### MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA Central Florida Chapter







March 2025 Volume 68 Issue 2

<u>www.moaacfc.org</u>

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#### **Dates to Note:**

#### March 11<sup>th</sup> – MOAA CFC Luncheon

March is Women's History Month
March 1st – Seabee Birthday
March 3<sup>rd</sup> - Navy Reserve B'day
March 9<sup>th</sup> - Daylight Saving Time
Begins
March 13<sup>th</sup> - K-9 Veterans Day
March 15<sup>th</sup> – American Legion
Birthday
March 17<sup>th</sup> – St. Patricks' Day
March 25<sup>th</sup> – Medal of Honor Day
March 29<sup>th</sup> – Vietnam Veterans
Day

April is Month of the Military Child April 5<sup>th</sup> – Gold Star Spouses Day April 9<sup>th</sup> – Former POW Recognition Day April 14<sup>th</sup> – Air Force Reserve Birthday April 23<sup>rd</sup> – Army Reserve Birthday

April 12<sup>th</sup> – MOAA CFC JROTC Scholarship Award Luncheon

#### President's Message

With all the delightful warm weather we are having, the new green buds on our trees lets us know that Spring has Sprung! Luckily, we are turning our clocks forward on March 9<sup>th</sup> to give us an extra hour of sunshine for all the new growth that is occurring. I'm wishing you all the luck of the Irish on St. Patricks' Day on March 17<sup>th</sup>, and don't forget to



"Welcome Home" our Vietnam Veterans on their special day on March 29<sup>th</sup>. Mark your calendar for March 11<sup>th</sup> as we are having our monthly luncheon with special guest speaker Brittany Parks, the Strategic Director for Concerned Veterans for America (CVA). CVA has been a supporter of our MOAA Florida Council of Chapter (FCoC) and our organizations have much to learn from each other. I went into their website www.cv4a.org and discovered both MOAA and CVA are supporting the ACCESS Act (Assuring Critical Care Expansions to Support Servicemembers) to expand veterans' community care options. Like MOAA, the CVA website makes it very easy for anyone to sign a prepared letter that is sent to our federal legislators in support of veteran legislation.

If it's been a while since you've attended one of our Chapter luncheons, please reserve April 12<sup>nd</sup> (our only Saturday luncheon) to come out and celebrate our JROTC Scholarship recipients, their family and cadre. This 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. Lastly, I know there are chapter members who don't always come to our luncheons and thus may not get a reminder that the \$20 dues we each pay to support our chapter are now overdue. We rely on the dues to help pay for items such as meals for our guest speakers, and medals for our JROTC/ROTC cadets. Please note that we have changed our mailing address for our Chapter: MOAA CFC. 10151 University Blvd, PMB 145, Orlando, Fl. 32817-1904. You will see the form at the end of this newsletter or go into

Mailing Address:

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MOAA Take Action Center: https://moaa.guorum.us/

# Next MOAA CFC Event March 11<sup>th</sup>, 11:30am \$24 per person

Our next Chapter meeting is a luncheon on March 11th at 11:30 am 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. Come out to hear from Brittany Parks, the Strategic Director for Concerned Veterans for America (CVA). CVA is a vocal proponent and advocate to support our military, veterans and their families. RSVP NLT than March 7th to this email, or email lorraineholland@hotmail.com or call 407-221-1388. There will be a full Salad Bar with Cubed Chicken, Turkey, and Ham to customize your own Chef Salad, AND to be determined Main Protein with sides, plus Chef's choice for dessert. The price for the lunch is \$24 per person and can be paid in cash, check, or credit card.

<u>Save the Date</u> – April's Special JROTC Scholarship luncheon will be on April 12<sup>th</sup>. This is a "do not miss" event that we look forward to all year to celebrate our JROTC Cadets, their families, and Cadre.

our website to pay your dues online at <a href="https://www.moaacfc.org">www.moaacfc.org</a>. We need your support, and while you are at it, please update your information (especially your spouse) so we can keep in touch! For those celebrating Easter, I wish each of you a joyous Easter celebration in April!

Cheers, Lorraine



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#### At our February Luncheon:

We had two great speakers at our February Luncheon. Postponed from January and therefore eagerly awaited, Ms. Veteran American 2024, Cassandra Guzman, was our guest speaker. Cassandra represents both the Ms. Veteran America and Final Salute organizations.

