



Officers' Call

Newsletter of the Lake & Sumter Counties Chapter
Military Officers Association of America
June 2025

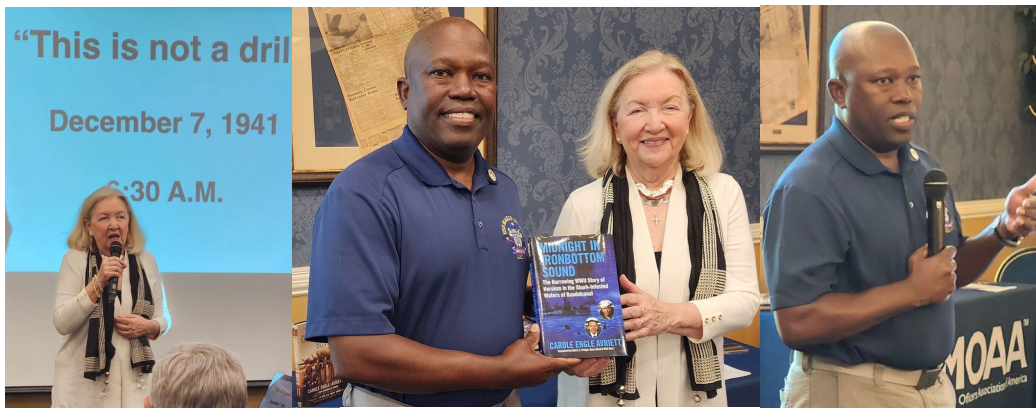


Presidents Message

LTC Don Hansen, USA (Ret), Chapter President

As we start our summer hiatus, I want to thank all of our volunteers on our Golf Committee for their superb work this year in helping put on our best golf tournament in many years. It truly makes a difference when you have many hands contributing as it did this year. More about the tournament later in this column.

Our last speaker this Spring was author Carole Engle Avriett who spoke about her latest book "Midnight in Ironbottom Sound," the story about the sinking of APD-3 U.S.S. Gregory off of Guadalcanal on 4/5 September, 1942, and the heroic events that followed. The Gregory was a WWI era destroyer converted to a high speed transport for Marine Raider units. Carole has spoken to us about her books three times previously: Jan. 2018 "Under The Cover Of Light;" Jan. 2019 "Coffin Corner Boys;" and Jan. 2022 "Marine Raiders." She was accompanied by RAdm. Cedric E. Pringle, USN (Ret.), who wrote the forward to her book and who commanded the U.S.S. Makin Island (LDH-8), a Wasp-class amphibious assault ship named for the target of the Marine Raiders' Makin Island raid early in WWII in which the Gregory participated.



(Continues on next Page)



Check out the Florida Department of
Veteran Affairs for Florida Veteran Leg-
islation.

Meetings
will resume
in Septem-
ber

Presidents Message Continued

Our September speaker will be Lt.Cdr. David F. Barden, USNR (Ret.), a Mount Dora attorney, now retired from active practice, who will give us a presentation on “Heads Up on Trusts, Wills, and Estates.” As he will tell you, he is not accepting new clients and so is not trying to sell you his services. Rather, as a National MOAA member, his information is for your benefit only.



Based upon the successful outcome of our golf tournament, we increased our scholarships to \$2,000 and \$1,500 for the top two senior cadets from each of the six high school in our two county catchment area that we support. The cadets receiving our scholarships and MOAA Award (top underclass person) are shown below. We are also busy handing out the checks to military oriented local organizations/charities we have selected to support this year. The organizations and the amount of our gift are as follows:

- The Villages Honor Flight \$3,000
- Villagers For Veterans (Ashley House) \$3,000
- Smiles For Vets (Evening Rotary Club) \$3,000
- DAV Orange Blossom Chapter 150 \$2,000
- Operation Shoe Box \$2,000
- Project SOS \$2,000
- Support the Troops \$1,500
- Combat Veterans To Careers \$1,500



Above left: Cdr Robert (Dusty) Rhodes, USN (Ret), accepting our check on behalf of Smiles For Vets (TV Evening Rotary Club) as he is also a member. Above right: Treasurer Dennis Storey presenting our check to Operation Shoe Box. Right: Dennis presenting our check to DAV Orange Blossom Chapter 150.



