly BAS payment will be \$316.98 for officers, up from \$311.68, while enlisted members' BAS will increase from \$452.56 to \$460.25.

The 5.4% increase in the BAH coming in 2024 is similar to the increase in basic pay but can't match 2023's 12.1% rise. BAH is set at 95% of housing costs in a given area. The nearly one million troops who receive BAH will absorb \$84 to \$194 of their calculated housing costs monthly in 2024.]

### 2024 Military Veteran Pay Raise

The 5.2% raise in basic pay for active-duty, Guard and reserve members in 2024 joins a 3.2% [cost of living adjustment](#) (COLA) given to military retirees and to veterans who receive disability checks from the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#).

While 3.2% may look low compared to the 2022 (5.9%) and 2023 (8.7%) adjustments, it's still above the average of 2.6% for the prior 20 years. (Cont.)

## Did You Know 4? 2024 Pay Raise: What You Need to Know (Cont.)

That increase means that, for 2024, retired military members and veterans who receive [disability payments](#) will receive a \$32 increase for each \$1,000 of [military retirement](#) pay they receive each month. [Survivor Benefit Plan](#) payments will increase by the same amount.

Military retirees who entered military service on or after Aug. 1, 1986, and opted for the [Career Status Bonus \(CSB/Redux retirement plan\)](#) have any COLA increases reduced by 1%. That means they will see a smaller increase of \$22 per \$1,000 in 2024.

## Did You Know 5? Surviving Spouse Corner: Facing Your Holiday Blues

From MOAA News By: Pat Green December 01, 2023

The holiday season is a time of joy. It's a time of get-togethers with family and friends. But it also can be the perfect storm of events and emotions. For those suffering the loss of a spouse, it might be overwhelming and a time of dread.

Some have a fear of going to a party alone, of becoming emotional, or being alone and lonely on days that used to hold so many happy memories. Others worry the weight of carrying their grief is visible and contagious. A few are trying to decide how much jolliness is appropriate, what lessons about grief and coping they are teaching their children and grandchildren, and whether the absence of decor and tradition signal the sadness and depression that surrounds us.

All these considerations can weigh one down, and the numbness sets in. Fortunately, there are some coping skills that work.

**Find your comfort zone.** Initially, you might feel you want to cocoon, and be antisocial. For most of us, crying is necessary. A lot of crying is best done privately. You also need time to focus on *your* health and happiness. Maybe you sit out the holidays. Eventually though, you must ...

**Embrace change.** After a necessary (your time frame) grieving period, accept the reality that no holiday will be the same again, and adjust.

Instead of the big holiday dinner at your house, take the family out. If it's affordable, rent a cabin in the woods or a house at the beach. Assign dishes for each guest to bring. Announce that your only responsibility is the turkey, gravy, and dressing. Relax. Do things simply.

If you and your spouse hosted an annual holiday cocktail party, and you feel up to entertaining, do something different. Alcohol is a depressant, and tears are harder to hold back if you've been drinking. Have a cookie-sharing party or a neighborhood open house.

Decorate, but keep it simple. Guests will enjoy the party whether your tree is 5 feet or 15 feet tall. A wreath trimmed with a red ribbon on the front door might be all you have the energy for, and it's enough!

Ask the leadership of your church, temple, or mosque for suggestions for changes in rites or religious ceremonies. Possibly a family member can assume the role your spouse held in presiding over a customary event.

If you are truly alone, find your solace and your footing in helping others. This will be a difficult time, but good times will follow. Many of us have been in your shoes. As you now know, that is why we are called "surviving spouses."



## Did You Know 6? Famous Female Veterans Grace Murray Hopper (From Military.com March 03, 2023)

### Commodore Grace Hopper

Known as "Amazing Grace," Commodore Hopper's importance in U.S. naval history is apparent everywhere you turn: a destroyer was named after her (USS Hopper, DDG-70), as was the Cray XE6 "Hopper" supercomputer. As founder of the COBOL programming language, a precursor to many of the software code approaches of today, her work is legendary among computer scientists and mathematicians.

