

MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA  
Central Florida Chapter



FOCUS



May 2026 Volume 69 Issue 3

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Dates to Note:

May 12th– MOAA CFC Luncheon

June 9th– MOAA CFC Luncheon

May is Month of the Military Caregiver

May is National Military Appreciation Month

May 1st Silver Star Service Banner Day

May 7th National Day of Prayer - 2026 theme 'Glorify God Among the Nations, Seeking Him in All Generations.'

May 8th Victory in Europe (VE) Day

May 8th National Military Spouse Appreciation Day

May 10th Mother's Day

May 13th Children of Fallen Patriots Day

May 14th Ascension Day

May 16th Armed Forces Day

May 22nd National Maritime Day

May 25th Memorial Day

June is PTSD Awareness Month

June 6th D-Day Invasion Anniversary

June 12th Women Veterans Day

June 14th Flag Day

June 14th Army Birthday

June 19th Juneteenth Day

June 21st Father's Day

June 23rd U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Birthday

June 27th USCG Auxiliary Birthday

June 27th National PTSD Awareness Day

SEE DUES NOTICE ON PAGE 5

**President's Message**

It is with great pride that I announce that our 2026 JROTC Scholarship Selection Board chose eight of the finest JROTC cadets in Central Florida! We are now up to 37 JROTC High Schools in our catchment area, and in addition we have UCF ROTC for Army and Air Force. Without the generosity of our chapter members to contribute to our scholarship fund, our ability to issue a check for \$1,000 to each cadet would not be possible. I thank you for seeing the goodness of our program and supporting the future leaders of our military! I would be remiss if I didn't thank members of our chapter for making our scholarship program a reality on April 11th for our JROTC luncheon: LTC Dean Ptaszynski, COL Kin LaFate, LTC Mike and Vicki Gillett, CDR Randy Fiebrandt, and COL Bob Brogan, and our photographer Nita Seng. I hope you take the time to read the attached bios of each of the 8 cadets. We honored the cadets, their family and cadre on April 11th with a luncheon, and each year I remind myself that this is the most celebrated luncheon of the year with our members. I want to also thank COL Bob Brogan for overseeing and keeping track of the MOAA JROTC Leadership Medal program with our 37 JROTC High Schools and 2 UCF ROTC program (no easy task to keep up with). Several of our chapter members continue to present the MOAA medal to the Junior Cadets, and it's always exciting to see the delight on the cadets faces as they cheer on their fellow cadets!



**Memorial Day is on May 25th**, it is up to all of us to honor the legacy and memory of our fallen heroes who we memorialize on what makes our nation exceptionally extraordinary, For some of us, every day is Memorial Day as we accept the deaths of those we know who gave their lives for love of country and democracy we so cherish. We look

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[www.flmoaa.org](http://www.flmoaa.org)

MOAA National: [www.moaa.org](http://www.moaa.org)

## MOAA Take Action Center:

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

## MOAA CFC Luncheon on May 12<sup>th</sup> @ 11:30am at DoubleTree UCF \$24 per person

Our next Chapter meeting is a Luncheon at 11:30am on May 12th and will be held at the DoubleTree Orlando East - UCF Area. The DoubleTree is located at 12125 High Tech Ave, Orlando. Please note the hotel sits back off the road and may not be immediately visible. There will be a full Salad Bar with Cubed Chicken, Turkey, and Ham to customize your own Chef Salad, AND Pepper Steak, Garlic Mashed Potatoes (Gravy on the side) and Grilled Vegetables. And ... we will have a special Costco birthday cake! The price for the lunch is \$24 per person and can be paid in cash, check, or credit card. As always, we welcome your generous JROTC/ROTC scholarship contributions! RSVP NLT than May 9th to this email, or email [lorraineholland@hotmail.com](mailto:lorraineholland@hotmail.com) or call 407-221-1388. Please come out to enjoy a wonderful event with your fellow chapter members and hear informative information from CAPT Denise Smith on her time on the USNS Comfort and celebrate our 96-year young MOAA member COL Carol Reagles!

Save the Date: The June luncheon will be on June 9th at 11:30am. Please note that we do not hold luncheons in July and August, and the next meeting is September 8th.