Cassandra is a distinguished Real Estate Professional, Interior Designer, and Military Veteran from Orlando, Florida. She is originally from Geneva, Ohio where she enlisted in 2008 resulting with ten years of service in the United States Air Force bringing a wealth of resilience, experience, and dedication to her community and field. She comes from a proud military family in which her grandparents, parents, and husband have served and continue to serve this great nation.



During her military service, Cassandra excelled as a Medical Logistics Technician and Professional Military Education Instructor. Her leadership spanned from organizing military ceremonies, to mentoring future Air Force leaders, and ensuring global medical readiness. She demonstrated exceptional skills in leadership, organization, communication, and management, leading teams of 20 in dynamic environments.



Cassandra, her husband Carlos, Richard Proctor and Charles Smith

Her achievements include meticulous asset management, surpassing senior leadership expectations, and nurturing future Air Force leaders. Cassandra served at overseas duty stations including Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska, and Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan, earning accolades such as the Air Force Commendation Medal and the Air Force Achievement Medal for her outstanding performance and dedication.

Both Final Salute Inc. and Ms. Veteran America are deeply committed to empowering and supporting women veterans. As Ms. Veteran America 2024, Cassandra has the honor of representing a platform dedicated to advocating for women veterans and ensuring their voices are heard at local, state, and national levels. The mission is to raise awareness about the unique challenges women veterans face and to advocate for access to resources and services that help them transition successfully to civilian life.

Final Salute Inc. is a national program founded by Jas Boothe, a U.S. Army veteran, who has become a leading voice for women veterans. Her vision and leadership have helped thousands of women veterans secure safe housing and rebuild their lives. Through Final Salute Inc., Jas has worked tirelessly to address the unique needs of women veterans, including access to healthcare, housing, and other essential services.

For more information, see <a href="https://www.msveteranamerica.org/">https://www.finalsaluteinc.org/Home.html</a>.

We were also honored to have Angela Navratil, wife of member Ron Navratil, who is a member of the local Central Florida Korean Association. The Central Florida Korean Association began in 1970. As of 2024, the service has continued for 54 years in its 25th generation. The Central Florida Korean Association is a volunteer organization representing the local Korean community centered in Orlando, and its purpose is to promote friendship and harmony among Koreans, promote Korean culture, help them enter American society with their identity and pride as Koreans, and serve as a bridge between Korea and the United States. All Koreans in Central Florida live a happy life of respect, love, gratitude, and service to each other. Our mission is to create a bright and joyful world overflowing with happiness.



The Central Florida Korean Association (CFKA) <a href="https://cfkoreanassociation.org">https://cfkoreanassociation.org</a> which promotes and sustains Korean values, heritage and culture in Central Florida.

### Florida Council of Chapters Communique'

The February Edition of the MOAA Florida Council *Communiqué* is available on the Council Website (<a href="www.flmoaa.org">www.flmoaa.org</a>) or click below. The Council Communiqué has items of interest including our Legislative Advocacy efforts, activities of the State's 39 Chapters, and much more. The Communiqué is published on the even numbered months (February, April, June, August, October, and December) to keep Florida MOAA members updated and engaged on events. There is usually a topical quiz on various issues. (The first one to tell me the January answer at the next luncheon, gets a prize).

Randy

Communiqué

## Surviving Spouse Corner By Pat Green

## MENTAL PROWESS AND CHALLENGES

### By Pat Green

Most of us have noticed a mental decline in a close friend or family member. This person is not as sharp, witty or speedy as they once were. We may wonder if we also seem so, to others.

Mental decline is not just a phenom of aging. Some as young as 40 speculate about this topic. Stress, emotions, and poor diet and sleep reduce cognitive skills, and affect all ages.

If you have had a stroke, a brain injury, or if you are concerned about a perceived mental decline, speak to your family doctor. If the doctor recognizes an issue, a Neurologist can provide a detailed cognitive skills evaluation.



Physical health and emotional health correlate with mental health. If you are consumed with grief or anxiety or dealing with a disease, deal with that first. If serious grieving extends more than two years, seek some grief counseling for help. Complicated grief is seen in 9% of widows in the 60-75 age range. A smaller percentage of men are affected.