In 1943, during World War II, she joined the United States [Naval Reserves](#). She was assigned to the Bureau of Ordinance Computation Project, where she became the third programmer of the world's first large-scale computer called the Mark I. When she saw it, all she could think about was taking it apart and figuring it out.

"That was an impressive beast. She was 51 feet long, eight feet high and five feet deep," Hopper said.

She mastered the Mark I, Mark II and Mark III. While trying to repair the Mark I, she discovered a moth caught in a relay. She taped the moth in the log book, and from that, she coined the phrase "a bug in the computer." During her career, she mastered the UNIVAC I, the first large-scale electronic computer, and created a program that translated symbolic math codes into machine language. This breakthrough allowed programmers to store codes on magnetic tape and recall them when they were needed -- essentially the first compiler.

In 1966, Hopper retired from the Naval Reserves as a commander, but she was called back to active duty one year later at the Navy's request to help standardize its computer programs and their languages. She was promoted to captain in 1973 by Adm. Elmo Zumwalt Jr., chief of naval operations. And in 1977, she was appointed special adviser to the commander, Naval Data Automation Command (NAVDAC), where she stayed until she retired.

In 1983, a bill was introduced by Rep. Philip Crane (D-Ill.), who said, "It is time the Navy recognized the outstanding contributions made by this officer recalled from retirement over a decade and a half ago and promote her to the rank of commodore." Crane became interested in Hopper after seeing her March 1983 "60 Minutes" interview.

He'd never met Hopper, but after speaking with several people, he was convinced she was due the added status of being a flag officer. The bill was approved by the House, and at the age of 76, she was promoted to commodore by special presidential appointment. Her rank was elevated to rear admiral in November 1985, making her one of few female admirals in the history of the United States Navy.

By the time of her death in 1992, Hopper was renowned as a mentor and a giant in her field, with honoree doctorates from more than 30 universities. She was laid to rest with full military honors in Arlington National Cemetery.

## Did You Know 7? Got Gratitude? Express It!

From MOAA News: By: Erin Cardinal December 27, 2023

As I reflect on 2023, I am incredibly humbled and grateful to be a part of MOAA, supporting the broader uniformed services community, aligned to a role I truly love. I have the honor and privilege of equipping, educating, and empowering servicemembers past and present, as well as military spouses, to pursue their goals and dreams!

Helping others live their best lives is the most edifying job I could ask for. For that, I am truly grateful.

How about you? For what, or whom, are you grateful this past year?

### An Attitude of Gratitude

Gratitude can improve your mental and physical health, according to a [Mayo Clinic Health System article](#). This is because oxytocin, known by some as the "love hormone," is released when we express sincere gratitude. Taking the time to reflect on or write down what we're grateful for, even if we spend only a few minutes at the end of the day, will curb entitlement, instill humility, and build character.

We often take basics needs such as food, clothing, shelter, and clean running water for granted. Gratitude can remind us of our blessings and foster the virtues of humility, charity, and kindness.

### Gratitude Is a Mindset

A fantastic example of what can happen when gratitude is your attitude comes from a book I have grown to love: [The Gap and The Gain](#), co-authored by Dan Sullivan (Founder of [Strategic Coach](#)) and Dr. Benjamin Hardy. The book begins with a story of renowned speed skater Dan Jansen, who by all accounts was the best skater in the world for much of his career but entered what would be last event in his last Olympic Games without a medal.

"He decided this final Olympic event would be an expression of gratitude – a way of saying 'thank you' and 'goodbye' to the sport, the people, and the experiences he loved so much," the authors wrote.

The difference was simply his mindset. Jansen had finished eighth as a favorite in his best event at the competition, and then – spoiler alert – he not only won gold, but broke the world record in what was considered his weakest event.