Presidents Message Continued

This month our Dine-To-Donate day is Tuesday, **June 17th**, at the [Palmer Legends Country Club Restaurant](#). When you eat there on the 17th AND you print MOAA on the top of your bill, the restaurant will donate 20% of the cost of the meal, not including drinks, to our JROTC Scholarship Fund. ALSO, if you donate \$5 to the JROTC Scholarship Jar at the front desk (make sure to show the Greeter that you are donating \$5), you will be given a \$10 coupon to be used in the future at the restaurant. Hope to see you there that day.



Following this column is the list and photos of our scholarship and MOAA Award selectees. We will be hearing from the MOAA Award selectees and their senior instructors at our November 12th Dinner in honor of the JROTC cadets that we support. Our selectees have done extremely well, both in High School and in the JROTC units they belong to. Congratulations to all 18 cadets.

As we travel through the month of June, be aware that: the 1942 Battle of Midway took place on June 4th; the 1944 D-Day landings were conducted on 6 June; Flag Day is the 14, as well as the Birthdate of the U.S. Army; the 1944 invasion of Saipan and Father's Day falls on June 15th; the 21st is the First Day of Summer; and the GI Bill was signed on June 22, 1944. Have a great summer and we will publish the next Newsletter the beginning of August. Until then, have fun, stay safe, and above all—**NEVER STOP SERVING!**

2025 JROTC AWARDEES

EUSTIS HIGH SCHOOL AIR FORCE JROTC UNIT (SMSgt Davis Watkins)
Presented by Marc Sherrill (26 Apr)