*upon them as our own beloved sons and daughters knowing their patriotic sacrifices live on through safeguarding their memories by future generations to come. President Reagan reminded us that "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction."*

Our MOAA family member COL Carol Reagles turns 96 in May and please come out to our May 12th luncheon to help celebrate her birthday with her. We will have a very informative presentation from MOAA family member USN CAPT Denise Smith. Denise served on the USNS Comfort. You might recall the Comfort was deployed during Gulf War Desert Shield and Storm. In addition, it was docked in NYC in March and April 2020 during the COVID19 Pandemic. Comfort's duties include providing emergency, on-site care for U.S. combatant forces deployed in war or other operations. Please mark your calendar for June 9th for next month's luncheon. For

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those of you that will be taking vacations during the upcoming months, please make memorable memories, and safe travels on your journeys!

Cheers, Lorraine

### **CAPT Denise L. Smith, Nurse Corps, USN (Ret)**

A native of West Springfield, Pennsylvania and a graduate of Phillipsburg State General Hospital School of Nursing, Captain Smith received her Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing from the Pennsylvania State University in 1996, and subsequently her Master of Science degree in Nursing with a focus on Adult/Older Adult Health in 2002 from the Pennsylvania State University. CAPT Smith was commissioned an Ensign in the Naval Reserve, May 1986.



As a reservist, CAPT Smith started her career in Jacksonville, Florida as Assistant Clinical Supervisor and Assistant Training Officer of NRNH JAX 108. Recalled to active duty in August 1990, in support of Operation Desert Shield/Storm, CAPT Smith's first assignment was to Naval Hospital Camp LeJeune, then Naval Medical Center, Portsmouth. After completing her first recall-to-Active Duty assignment, she requested and received approval to remain on Active Duty in 1991, with follow-on orders to Naval Hospital Guam, from 1991-1994.

From July 1996 to June 2000, she was assigned to National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland, as Division Officer of the Same-Day surgery Unit. During this tour she deployed on the USNS COMFORT (TAH-20) platform as Division Officer of the four hundred (400) bed surgical ward, in support of Operation Baltic Challenge, June 1999.

In June 2002, she reported to Naval Health Clinic New England (NHCNE) as the Risk Manager/Performance Improvement Coordinator, responsible for the oversight of Risk Management/Quality Performance programs for five military facilities across five states. Subsequent to this assignment, Captain Smith transferred to Naval Hospital, Naples, Italy as the Quality Management Department Head. During her tenure in Italy, she also served as the Department Head of the Multi-Service Ward.

After completing this overseas assignment, CAPT Smith transferred to Naval Health Clinic Cherry Point, NC, as the Senior Nurse Executive (SNE) in July 2007, and promoted to Captain, Aug 2007.

In August 2010, CAPT Smith reported to Navy Medicine National Capital Area as the Regional Senior Nurse Executive.

CAPT Smith was selected as the first Deputy Commander Executive Officer of the Navy Medicine Education and Training Command (NMETC), headquartered at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas, and assumed the role in November 2012.

On June 19, 2014, CAPT Smith accepted the role as Commanding Officer, Navy Medicine Training Support Center (NMTSC). As Commanding Officer, she was responsible for the strategic leadership and overall support of six hundred (600) Officers, Enlisted and Civilian staff and over six thousand (6000) Navy initial entry, advanced technical and professional students per year at the unique, Tri-Service training environment on Fort Sam Houston, TX. The Center prepares Officer and Enlisted medical personnel to support military operational and garrison missions worldwide.

CAPT Smith's accomplishments include numerous awards, the highest award, The Legion of Merit, presented June 2016; however, her greatest pride and joy come from her two daughters, Sarah and Abigail and their families.

### **MOAA Central Florida Chapter Celebration JROTC Scholarship Program**

We have 37 JROTC High Schools and a UCF ROTC Air Force and Army Detachment in our Osceola, Orange and Seminole County catchment area.