### Gift Yourself the Practice of Gratitude

You might be thinking, "I already say 'thank you!'" or, "I am grateful for what I have!" – that's great! Don't stop doing those things. But consider making a daily habit out of practicing gratitude: Take an intentional pause to reflect on, and WRITE DOWN, what you are/were grateful for during the day.

I started this daily practice when I was deployed in 2018, making three entries in a simple book. That's it. I wasn't sure if it was going to have an effect, but I still wanted to try it out. After all, there is not much to do after hours on deployment – I had plenty of time to reflect on and write down three things for which I was grateful, especially when my list of complaints was long.

Simply reflect at the end of your day, or the beginning if you prefer. Or both, for extra credit – just kidding, there is no extra credit (just extra grace!). Try it for 90 days. You can buy a [gratitude journal](#), or simply grab a notebook and write the date and three to 10 things for which you are grateful.

Rinse and repeat daily. If you miss a day, pick up where you left off. The goal is not perfection. The goal is gratitude.

## Did You Know 8? Retired military officers donate toys to The Salvation Army

From Heartland New-Sun, Dec. 19, 2023 By Phil Attinger Staff Writer

If you filled an "Angel Tree" bag or donated a toy through a retired military officer, you took part in a big program this year.

It's the ninth year that the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) has worked with The Salvation Army to gather toys, bicycles and other gifts to bring families some joy this season.

They have worked directly with Sandy Meeks, staff member at The Salvation Army, who has seen to gathering gifts for Christmas, but also food and funds to help people through the season and throughout the coming year.

"Sandy (Meeks) said they have roughly the same number of kids this year," said Mike Borders, a past president of the local MOAA chapter. "There is clearly a lot of need in the county." He said they gathered more bicycles this year than last year, a number that has kept going up because of how well they network with people to get bicycles donated.

"[The Salvation Army] warehouse these gifts on the Fairgrounds," Borders said.

Borders gives a great deal of credit for this effort to Glen and Pam West, the chapter's Christmas toy program coordinators. He is the chapter vice president, and she coordinated an area-wide toy drive with her employer, RE/MAX Realty Plus. Meanwhile, Glenn West got a large contribution from the Reflections on Silver Lake Veterans Association, and Chapter President Bob Brooks got the Avon Park Service Club to also make a large contribution.

In all, they collected approximately 55 bicycles and 120 "Angel Trees" gift bags, for a total of more than \$12,000 in toys, clothing and bicycles. Just one Angel Tree gift bag, with the wish list for toys and clothes, can easily cost up to \$200, Borders said. Add to that the cost of a bicycle, and the amount of generosity can be amazing, he said.

"It's amazing how much goes into this each year," Borders said.

MOAA is an independent, nonprofit organization of retired, active and former military officers, including the National Guard and Reserve, with some 355,000 members worldwide. It has approximately 400 chapters at the local level, representing the eight uniformed services of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard, Public Health Service and the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration.

When the dormant chapter got revived in 2014, Borders said, they looked for a Christmas gift charity to assist, and would have done Toys for Tots, part of the U.S. Marine Corps. Unfortunately, the Corps did not have a local program in Highlands County, and setting one up would have required a full-time commitment, much like a job, from a volunteer coordinator.

"We just didn't have the bandwidth as a MOAA chapter to do this," Borders said.

Instead, retired attorney Tom Nunnallee suggested The Salvation Army's annual drive, and they got started. Borders has great praise for Meeks, who is very active in organizing The Salvation Army efforts since the local organization's former commanders retired.

"She's a trooper," Borders said.

## CHAPTER SENIOR THEMES by Craig Smith

If you haven't noticed the cost of stamps are going up again January 21, 2024. So if you still send letters get the FOREVER stamps before the price increase. See the chart below.

The US Postal Service has announced an upcoming price increase, effective January 21, 2024, if reviewed favorably by the Postal Regulatory Commission.