LEADERSHIP AWARD - Cadet Kyra Jackson



\$2,000 SCHOLARSHIP - Cadet Samantha Chewing



\$1,500 SCHOLARSHIP - Cadet Wesley Gantz

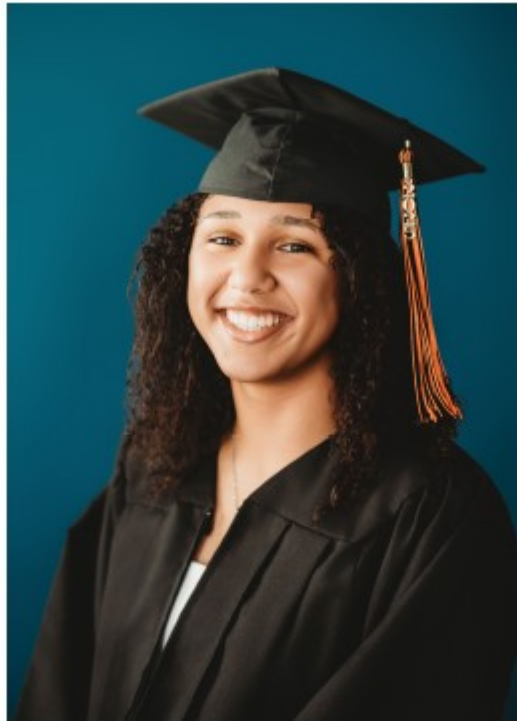


**LEESBURG HIGH SCHOOL AIR FORCE JROTC UNIT (Major Glenn Tussing)
Presented by Marc Sherrill (7 May)**

LEADERSHIP AWARD - Cadet Hailey Jones



\$2,000 SCHOLARSHIP - Cadet Alana Camps



\$1,500 SCHOLARSHIP - Cadet Skyler Hawkins



**MOUNT DORA HIGH SCHOOL AIR FORCE JROTC UNIT (Major Andrew Scott)
Presented by Marc Sherrill (3 May)**

LEADERSHIP AWARD - Cadet Camila Acosta Pimentel



\$2,000 SCHOLARSHIP - Cadet Peyton Scott



\$1,500 SCHOLARSHIP - Cadet Luca Celis



**SOUTH LAKE HIGH SCHOOL NAVAL JROTC UNIT (Lt. Col. John Pylant)
Presented by Janet Arnett (29 Apr)**

LEADERSHIP AWARD - Cadet Thomas Anderson



\$2,000 SCHOLARSHIP - Cadet Dreikken Biggs



\$1,500 SCHOLARSHIP - Cadet Kaylee Majorie



**SOUTH SUMTER HIGH SCHOOL NNDCC JROTC UNIT (Sp.4 Dylan Woodard)
Presented by Janet Arnett (10 May)**

LEADERSHIP AWARD - Cadet Elias Parrett



\$2,000 SCHOLARSHIP - Cadet Christopher Ellison



\$1,500 SCHOLARSHIP - Cadet Haylee Lane



**UMATILLA HIGH SCHOOL ARMY JROTC UNIT (LTC Al Nevárez)
Presented by Tom Lutes & Dennis Storey (10 Apr)**

LEADERSHIP AWARD - Cadet Hunter Casares



\$2,000 SCHOLARSHIP - Cadet Mia Lowery



\$1,500 SCHOLARSHIP - Cadet Angel Eutimio



Membership and Recruiting

COL Al Arnold, USA (Ret), Membership Chairman

A **hearty welcome** to the following members who recently joined our Chapter:

Adele Guarino-Peters, 1LT, USAF, former officer
Sally Scavone, CPT, USA, former officer



We currently have 290 Chapter members. All Chapter members are also members of National MOAA!!

I was honored to recently speak at The Villages Veterans Memorial Park for Armed Forces Day. I mentioned: "I feel very blessed to be living in a community that truly honors and supports our armed forces and the sacrifices they have made." As you certainly know, The Villages does this 100% of the time. But I also added the following question: "But what can we do here in The Villages." Here's a couple things I offered to answer this question. Actually, you can do these things from anywhere.

- Wear red, white and blue
 - Fly the American flag
 - Thank a man or woman who serves or has served
 - Donate to veteran or military-based organizations
 - Send care packages to those serving overseas
 - Volunteer with one or more of the many military-related clubs or organizations
- Host a military-themed movie night with friends; then after the movie is finished, pause to reflect on our armed forces sacrifices.

There are a lot of military-related opportunities/organizations in The Villages to donate to and/or volunteer with. **We sincerely appreciate your continued membership and support of the Lake & Sumter Counties MOAA Chapter.** Like most of the other organizations, we can always use more volunteers and money.

If you'd like to make a tax-deductible donation to the JROTC scholarship fund, just go to our website (www.lakesumtermoaa.org), go to "Chapter Info" in the banner, click on "Donations", then follow the prompts.

If you'd like to volunteer with your Chapter, please email me (aeaiii@aol.com), and I'd be happy to find an area where you can help.

As always, if you have questions or need more information, call or email me.

Stay safe.



2024

Chapter Awards



2024

CHAPTER OFFICERS

President

LTC Donald Hansen, USA (Ret)

Past President

CAPT Paul Hauser, USN (Ret)

First VP

Lt Col Bruce Hacker, USAF (Ret.)

Second VP

Pam Fillmon Sherrill

Treasurer

CWO3 Dennis Storey, USA (Ret)

Secretary

SMSgt Rhonda Storey, USAF (Ret)

Chaplain

Maj Daryl DesJardin, USAF (Ret)

Legislative Liaison

Lt Col Bob Bienvenue, USAF (Ret)

State Legislative Liaison

Col William Wojciechowski, USAF (Ret)

Membership

COL Al Arnold, USA (Ret)

Personal Affairs

LtCol James O'Hagan, USMC (Ret)

Community Affairs

Col Marcus Sherrill, USAF (Ret.)

Surviving Spouse Liaison

Cathie Stevens

Provost

COL Kevin Harvey, USA (Ret.)

Recruiting

MAJ Thomas Lutes, USA (Ret.)