Three of us spent two Saturday mornings interviewed of the top senior cadets that the cadre instructors select from various schools. Mike Gillett sets the interview stage by greeting the cadets prior to their interview. The competition is fierce, and we usually select the top 8-10 cadets based on our donations from our members (each cadet is awarded \$1,000). Our



*Cadets Bauer, Royal, Hawley, Feliciano, Silva, Wagner, Scarpulla. Cadet Neudigate could not attend.*

JROTC luncheon is my favorite luncheon event as it's an opportunity to showcase our future military leaders and recognize them with the generous financial donations from our chapter members for their achievements. It's also an opportunity to show our gratitude to the cadre instructors and family members. Please see our attached flyer for pics & bios on each cadet that we printed for our April 11th luncheon.

The Chapter believes the cadets benefit from the interviewing process whether or not they win a scholarship because they will be interviewing for positions throughout their lives. It was a privilege to share in the exciting achievements of not only what the cadets have accomplished in High School, but we shared in the excitement that one cadet received an Air Force Service

Academy Appointment,, and some qualified for ROTC Scholarships, and one is enlisting in the Navy! Each year I think I can't be more impressed with our selection of cadets, and each year I hear and see more potential for military service in the cadets we selected. On behalf of all four selection board members, I want to thank the hard-working Cadre Instructors who take their job seriously to train and mold our future leaders, and the family members who help guide and support their children who in many cases want to follow in their footsteps and serve our country. Job well-done Cadets!

**Annual Dues are due.** We rely on the \$20 annual dues to help pay for items such as meals for our guest speakers, medals for our JROTC/ROTC cadets, dues to the Council and basic needs like a post office box, mailing and other administrative items. SECTION 4.1 (of the Bylaws state): *The membership of the Chapter shall be composed of: a) men and women (and their surviving spouses) who are, or have been, commissioned or warrant officers of the seven U.S. uniformed services (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Public Health Service) or the reserve or other components of those services. Also, b) cadets (including students in college or university ROTC programs or Armed Service academies.* You don't have to be a MOAA Member to be a member of the Chapter. Dues can be paid at your next meeting, by mailing to MOAA CFC, 10151 University Blvd, PMB 145, Orlando, Fl. 32817-1904, using the form at the end of this newsletter or just using the website at [www.moaacfc.org](http://www.moaacfc.org) (click on Donate and indicate Dues in the Note block). We need your support, and while you are at it, please update your information (especially your spouse) so we can keep in touch!

**FOCUS Editor Requests Articles of Interest**  
**By Randy Fiebrandt**

***This is your newsletter.***

Would you like to submit an Article of Interest? Reply to this Focus newsletter email for inclusion in the next Newsletter [director1@moaacfc.org](mailto:director1@moaacfc.org)



Want to find out what is going on with MOAA members and organizations across the State of Florida? **The Council Communiqué is posted on the FCoC website at [www.flmoaa.org](http://www.flmoaa.org)** .

The Florida Council publishes *The Council Communiqué* every other month (February, April, June, August, October & December) for MOAA members in Florida.

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## **Membership and Mission of MOAA**

The last page of this newsletter will always be a Central Florida Chapter (CFC) membership application for your use to recruit new members. MOAA's greatest mission is to improve the lives of those who serve, and their families. The larger our numbers, the greater our voice. If you know of an eligible military, veteran or surviving spouse, please print and cut out the membership application form and ask the veteran to join up and become a member of your Central Florida Chapter!

## **MOAA CFC Board Meeting Minutes**

Minutes for MOAA CFC Board Meetings are located on the web site at [www.moaacfc.org](http://www.moaacfc.org).

## **MOAA National Col. Marvin J. Harris Communications “Five Star” Award Recipients!**

Each year, MOAA national recognizes chapters and councils doing an outstanding job communicating with their members by awarding the Col. Marvin J. Harris Communications Award. The award is given to the chapters and councils with the best newsletters and websites from among MOAA's 400+ affiliates. Our chapter received the “5 Star” or highest rating. We exceeded the requirements for this award with our state-of-the-art website, a first class printed and electronic monthly Newsletter—THE FOCUS. Congratulations to Ken Dold - Webmaster, Randy Fiebrandt the Editor of The Focus, and Pat Green for their input into the Focus Newsletter. Randy is a double dipper for not only receiving the award for our Chapter Newsletter but also receiving the award for the FCoC Communique' Newsletter! I thank all our Chapter administrators for clearing the bar to receive this distinction and keeping our members informed and engaged. Job Well Done!