Product	Current Prices	Planned
Letters (1 ounce)	66 cents	68 cents
Letters (metered 1 ounce)	63 cents	64 cents
Domestic Postcards	51 cents	53 cents
International Postcards	\$1.50	\$1.55
International Letter	\$1.50	\$1.55

There will be no change to the additional-ounce price, which remains at 24 cents. The Postal Service is also seeking price adjustments for Special Services products including Certified Mail, Post Office Box rental fees, money order fees and the cost to purchase insurance when mailing an item.



Taps: Herbert Smith

**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.



**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.

**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.



## **BATTLEFIELD COMMUNICATIONS**

**By Bill Muckler, Captain USMC**

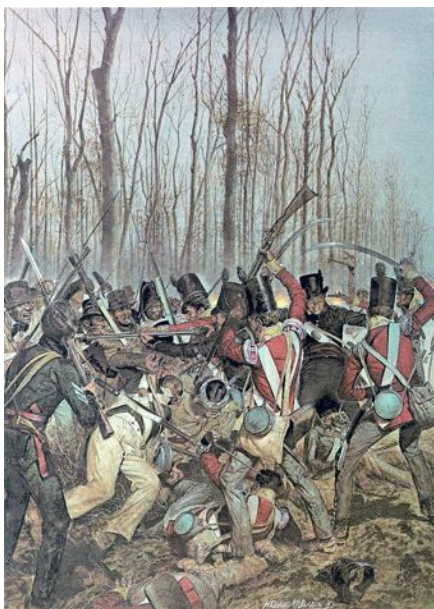
Never in the history of mankind has total battlefield action been observed by the public in real-time. The Israeli conflict in Gaza is televised day and night. The war in Ukraine is shown around the world. Every move is documented by video. News correspondents are embedded with the soldiers in full view of their camera crews. We see combatants firing everything from rifles to rockets. We see the explosions and the rubble. Nothing is left to the imagination of the viewer. Nothing is left unseen.

Reporters have covered conflicts for millennia. Centuries ago they were most likely historians. We know war correspondents have covered battles Americans have fought in. We've seen photographs from the Civil War. But we've never experienced anything similar to what this new technology is bringing us.

What would have happened if the internet, telephones and telegraphs existed in 1814? The Battle of New Orleans was fought between the British Army and the United States roughly five miles southeast of the French Quarter of New Orleans on January 8, 1815. British Secretary of State and War, Henry Bathurst, issued secret orders to General Pakenham on October 24, 1814, commanding him to continue the war even if he heard rumors of peace.

The battle took place fifteen days after the signing of the Treaty of Ghent which formally ended the War of 1812 on December 24, 1814, but news of the agreement had not yet reached the United States from Europe. The British possessed a large advantage in numbers, training, and experience. The American forces defeated the British Army in slightly more than thirty minutes. Americans suffered just seventy-one casualties while the British suffered more than 2,000 including the deaths of Major General Sir Edward Pakenham and his second in command Major General Samuel Gibbs.

The Battle of New Orleans would never have been fought if news of the signing had been communicated instantaneously to both armies in real time. The technology of today would have saved the lives of soldiers who would have already been headed home by January 8, 1815. History would have undoubtedly been changed. Would the hero of the battle, Andrew Jackson, be elected as the seventh President of the United States?



## **Heard on the Hill—David Loy, Legislative Affairs Chair**

**By MOAA Staff**

MOAA's work on Capitol Hill on behalf of the uniformed services community has been recognized again by The Hill, one of the nation's top Beltway-focused news outlets, with a position on the publication's Top Lobbyists list for the 17th straight year. MOAA was among the honorees in the 2023 Grassroots category, which included AARP, Burn Pits 360, and Veterans of Foreign Wars. "This honor reflects not just the work of our Government Relations team on the Hill, but our entire headquarters team and our members and supporters throughout the country," said MOAA President and CEO Lt. Gen. Brian T. Kelly, USAF (Ret). "The grassroots support of our councils and chapters has been the backbone of our advocacy mission, along with the tens of thousands of MOAA members who bring our agenda items to their lawmakers via our Legislative Action Center. It's a yearlong group effort, and I'm proud to be a part of it."