Newsletter

LTC Luke Emerson, USA (Ret)

Web Site:

www.lakesumtermoaa.org

Information:

info@lakesumtermoaa.org

Follow us on Facebook

Mailing Address:

Lake & Sumter Counties Chapter –
MOAA

P O Box 666

Lady Lake, FL 32158-0666

Chaplain's Corner

Maj Daryl DesJardin, USAF (Ret), Chaplain



As we mark the 81st anniversary of D-Day, we reflect on the profound spiritual lessons embedded in this pivotal moment of history. The Normandy landing exemplifies sacred sacrifice, with soldiers laying down their lives for the freedom of others. As Jesus taught in Christian scripture, "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13)—a principle echoed across faith traditions that honor selfless service. As retired officers who have served with distinction, you understand this timeless principle of sacrifice in a deeply personal way.

The courage displayed on those beaches reflects the faith that sustains us in our darkest hours. The Psalmist wrote, "The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me" (Psalm 28:7), while people of many faiths find similar comfort in divine providence during times of trial. Your military careers required this same courage and faith, virtues that continue to guide you in retirement and community service.

D-Day united men from different religious backgrounds, denominations, nations, and cultures in common purpose against tyranny. While Christian scripture reminds believers that we are "all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28), this unity across differences is a principle honored by all major faith traditions. Your MOAA chapter embodies this unity of purpose, bringing together officers from various backgrounds in fellowship and shared mission.

Despite overwhelming obstacles, the Allied forces persevered, embodying the perseverance described in many religious texts. The Apostle Paul encourages, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9). As veterans who built distinguished careers through steadfastness, you understand that meaningful achievement requires endurance through difficult seasons.

This solemn anniversary calls us to remember and honor those who came before us, a principle woven throughout religious traditions worldwide as communities are instructed to remember righteous deeds and faithful servants. As senior members of the military community, you are entrusted with preserving and passing on this legacy of faith-filled service.

Though your uniforms have been set aside, your calling as leaders guided by spiritual principles continues. The legacy of D-Day challenges us to live with purpose, sacrificial service, and unwavering courage shown on those distant shores eight decades ago. In the words of Scripture that speak to many, may you continue to "fight the good fight, finish the race, and keep the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7).

SUPPORT OUR SPONSORS

Please Support our Golf Tournament Hole Sponsors

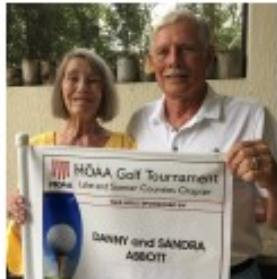


BLACKSTON FINANCIAL ADVISORY GROUP
YOUR TOTAL ADVISORS

David Blackston



Craig Curtis MD.com
Be Alzheimer's Aware



Investment
Advisors

Steady as You Grow



AMERICAN
LEGION
AUXILIARY

Unit 347



Edward Jones



Luke Emerson, CFP®, AAMS™
Financial Advisor
1100 Page Road
Suite 200, Fort High Tower Center
Fort Collins, CO 80521
970-778-1324
luke.emerson@edwardsjones.com

edwardjones.com | Member SFC



REAL SOLUTIONS
REAL ESTATE, LLC



Lynne K. Boykin
Bill Wojciechowski

Al & Phyllis Arnold
Janet Arnett
Emory & Susan Deason

Dennis & Rhonda Storey
Bruce & Nancy Hacker

Legislative Update

Bob Bienvenue, Lt Col, USAF (Ret), Legislative Liaison

MOAA Legislative Update:

<http://www.moaa.org/takeaction/?tab=Legislative-Action-Center#Legislative-Action-Center>



MOAA's Advocacy in Action Campaign— Status Update



National Defense Authorization Act Lags Behind Congresses Legislative Schedule

The Senate Armed Services Committee has just started working on the FY2026 National Defense Authorization Bill. That draft version contains the vast majority of the quality-of-life funding boosts found in the [House-passed version](#), to include support for several key MOAA quality-of-life priorities.