### **The Florida Council Social Media Channels**

**facebook** @ *MOAA Florida Council of Chapters*

**LinkedIn** @ *MOAA-Florida-Council-of-Chapters*

**Instagram** @ *FloridaCouncilofChaptersMOAA*

**YouTube** @ *FloridaCouncilofChapters*

[\*\*www.FLMOAA.org\*\*](http://www.FLMOAA.org)

**Be sure to Follow and Like Us!**



## **Veterans Entrepreneurship Initiative (VEI) Veteran Business Summit 2026** **May 14th at 1pm**

The VEI Veteran Business Summit 2026 is a premier event designed to educate, empower, and support veteran-led businesses. Scheduled for May 14, 2026, at the GuideWell Innovation Center in Lake Nona located at 6555 Sanger Road, Orlando, FL 32827. The summit will kick off at 1 PM and conclude with a networking reception at 6:30 PM. Attendees can expect to learn from successful veteran business owners, connect with organizations that provide access to capital, and gain inspiration from successful stories. The summit aims to foster innovation and collaboration within the military veteran business community, further empowering veterans in entrepreneurship. Registration <https://veteranbusinesssummit.com/>  
Jane Hertz, Program Coordinator  
Veterans Entrepreneurship Initiative (VEI)  
[www.vei.center](http://www.vei.center)

## **MOAA 2026 Federal Legislative Priorities for Veterans, Military & Families**

**Our Florida MOAA Legislative Chairman, Pierre Louis, has a fantastic article on MOAA's Five Legislative Priorities for 2026.**

Each priority below includes a direct link to the MOAA Legislative Action Center. Taking Action is simple. Each click takes less than 60 seconds and directly contributes to Florida's national leadership in advocacy. **Please Note: You Do Not have to be a member of MOAA to use these links to make your voice heard!**

### **Priority #1: Shutdown Fairness Act (S. 3168)**

Ensures service members continue receiving pay during government funding lapses. **Florida Cosponsor:** Sen. Rick Scott (R-FL) has been a strong advocate for protecting military pay during shutdowns.

► **TAKE ACTION HERE** <https://moaa.quorum.us/campaign/142300/>

### **Priority #2: Work Opportunity Tax Credit Act (H.R. 6231 | S. 3265)**

Modernizes tax credits for employers who hire veterans and adds military spouses as a targeted group. **Florida Cosponsors:** Sen. Rick Scott and Sen. Ashley Moody support the Military Spouse Hiring Act (S. 596), a key component.

► **TAKE ACTION HERE** <https://moaa.quorum.us/campaign/148732/>

### **Priority #3: GUARD VA Benefits Act (H.R. 1732)**

Reinstates criminal penalties for unaccredited representatives who charge unauthorized fees for VA disability claims assistance. Protects veterans from predatory practices.

► **Campaign Coming Soon**

### **Priority #4: Military CARE Act (H.R. 6796)**

Establishes a digital platform for TRICARE beneficiaries to report access barriers at Military Treatment Facilities. Increases transparency and accountability in the military health system.

► **TAKE ACTION HERE** <https://moaa.quorum.us/campaign/151857/>

### **Priority #5: Veteran Caregiver R3 Act (H.R. 2148 | S. 879)**

Expands health care coverage and career transition support for veteran caregivers. Provides

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extended medical coverage, employment assistance, and retirement planning services.

► **TAKE ACTION HERE** <https://moaa.quorum.us/campaign/113746/>

**FLORIDA ADVOCACY IS THE GOLD STANDARD!**

**What You Can Do:** Go to <https://moaa.quorum.us> in the Legislative Action Center to send a message to your congressional representatives. Taking action is simple. Each click takes less than 60 seconds and directly contributes to Florida's national leadership in advocacy. MOAA combines the voices of active, reserve, retired and former officers - as well as their spouses and survivors - on behalf of the entire military community. If you aren't receiving MOAA.org email updates, [sign up for The MOAA Newsletter](#). You can choose how often you want to hear receive emails as well as which topics are included in your newsletter.