**Also by David Loy**

### **The Elephant and Donkey . . . .**

Did you ever wonder how the two National Political parties came to use the Elephant and Donkey as their ICON?

A political satirist in the 1870s is ultimately responsible for these symbols. Thomas Nast, a German born American caricaturist and political cartoonist, who is often referred to as the Father of Political Cartoons, helped create and develop the Republican and Democratic symbols.

The Republican Elephant first appeared in Harper's Weekly in 1874. Cartoonist Thomas Nast drew a donkey clothed in lion's skin, scaring away all the animals in the zoo. One of those animals, the elephant, was labeled "The Republican Vote." After the Republicans lost the White House in 1877 Nast drew a cartoon of an elephant walking into a trap set by a donkey. Nast chose the elephant to represent the Republicans because elephants are intelligent, but easily controlled. Other cartoonist picked up the symbol and the elephant, and the symbol soon caught on and became the symbol of the Republican Party, because at the time pro-Republican newspaper editors said the elephant symbolized strength and dignity.

The Democratic Donkey was first associated with Democrat Andrew Jackson's campaign for president in 1828. His opponent called him a donkey and Jackson decided to use the donkey image on campaign posters. Later, in 1870, cartoonist Thomas Nast, drew a donkey in Harper's Weekly to represent the "Copperhead Press" kicking a dead lion, representing Abraham Lincoln's Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton, who had recently died. When the Democratic party was formed, the donkey was the mainstay of labor. Consequently, the symbol caught on with the pro-Democratic newspapers editors as they claimed the Democratic party represented labor and was the party of the working class.

## 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!

[WWW.MOAA.ORG/TAKEACTION](http://WWW.MOAA.ORG/TAKEACTION)



SCAN THE QR CODE



OR GO TO THE LINK TO SIGN UP!



## Our Members in Action

From left, Glenn West, vice president of the local Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) chapter, Sandy Meeks of the Highlands County Salvation Army, MOAA Chapter President Bob Brooks and MOAA Chapter Past President Mike Borders pause among the bicycles and toys in bags collected this year for The Salvation Army Toy Drive. This is the ninth year that the veterans organization has worked with The Salvation Army to bring Christmas cheer.



## Chapter Members Enjoying our Christmas Party





Chapter Members Enjoying our Christmas Party






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)  
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[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:  
**Retiree:**  
Defense Finance and Accounting Service  
U.S. Military Retirement Pay  
8899 E 56th Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46249-1200  
(800) 321-1080 / Fax: (800) 469-6559.  
SBP/RSFPP annuitant:  
Defense Finance and Accounting Service  
U.S. Military Annuitant Pay  
8899 E 56th Street  
Indianapolis IN 46249-1300  
(800) 321-1080 / (800) 469-6559  
**RETIRED ACTIVITY OFFICES IN FLORIDA**  
**CENTRAL FLORIDA**  
Phone: 352-430-1679  
Email: [centerfloridaRAO2@thevillages.net](mailto:centerfloridaRAO2@thevillages.net)  
**EGLIN**  
Phone: 850-882-5916  
Email: [eglin.rao@us.af.mil](mailto:eglin.rao@us.af.mil)  
**HOMESTEAD**  
Phone: 786-415-7580  
Email: [rao\\_homestead@us.af.mil](mailto:rao_homestead@us.af.mil)  
**HURLBURT FIELD**  
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Email: [1sofss.rao@us.af.mil](mailto:1sofss.rao@us.af.mil)  
**MACDILL**  
Phone: 813-828-4555  
Email: [Roldan.milian@us.af.mil](mailto:Roldan.milian@us.af.mil)  
**PATRICK**  
Phone: 321-494-5464  
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))