*“While many portions of this bill are pointing in the right direction for servicemembers, retirees, veterans, and their families, **the final result is far from certain**,” said Maj. Gen. April Vogel, USAF (Ret), MOAA’s vice president of Government Relations. “As the process moves forward, there will be opportunities to ensure MOAA priorities remain at the top of the to-do list for law-makers – and we’ll need help from our members, and others, to make that happen.”*

Key provisions include:

Better BAH: \$2.9 billion to raise the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) to 100% of anticipating housing costs. This would restore the cuts made in 2015, when Congress began a series of annual decreases before reaching the current 95% level in 2019.

Housing Help: More than \$1.2 billion earmarked for housing modernization and sustainment, to include more than \$230 million for Marine Corps barracks improvements.

Spouse and Family Support: \$100 million in child care fee assistance, on top of the \$62 million in DoD staffing funds not found in the House version. Another \$100 million for Impact Aid payments (designed to assist school districts with large DoD populations), and \$10 million for military spouse professional licensure.

Health Care Assistance: \$2 billion in additional funding for the Defense Health Program.

The Senate version must be reconciled with the House version and passed by both Chambers before the 30th of September, which is sooner than it looks with the 8 weeks of recesses on the calendar between now and then.

In addition to this most important legislation there are currently 25 bills across the House and Senate introduced in the 119th Congress that can be found on the **MOAA – Supported Legislation** page at this link [MOAA | Action Center](#).

One of the Bills on that list is **The Major Richard Star Act HR-2012 and S-1032**. On May 21st, combat-injured veterans, legislators, and representatives from MOAA and other



Legislative Update (Continued)

Bob Bienvenue, Lt Col, USAF (Ret), Legislative Liaison

veterans advocacy groups conducted a press event on Capitol Hill to continue their advocacy work aimed at ending an unjust offset faced by tens of thousands who are forced to give up a dollar of their earned retirement pay for every dollar of VA disability pay received.

This bipartisan bill with more than 340 co-sponsors. has yet to cross the finish line, either as a stand-alone measure or as part of the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

Despite similar levels of support in previous congressional sessions, House leadership has failed to advance the bill for a vote. MOAA's Calls-to-Action over the past three congresses have resulted in the largest count of messages from our members sent on any matter before the legislature. Ask your Representatives and Senators why they are ***failing on our country's promise to take care of those injured in service*** ... their co-sponsorship rings hollow to those families who are not receiving the compensation due them. [**Ask Your Lawmakers to Support Combat-Injured Veterans**](#)

A Personal Note from Bob

You may have read in last month's *Officers Call* that I was selected for the 2024 Colonel. Steve Strobbridge Award for the Council Legislative Chair/Liaison. Legislative Advocacy has continued to be my major focus in the various roles I filled in MOAA Chapters and Councils going back to 2005 when I first met Steve Strobbridge at a New York Council Convention. I had the pleasure on many subsequent State, Regional, and National meetings to renew our acquaintance and worked directly with him on several campaigns. That relationship grew with his successors as Directors and VPs of Government Relations and many of the staff. I was proud to represent the members and Chapters in two Councils (New York and Florida) in my exchanges with our National Team.

That may have been the factor that led to this award – I never presented myself as “THE” advocate in those organizations but as a promotor of the grassroots efforts and liaison with our elected representatives and their staffs. I would add that one measure of my efforts has been the record of advocacy messages by the members of this chapter and the chapter leaders in the Florida Council - our count of messages sent in response to MOAA's Calls-to-Action have been consistently the highest across all the states. **We all share in that accomplishment – thank you for that**

State Legislative Update

William Wojciechowski, Col, USAF (Ret), State Legislative Liaison



STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Nothing to report this month.

VILLAGERS FOR VETERANS (V4V) UPDATE

Nothing to report this month.