**Your support for these efforts is crucial. Here's how to be an effective advocate:**

1. Email your legislators with a MOAA-suggested message.

Visit <https://moaa.quorum.us/> to find pre-written emails outlining MOAA's advocacy positions. Enter your ZIP code, and they'll be delivered right to your senators and representative. Some members ask us whether these pre-written messages are effective; our experience says yes. Legislative staffers know a constituent who takes the time to send a message is one who will vote in November.

2. Make a phone call.

Call (866) 272-MOAA (6622), MOAA's toll-free line to the U.S. Capitol switchboard, to be connected with your legislators' offices. Congressional staff members track constituent calls, and elected officials pay close attention. You can find talking points at [takeaction.moaa.org](http://takeaction.moaa.org).

### **Florida Department of Veterans Affairs (FDVA) April Newsletter Available:**

FDVA's latest monthly email subscription newsletter, 'Forward March' is out (click) [April 2026 Edition of the Forward March Veterans' Newsletter](#) and launched its inaugural edition in January 2020 and the subscriber base has grown to 64,000 in the latest issue. No-cost subscriptions are available on website [www.FloridaVets.org](http://www.FloridaVets.org) **April 2026 Edition of the Forward March Veterans' Newsletter** is produced by *Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs* and available online <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/FLDVA/bulletins/4123564> The monthly newsletter is another tool to help connect Florida Veterans, their families, and surviving spouses with earned benefits & support. FDVA's monthly *Forward March Veterans' Newsletter* continues to grow subscribers. The email subscription-based newsletter has more than 62,000 subscribers and is available by visiting [www.FloridaVets.org](http://www.FloridaVets.org) In addition to the informative monthly email, please explore the website to gain additional information about benefits, points of contacts, and specific information vital to our veterans and their families.

If you seek no-cost advice or counseling regarding Veterans' issues, please contact one of our State Veterans' Service Officer at (727) 319-7440 or via email at [FDVA.VSO@FDVA.FL.GOV](mailto:FDVA.VSO@FDVA.FL.GOV). Our team of Hope Navigators is also hard at work connecting Veterans and their families with information and resources to improve their quality of life. Contact one of our Hope Navigators today at [HopeNavigators@fdva.fl.gov](mailto:HopeNavigators@fdva.fl.gov) or call (833) GET-HOPE. The link for the flyer is [https://floridavets.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Hope-Florida-Veterans-Flyer\\_9.3.2024.pdf](https://floridavets.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Hope-Florida-Veterans-Flyer_9.3.2024.pdf)

We encourage you to learn more about your earned services, benefits and support. Follow FDVA online at [www.FloridaVets.org](http://www.FloridaVets.org) and their many social media platforms such as X,

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Facebook and LinkedIn. A Free FDVA MOBILE APP is also available by visiting <https://floridavets.org/download-the-fdva-app/>

Florida State Legislation Websites:

To view the website of the Florida House of Representative, [www.myfloridahouse.gov](http://www.myfloridahouse.gov)

To view the website of the Florida Senate, [www.flsenate.gov](http://www.flsenate.gov)

To view the status of Florida veteran-related legislation under consideration, [www.floridavets.org](http://www.floridavets.org)

## **Military Spouse Appreciation Day May 8th 2026**

National Military Spouse Appreciation Day is a presidentially approved holiday and is celebrated on the Friday before Mother's Day in May. This year it will be observed on Friday May 8th, 2026. "A man travels the world over in search of what he needs and returns home to find it." -- George A. Moore "Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength. Loving someone deeply gives you courage." -- Lao Tzu

**May is Military Appreciation Month**, a time to pause and reflect on the service and sacrifice of those who have served our country. Military Appreciation Month is also a time to acknowledge those who serve alongside veterans. The spouses, partners, and children of service members carry the weight of long absences, emotional distance, and silent struggles. Caring for the whole family is how we truly honor their service

**The Children of Fallen Patriots Day on May 13<sup>th</sup>** salutes the sacrifice of military children who have lost a parent in the service to our country. This day helps to raise awareness of the sacrifices and struggles children must endure in the wake of their parents' death. The numbers are staggering and in the past 25 years, more than 15,000 children have lost parents in military conflict. This date reminds us to applaud their resilience and strength and show appreciation for the young people whose lives were forever changed. May 13th was selected as the date of observance due to being the day Arlington National Cemetery was established in 1864.