If you want to improve your mental skills, there are some mental Strengthening Exercises that can be built into daily activities. Even a schedule of exercises a few times a day result in improvement. When you are ready, try the mental gymnastics below:

RECALL: Practice memorizing names, phone numbers, vocabulary words, MLB standings, NCAA March Madness lineups, or TV program schedules. Look at a magazine photo for a few seconds, close your eyes and try to recall items in the photo.

ANALYSIS: Read a newspaper article. Set it aside, then try to write a recap or summary of the article. Try to remember the "who, what, when, where, and why".

SPATIAL: Rearrange a linen closet, pantry or garage. Look for the most pragmatic and yet economical use of space. Do the same exercise with drawers in kitchen, bed, or bath. While you're at it, set aside some donation items and throw out expired items.

SOCIAL: Have a conversation every day. If you live alone, this may be a challenge. Practice small talk at the checkout line of stores. Initiate a phone call or an invitation. This is a must. Accept any invitations you receive. Try to remember a joke you can tell at your next social event.

FOCUS: Stay focused on whatever activity you are engaged. It may be a conversation, gardening, dancing, chores or workouts at the gym. Focus on listening, strength, the number of repetitions, muscles involved, posture, and breathing. Be in one with your thoughts. Meditation and prayer are very good options of mental focus.

FUN and GAMES: This can be all manner of social get-togethers. But there are some good solitary options.

Spatial: Jig saw puzzles provide color and form discernment. Manipulation of the pieces is also good hand-eye coordination practice.

Analysis: Sudoku uses number grids, but it is not a math game. It is a logic exercise. Start with easy grids and progress to expert status.

Recall: Using computer sites, you can play Bridge, Gin Rummy, or Hearts with robots. These games require a memory of cards played and the counted.

Once your skills have improved, socialize and play games with others and *remember* to have FUN!

# <u>Governor Ron DeSantis' 2025 Budget Provides Vital Funding to Florida's Veteran Community</u>

Gov. Ron DeSantis' 2025 Budget provides the nation's highest premier services and support to the state's veterans, their families and survivors through the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA). FDVA is responsible for serving the nation's estimated second largest veteran population. Serving as the premier point of entry for Florida's 1.4 million veterans.

The Governor's Focus on Fiscal Responsibility Budget invests \$12.3 million to support capital improvements for the State Veterans' Nursing Homes. The budget includes \$3 million for renovations of the 120-bed Baldomero Lopez State Veterans' Nursing Home in Land O' Lakes, which opened to residents in 1999. The budget also invests \$2.2 million to support enhancing safe and secure medication management for residents in State Veterans' Homes.

The Governor's Budget continues a \$2 million investment to assist veterans in securing meaningful skills-based employment, provide employers a skilled talent pipeline, and to assist veterans in creating and operating a small business. The budget includes \$1 million for the Veterans Dental Care Grant Program for veterans with less than 100% VA disability (they already get dental care at no cost), which expands access to dental care services for veterans through committed nonprofit organizations.

For 2025, Gov. Ron DeSantis signed proclamations honoring Veterans, including Memorial Day and Veterans Day, Vietnam War Veterans Day in Florida, the 80th Anniversaries of D-Day and the Battle of the Bulge, Korean War Remembrance Day, Florida Purple Heart Day, POW/MIA Recognition Day and Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day in Florida.

For a very detailed write-up on additional important information, go to <a href="www.flmoaa.org">www.flmoaa.org</a> and read the February FCoC Communique article by MOAA member and FDVA Communications Director, Lt Col R. Steve Murray, USAF.

#### Florida 2025 Veteran Legislation Issues:

The 2025 Florida Legislative Session begins on March 4. In preparation for the 60-day session, the legislature is meeting in a series of Interim Committee Weeks, discussing key legislation which may impact our State's Veterans. You can find a summary of previous year's legislation and a preview of upcoming Veteran-related bills by visiting our website at <a href="https://www.FloridaVets.org">www.FloridaVets.org</a> and clicking on "Veteran Legislation." Florida has 1.4 million Veterans, their families and survivors.

Opening day of the 2025 Florida Legislative Session is Tuesday, March 4. The FDVA & FVC Councils attended a Military Veteran Legislation Breakfast on Feb 18th at 7:30am at the Capital, and following the breakfast they held their Council meeting to discuss Veteran related legislative issues. Three key 2025 issues are Veteran Treatment Courts, provide specific written disclosures as safeguards for Veterans' seeking advice on their Veterans Benefits from agencies that may seek compensation, and increase value of tax exemption for certain disabled ex-servicemembers.

# Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA) 2025 Guide and Newsletter:

The 2025 Florida Veterans Benefits Guide is now available. This guide is designed for Florida Veterans, their families, and surviving spouses, and explains their State benefits (not VA benefits). You can find it on our website at

https://moaacfc.org/wpcontent/uploads/FDVA20Benefits20Guide202025.pdf



Also, 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 <a href="www.FloridaVets.org">www.FloridaVets.org</a> 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.

#### Florida FDVA Women Veterans' Outreach:

A new comprehensive website for Florida's 168,000 women veterans was launched in 2024 at <a href="https://womenveterans.floridavets.org">https://womenveterans.floridavets.org</a>. The Sunshine State is home to the second-largest population of women Veterans in the nation. Many women Veterans don't know they are eligible for the full range of federal and state benefits, including special programs. Vanessa Thomas, Florida Department of Veterans Affairs, is the State Women Veterans Coordinator Phone: 727-310-7418 Email: <a href="mailto:Vanessa.Thomas@fdva.fl.gov">Vanessa.Thomas@fdva.fl.gov</a>

### 2024 Florida Veterans Hall of Fame

The Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame recognizes and honors those military veterans who, through their works and lives during or after military service, have made a significant contribution to the state of Florida through civic, business, public service or other pursuits. It is not a traditional military hall of fame, as it focuses on post-military contributions to the State of Florida. Our own Major Lorraine Holland, USA (Ret), was honored to be a 2024 recipient. She thanks all of you and our Central Florida Veteran Organizations that helped open many doors to assist our Florida Veterans and their families.

Class of 2024
Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame

We encourage you to nominate a 2025 Florida Veteran for this recognition from the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs (FDVA); nominations are due by April 1st.

Go to https://floridaveteranshalloffame.org

MajGen James S. Hartsell, USMC (Ret), Executive Director of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs and Maj Lorraine Holland, USA (Ret)

## MOAA 2025 Federal Legislative Priorities for Veterans, Military & Families

In the February FCoC Communique, our Legislative Chairman Pierre Louis came across a very well written article from Brenden McMahon, Associate Director of MOAA, which summed up key Federal legislation points. Source: www.moaa.org

Overview: MOAA emphasizes advocacy for military and veteran communities as the 119th Congress begins, urging members to engage in legislative efforts. Visit the center today to create or update your account.

As the 119th Congress begins its work, MOAA is ready to champion critical issues for the uniformed services and veteran communities. With new legislative priorities in focus, now is the perfect time to join the effort and ensure your voice is heard.

MOAA's Legislative Action Center makes it easy to connect with your elected officials and advocate for meaningful change. Whether you're new to the platform or a seasoned user, registering ensures you're prepared to support upcoming campaigns. Visit the center today to create or update your account.

At MOAA, people are our cornerstone. Our priorities for the 119th Congress reflect our commitment to protecting compensation and benefits, ensuring access to top-tier DoD and VA health care, and addressing the unique challenges faced by military families and veterans. These efforts underscore MOAA's unwavering dedication to those who serve and have served.

What You Can Do: Go to <a href="www.moaa.org">www.moaa.org</a> and register as an advocate in <a href="our Legislative Action Center">our Legislative Action Center</a> to send a message to your congressional representatives,

#### **MOAA Key 2025 Priorities:**

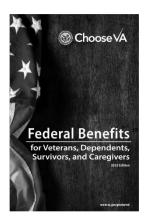
- Junior Enlisted Pay Raise: MOAA advocated for competitive pay to support the health of the all-volunteer force. Both the House and Senate have addressed this issue in the NDAA.
- Housing Assistance: Efforts were made to improve housing allowances and support military housing improvements.
- Healthcare: MOAA pushed for enhancements to TRICARE for Life and other healthcare benefits for retirees.

# <u>Lake Nona VA Free Veterans Open Studio Art Clinic on March 10<sup>th</sup> @</u> 9:30am

The next Free VA Open Studio Art Clinic is **March 10**<sup>th</sup> **at 9:30am** on the 4th floor Conference Room 10 at Lake Nona (13800 Veterans Way, Orlando). Marybeth Verbinski is the VA Recreational Therapist POC for veterans. Text or call MaryBeth cell 407-403-4718 or email <a href="Mary.Verbinski@va.gov">Mary.Verbinski@va.gov</a> and let her know you would like to attend. Your MOAA Central Florida Chapter supports these classes with art supplies and refreshments. You can come and enjoy getting your creative side on or just chat with the veterans. It's a very inspiring experience to see our fellow veterans express on paper or other art mediums what they can't do verbally!