IMPORTANT MESSAGE

MOAA's status as a tax-exempt veterans organization precludes it from participating in political activities, which are defined as intervening directly or indirectly in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. We all need to be particularly attentive to this *non-partisanship restriction* during this very active political campaign season, when we are wearing our MOAA hat either individually or on behalf of our Chapters.

MOAA is a registered **lobbyist** with Congress. This legal designation pertains to the nature of communications with elected officials and staff. Maybe a better term to describe their effort is **advocacy**:

the association does play an active role in the field of military personnel matters and especially proposed legislation affecting the career force, the retired community, and veterans of the uniformed services and advocates for a strong national defense it does not, as an association, become involved in matters pertaining to military strategy or individual weapons systems of the various services. The association believes that such decisions can be made only by those who have all of the facts available to them: today's actively serving military leadership.

MOAA has been recognized for the past 18 years by **The Hill News** as a TOP Lobbying Organization based on its effective advocacy on the issues defined in its governing documents and resolutions, presenting and supporting legislative proposals that provide for the fair and equitable treatment of members of the Armed Forces, including the National Guard and Reserves, military retirees, family members, survivors, and veterans as defined in its federal Charter in 36 USC, chapter 1404.

The Editorial Policy of this Newsletter is consistent with the discussion above.

Surviving Spouses Corner

Cathie Stevens, Surviving Spouse Liaison

Nothing to report this month.



Veterans Memorial Park Honor Guard *Announces 2025 Summer Ceremony Schedule*

All Ceremonies are at The Veterans Memorial Park 10:00 AM, Paige Place between Spanish Springs Town Square and Morse Blvd.

- * Armed Forces Day, May 17th
- * Memorial Day, May 25th
- * Flag Day, June 14th
- * Independence Day, July 4th
- * National Korean War Armistice Day, July 27th



Chapter Shirts & Name Tags



3451 Wedgewood Lane

The Villages, F: 32162

Tel 352-750-1600



Editorial Policy

MOAA is the nation's largest and most influential association of military officers. It is an independent, nonprofit, politically nonpartisan organization. It is our Chapter responsibility to adhere to MOAA standards in all regards. Membership is open to anyone who has served as a commissioned or warrant officer in any of the eight military services, or is the surviving spouse of an individual who was a member or was eligible to be a member of MOAA.

This newsletter is a publication of the Lake and Sumter Counties Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America. It is intended for wide distribution to all MOAA members in Lake, Sumter and Marion Counties, Florida.

Input for **Officers' Call**, including text and pictures, can be emailed to the editor:



The Council Communique

Florida Council of Chapters
Military Officers Association of America

Click above to see what's going on in the state!



**TRI-COUNTY
WOMEN
★ ★ ★
VETERANS**



**Fender Stratocaster Guitar
Glass and Wooden Framed Case
Group Photo
and Certificate of Authenticity**

**Autographed by Mick Jagger,
Keith Richards, Charlie Watts &
Ronnie Wood.**



\$25 per ticket or 5 tickets for \$100

Winning Ticket to be drawn on

January 23, 2026 at

TCWV Trivia Night at Colony Recreation Center

Do not need to be present to win.

**Funds to benefit Tri-County Women Veterans -
Women Veterans Honor Retreat**

Tri-County Women Veterans, Inc.

2518 Burnsed Blvd Ste 203, The Villages, Florida 32163

501(c) (3) non-profit - EIN #88-1552498

tricountywomenveterans.org - tricountywomenveterans@yahoo.com

Lake & Sumter Counties Chapter.
Of MOAA
Po Box 666
Lady Lake, Fl. 32158

May 30, 2025

Dear MOAA Membership,

Thank you so much for your generous support, especially when it comes to Ashely's House and Ashely's Cottage.

With your critical donation of \$3,000, Villagers for Veterans (V4V) will be able to set aside monies for the many appliances that this home will need. The amazing partnership of MOAA has proven to be a lifeline to this very important mission.

Thanks to you, we have been able to start the appliances fund for Ashley's House, a much-needed transition home for female Veterans. The home will take approximately another six months to finish, based on estimates. We look forward to keeping you updated on its progress!