## **What is Memorial Day and why do we honor it on May 25th?**

The origins of the holiday can be traced back to local observances for soldiers with neglected gravesites during the Civil War.

The first observance of what would become Memorial Day, some historians think, took place in Charleston, S.C., at the site of a horse racing track that Confederates had turned into a prison holding Union prisoners. Blacks in the city organized a burial of deceased Union prisoners and built a fence around the site, Yale historian David Blight wrote in The New York Times in 2011.

Then on May 1, 1865, they held an event there including a parade – Blacks who fought in the Civil War participated – spiritual readings and songs, and picnicking. A commemorative marker was erected there in 2010.

One of the first Decoration Days was held in Columbus, Mississippi, on April 25, 1866, by women who decorated graves of Confederate soldiers who perished in the battle at Shiloh with flowers.

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On May 5, 1868, three years after the end of the Civil War, the tradition of placing flowers on veterans' graves was continued by the establishment of Decoration Day by an organization of Union veterans, the Grand Army of the Republic. General Ulysses S. Grant presided over the first large observance, a crowd of about 5,000 people, at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia on May 30, 1873. The orphaned children of soldiers and sailors killed during the war placed flowers and small American flags atop both Union and Confederate graves throughout the entire cemetery. This tradition continues to thrive in cemeteries of all sizes across the country.

Until World War I, Civil War soldiers were solely honored on this holiday. Now, all Americans who've served are observed.

### **Orlando VA Healthcare System (OVAHCS) Memorial Day Ceremony on Friday, May 22nd at 10 a.m.**

The [Orlando VA Healthcare System \(OVAHCS\)](#) invites Veterans, families, staff, and the Central Florida community to attend its annual Memorial Day Ceremony on Friday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026, at the [Orlando VA Medical Center](#). [RSVP at https://www.va.gov/orlando-health-care/news-releases/orlando-va-healthcare-system-to-host-memorial-day-ceremony-honoring-fallen-service-members/](https://www.va.gov/orlando-health-care/news-releases/orlando-va-healthcare-system-to-host-memorial-day-ceremony-honoring-fallen-service-members/) is requested for those planning to attend.

The ceremony will begin at 10:00 a.m. at the Outdoor Amphitheater, located at 13800 Veterans Way, Orlando, FL 32827, and will honor the brave men and women who gave their lives in service to the nation. This year's keynote speaker will be [Rear Admiral \(ret\) Denise Hinton](#), a distinguished leader in public health and military service. Rear Admiral Hinton previously served as the Deputy Surgeon General of the United States from October 2021 to September 2025 and performed the duties of the Surgeon General in 2025. Her career also includes serving as Chief Scientist at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and as a nurse officer in the U.S. Air Force. A Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing, she has received numerous national honors for her contributions to science and public health.

Prior to the ceremony, Veteran Outreach will begin at 9:00 a.m. and continue throughout the event. This outreach effort will feature VA programs and Veteran Service Organizations sharing information, resources, and services available to Veterans across Central Florida. Attendees can engage with representatives, receive educational materials, and learn more about the support available to them and their families.

"Memorial Day is a solemn reminder of the sacrifices made by those who gave everything in service to our country," said Timothy Cooke, Director and CEO of the Orlando VA Healthcare System. "At the Orlando VA, we are honored to stand alongside our Veterans and community as we remember the fallen, reflect on their legacy, and reaffirm our commitment to those who have served and continue to serve."

The Presentation of Colors will be conducted by the American Legion Post 286 from Pine Castle, FL. Additionally, musical performances will be provided by the VFW Post 2093 Central Florida Community Band & Brass Trio, adding a ceremonial tribute to the program.

## Parking Information:

- Parking is available in both the east and west parking garages, as well as the south parking lot near the emergency department.
- Attendees are kindly asked not to park in the Community Living Center or Domiciliary parking areas.
- Golf cart shuttles will be provided to assist guests traveling to and from the amphitheater.

For those unable to attend in person, the ceremony will be streamed live online: **Watch here:** <https://www.youtube.com/live/iAcZgV5MpMs>.