### 2025 Veterans Administration (VA) Benefits Guide Now **Available**

As part of the VA's commitment to provide world-class care and benefits to those who have served our nation, VA is pleased to present the "Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents, Survivors, and Caregivers." The handbook contains a comprehensive listing of VA programs, including phone numbers and websites for easy reference. The annual Federal Benefits Guide hosts a wealth of information on most VA benefits and services. As it stands now, the 2025 VA Guide will not be available in hard copy. Click here to get a copy:



https://department.va.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/2025-Federal-Benefits-for-Veterans-Dependents-and-Survivors.pdf

### Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) at UCF is March 22nd 2025

Save the Date! Annual Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) is March 22nd at UCF and is open to all military, retirees, veterans, their families and surviving spouses. It's not specific to retirees! All service branches are invited! The event takes place at the University of Central Florida, in Orlando, Florida on 22 March 2025, doors open at 8am to all military, retirees, veterans and their families. and the conference speakers begin at 9:00am. Among many other Veteran Service Organizations, MOAA will have a table, and our own MOAA Patricia Green will be speaking on Surviving Spouses. This is a huge event - there are 1,500 registered for the event so far and room for more. Pre-Registering helps speed up the process upon entering the event at 12175 Pegasus Dr, Orlando UCF Student Union. If you want to attend the event, we are being asked to register at

Fort Stewart/Hunter Army Airfield

# Retiree **Appreciation Day**

March 22, 2025

University of Central Florida Student Union 12715 Pegasus Drive, Orlando, FL 32816

### Presentations From:

**U.S. Army Retirement Services Office** Florida Department of Veteran Affairs **Surviving Spouses Briefing** 

Registration begins 8:00 A.M.; Presentations begin at 9:00 A.M. Meet representatives from the different agencies during the RAD Information Fair, 1300 - 1500 hours















Walk-in registration can be accomplished at the event - "We" want you there! All branches welcome.

Pre-Register at: https://2025RetireeAppreciationDay.eventbrite.com

Follow us on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/FtStewartRSO

ONCE A SOLDIER, ALWAYS A SOLDIER... A SOLDIER FOR LIFE!

Receive Services Understand Benefits Learn about Programs & Initiatives Socialize

https://2025retireeappreciationday.eventbrite.com/

The GPS address for Parking Garage H is: 12638 Gemini Blvd North, Orlando FL

# Our Community Salutes April 16<sup>th</sup> 7pm at Edgewater High School

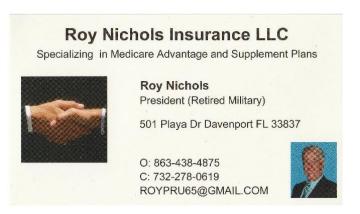
Our Community Salutes (OCS) Orlando is a free ceremony on April 16th at 7pm (doors open at 6pm) at Edgewater High School, address is 3100 Edgewater Dr. Orlando. The ceremony recognizes and celebrates our Central Florida (and outer surrounding areas) High School Seniors who have contracted and taken an oath with their local Recruiter to join the military. We expect between 500-700 attendees and if you would like to be an exhibitor or vendor (MOAA will be there), or sponsor/volunteer, please go to: https://community.ocsusa.org/orlando/. OCS connects High School Enlistees and their family members with the military community at large to become advocates and support them before they make their journey on active duty. By meeting members of the military community, the parents are armed with valuable information to seek out support if needed. Please RSVP to attend at www.ocsusa.org/Orlando/ I went last year and thoroughly enjoying talking with parents, new recruits, and recruiters.





The latest Navy Exchange MWR Ticket Office flyer is posted on our website. Go to <a href="https://www.moaacfc.org">www.moaacfc.org</a> and find Current News.





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Enroll me as a regular member		ress or Information Change Only	
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Member of National MOAA? Y / N Member Number		☐ Retired ☐ Navy ☐ Reserve ☐ Air Force	
If No, may we sign you up for a no-charge MOAA National Basic Membership?		☐ Surviving SP ☐ Marine Corps ☐ Space Force	

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!