Your support for Ashley's Cottage and now Ashley House is so instrumental and we are so grateful for your support.

We are looking forward to an even bigger year in 2025. It's because of people like you that V4V is able to provide this much-needed service to our underserved female Veteran community. Your generosity has enabled us to keep moving forward in bringing top-quality care and attention to our Veterans.

With so much gratitude,



Marie Bogdonoff, Villagers for Veterans President

Email: Marie.Bogdonoff@villagersforveterans.org

Villagers for Veterans is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and acknowledges that no goods or services were provided to you in return for your contribution. This letter is your receipt and should be kept with your tax credit records. The charitable deduction may be disallowed if you are unable to provide this acknowledgment to the Internal Revenue Service upon request.

EIN (Tax ID Number 47-1817320)



MOAA Vacations Advertising Program

MOAA Vacations is pleased to announce the NEW MOAA Vacations Council and Chapter Advertising Program. MOAA councils and chapters can receive a \$100.00, one-time, annual payment for placing both a MOAA Vacations digital print advertisement in at least one edition of your newsletter AND a banner ad on your website.

Once your enrollment has been approved by MOAA Vacations, you will receive an email confirmation with an embedded link for authorized digital and print advertisements. The enrollment confirmation email you receive will also have a link where you can submit links, URLs, and/or printed copies, and request reimbursement.

The annual \$100.00 payment is in addition to the 1% rebate chapters can receive from MOAA Vacations when chapter members identify their chapters upon booking with MOAA Vacations. Enrollment in the 2025 Chapter Advertising Program is limited to the first 100 chapters to enroll, so please act fast. We expect to expand the program in 2026, depending upon the success in 2025.

Chapter & Council Groups

As an alternative to the stock materials available online, your chapter or council can also advertise MOAA Chapter and Council group departures in your Newsletter and online. Once the group is confirmed we will provide a custom newsletter ad for your use. Advertising a Chapter or council group ad in your newsletter fulfills the Newsletter Ad requirement for the \$100.00, one-time, annual payment.

Please note chapter and council groups provide additional revenue share opportunities typically in the range of \$50 to \$200 per room or cabin sold. Please contact Jon Brenneman for more information about arranging a custom group for your members.

THE NAME YOU CAN TRUST FOR YOUR NEXT VACATION



Toll-Free: **1-800-211-5107**

Email: mail@moaavacations.com



**LAKE & SUMTER COUNTIES CHAPTER
MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION
OF
AMERICA**

**P.O. BOX 666
Lady Lake, FL 32158-0666**

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Today's Date: ____/____/____

Membership is open to those who have served duty as a commissioned or warrant officer in any of the seven uniformed services of the USA, and who are members of national MOAA. Chapter membership is separate from national membership and carries its own dues. Members age 90 and over become Chapter Life Members with no dues.

First Name: _____ Middle Initial: ____

Last Name: _____ Suffix: ____

Type Membership: ____ Regular ____ Surviving Spouse

Status: ____ Active Duty ____ Retired ____ Former Officer

Rank: _____ Service: _____

Date of Birth: ____/____/____ Spouse's Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ St: ____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

____ I am a current MOAA Member. Member#: _____ Life Annual Basic

____ I wish to join National MOAA. Please contact me with information. (circle one)

Annual Dues Fee: Regular Member: \$20 Surviving Spouse Member: \$10

This is an application for: a New or Renewal Chapter membership.

(circle one)

We are a 501(c)(19) tax deductible organization. We welcome voluntary donations to our Junior ROTC Scholarship Fund, which may be included with your dues.

Dues: _____

JROTC Donation: _____

Total Submitted: _____

Make Check Payable to: MOAA Mail to: MOAA, PO Box 666, Lady Lake, FL 32158

Membership application may also be submitted at <http://www.lakesumtermoaa.org/Join?showall=0>

Need more info? Contact COL Albert (Al) E. Arnold, III, USA (Ret), Membership Chairman, 703-470-3886

Rev 1-20-25