Visit: [VA Orlando Health Care | Veterans Affairs](#), to subscribe and receive email updates by clicking [here](#), like us on Facebook at: [@OVAHCS](#), follow us on Instagram at: [@OVAHCS](#), or on Twitter at: [@OVAHCS](#).

## Unlocking the Value of State Veterans Homes

PSO Disptach, Wednesday, April 29, 2026

Submitted by: **Mike Ungerman**, [mikeu18@protonmail.com](mailto:mikeu18@protonmail.com)

*American Legion Oviedo Memorial Post 243, 491 W. Broadway St., Oviedo, Florida*

**"Veterans Strengthening America"**



### **This Week's Focus: Unlocking the Value of State Veterans Homes**

It's no secret that the cost of long-term care in this country has become a massive financial burden for many families, with private nursing facilities often running between \$6,000 and \$10,000 every single month. It is a drain that can wipe out a lifetime of savings in short order.

However, many of our brothers and sisters in arms are sitting on a benefit that is significantly more affordable, yet surprisingly overlooked: **State Veterans Homes.**

### **Why They Are Worth A Look**

Unlike generic private nursing homes, these facilities are specifically designed for those who served. They offer everything from assisted living to full-time skilled nursing care, all in an environment built around the camaraderie and community that only fellow veterans can provide.

Because these homes are state-run and supported by the *U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs* through per-diem payments, the costs are drastically lower—often just a fraction of what you'd pay in the private sector. In some cases, depending on your disability rating, the cost can be minimal, or even zero.

### **Important Realities**

Before you assume you don't qualify or that the wait is too long, consider these points:

- **Eligibility is broad:** It's not just for combat veterans. If you have an honorable discharge and meet residency and medical requirements, you likely have a path forward.
- **Layered Benefits:** You can often stack your existing VA benefits, pensions, and Aid and Attendance to further offset any costs.

- **The "Waitlist" Factor:** Because these homes are such a high-quality, cost-effective option, they are in demand. If you think you might need this level of care down the road, it is wise to start your research and application process *now*, rather than waiting for an emergency.

### **Take Action**

Each state operates its own system, which means the rules, pricing, and services vary depending on where you reside. If you or a loved one are looking at long-term care options, don't leave this stone unturned. It is a practical, smart way to protect your finances while ensuring you receive the care you've earned.

For those of us here in the Sunshine State, you can explore facilities, review eligibility, and start your research directly through the *Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs*:

**[Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs - State Veterans' Nursing Homes](https://floridavets.org/locations/state-veterans-nursing-homes/)**

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**Video of the Week: New Florida law will let veterans and spouses receive care together at veterans' nursing homes;** <https://youtu.be/EvRft2xHxAI?si=DT01S7XB8xkH3Em>

### **Help Bring our Florida Vietnam Veterans" Enduring Spirit" to the Forefront!**

I present a challenge to all who read this: **Florida is short signing up 200 Florida Vietnam Veterans to overtake New York to become the #1 State in the Nation for Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA)! The Florida State VVA website is: [www.vvafsc.org](http://www.vvafsc.org) You don't have to be a Vietnam Veteran to sign-up for the bi-weekly Florida E-Recon newsletter to read current and past issues, and you can sign-up right from the website. The site notes that there are 30 Florida VVA Chapters, and the state has 6,003 members and 883 Auxiliary members. The National VVA website is [www.vva.org](http://www.vva.org). Please help recruit fellow Floridian Vietnam Veterans in Florida and let's kick New York to the number 2 slot in the Nation for Vietnam Veterans!!!!**

At a 2025 VVA Florida State Council in Lake Mary I had the good fortune of hearing and meeting the recently re-elected National President of VVA Jack McManus. He sums up exactly why veterans like me that have come after Vietnam Veterans owe a debt of gratitude we could never repay. "We have changed the way veterans are treated by our country. If those changes, especially the respect and dignity for sacrificing in service to the nation, are to be forever, then the vestiges of the VVA spirit must endure. I really believe that VVA has a future. That future will continue after we move on down our own lifetime's road. It is that intangible thing in the hearts and souls of every proud VVA and AVVA member. It's our VVA spirit."

Membership to VVA is open to U.S. military veterans who served on active duty (for other than training purposes) in Vietnam between November 1, 1955, and May 7, 1975, or in any duty location between August 5, 1964, and May 7, 1975. This is by far the best bang for your buck for life membership in a Veteran Service Organization: For a **one-time payment of \$50 for a LIFE membership**, the VVA application website: [www.vva.org](http://www.vva.org).



**Saturday, May 30, 2026**  
**10 a.m.–1 p.m.**

**Join us for supportive resources for veterans and families, tailored to overall well-being.**

**AMVET Post 30**  
 315 Ferguson Drive  
 Orlando, FL 32805

**For more information, visit**  
[Orange.FloridaHealth.gov](http://Orange.FloridaHealth.gov).  
 Scan the QR Code below.



**Featured Resources:**

- VA Benefits
- Healthcare/Mental Health
- Employment
- Housing
- Financial Literacy & Benefits Planning
- Education
- And More

**BROUGHT TO YOU BY:**

Bureau of Violence & Injury Prevention  
 Florida Department of Health in Orange County



**VA** U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
 Veterans Health Administration  
 Orlando VA Healthcare System

JOIN US FOR OUR

# MEMORIAL DAY

REMEMBER AND HONOR

## CEREMONY



**FRIDAY, MAY 22, 2026**  
 VETERAN OUREACH BEGINS AT 9:00 A.M.  
 CEREMONY BEGINS AT 10:00 A.M.

ORLANDO VA MEDICAL CENTER  
 OUTDOOR AMPHITHEATER  
 13800 VETERANS WAY, ORLANDO, FL 32827

WATCH ON YOUTUBE LIVE  

## THE MUSEUM OF MILITARY HISTORY

# MAY 16, 2026



### ARMED FORCES DAY

REMEMBER & HONOR



**10:00AM - 3:00PM**  
 VETERAN RESOURCES  
 MUSEUM EXHIBITS  
 FREE ADMISSION

**5:30PM**  
 ARMED FORCES DINNER  
 \$600/TABLE  
 \$75/SEAT

EXPERIENCE **Kissimmee** FLORIDA  
 GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC HALL  
 1101 Massachusetts Ave.  
 St. Cloud, FL 34769  
 MUSEUMOFMILITARYHISTORY.COM  
 407-301-8424



**MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA**  
**Central Florida Chapter**

Military Officers Association of America  
 Central Florida Chapter  
 10151 University Blvd, PMB 145  
 Orlando, Fl. 32817-1904  
 RETURNED SERVICE REQUESTED

**MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA - CENTRAL FLORIDA CHAPTER**

**Application for Membership, Dues Payment & Information Change Form**

- Enroll me as a regular member                       Address or Information Change Only  
 Enroll me as a surviving spouse member     Dues payment of \$20 & Information update

LAST NAME		FIRST	MIDDLE	RANK	SPOUSE NAME
STREET ADDRESS			ADD'L INFO	PHONE NUMBER	
CITY	STATE	ZIP + 4	E-MAIL ADDRESS		BIRTH DATE

NAME OF DECEASED OFFICER (IF APPLICABLE) \_\_\_\_\_

Member of National MOAA? Y / N    Member Number \_\_\_\_\_

If No, may we sign you up for a no-charge MOAA National Basic Membership?

<u>Status</u>		<u>Service</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Active Duty	<input type="checkbox"/> Army	<input type="checkbox"/> Coast Guard	
<input type="checkbox"/> Retired	<input type="checkbox"/> Navy	<input type="checkbox"/> USPHS	
<input type="checkbox"/> Reserve	<input type="checkbox"/> Air Force	<input type="checkbox"/> NOAA	
<input type="checkbox"/> Former	<input type="checkbox"/> Marine Corps	<input type="checkbox"/> Space Force	
<input type="checkbox"/> Surviving Spouse			

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Annual dues (payable January) are \$20 for all memberships (except existing Life Members). New members joining after September 1<sup>st</sup> get credit through the end of the following year. Make checks payable to and mail application to: MOAA CFC, 10151 University Blvd, PMB 145, Orlando, Fl. 32817-1904.. If you would like to make an additional donation to support our ROTC/JROTC scholarship program, please include it with your membership dues, or send separately. This would be greatly appreciated!