

Officers Call

2024

June-July Issue

Military Officers Association of America
Saint Petersburg Area Chapter



★★★★★
One of America's Best....

From the Desk of the Editor



Dave Warren, Editor OC

From the editor's Desk.....

Welcome to the June-July edition of Officer's Call, the official newsletter of the St Petersburg Area Chapter of MOAA.®

Happy Fourth of July as this edition goes to press!!!

Hope this edition finds you cool and collected for the "dog" days of summer. For the month of July and August there will be no membership luncheon as many members are north for the summer. Luncheons will start up again on September 20th. The Executive Committee will meet in July and August via Zoom. Details for anyone wanting to join that meeting are in the newsletter.

Our May membership meeting guest speaker was Ms. Tammi Martin from the Dental Outreach Program for the Wounded Veterans Relief Fund. We learned that these free dental services are available to all veterans who do not qualify for VA dental care.

The major activity over the last month was the awarding by the Chapter of MOAA awards to JROTC students in the county. Our Chapter President's message this month has the details on those activities in May.

A newsletter is only as good as the content it receives. Monthly the editor gets columns and notes from the members of the Board and Executive Committee, however I want to invite any member to submit notes or articles you may think will benefit the membership in general. I always welcome your feedback about this publication as well as comments on the articles you read. Email the editor at stpetemoaamail@gmail.com

So enjoy this edition, be on the lookout for changes in the coming months!

Dave Warren

LTC, USA (Ret)

OC Editor

President's Note



By: John Kieffer
MAJ, USA (veteran)

SPA MOAA[®]

Greetings,

The chapter has successfully concluded our JROTC awards for 2024. The Board approved awarding \$1000 scholarships to the top achieving JROTC seniors graduating from five Saint Petersburg area high schools. The top achieving juniors were awarded the MOAA Leadership and Academic Achievement Medal, with ribbon, as shown in the photo.

Except for Boca Ciega, these cadets were acknowledged in front of parents, fellow cadets and teachers at well-choreographed ceremonies held between April 25 and May 16. I want to thank CAPT Pete Gunderson and CMDR John Rummel for their assistance in making these presentations.

Receiving the \$1000 scholarships were the following senior cadets:

Northeast High School: Cadet CPT Janessa Harrison

Gibbs High School: Cadet LTC Audrey Pamela Gardenia-Tucker

Hollins High School: Cadet MAJ Kaitlin Elizabeth O'Brien

Admiral Farragut Academy: Cadet CAPT Jessica Weissman

Boca Ciega: Cadet Ambria Campbell (ceremony had occurred prior to receiving awardee name)

At every school, the cadets, their parents and JROTC instructors expressed gratitude for our chapter's support of their JROTC program with these scholarships, certificates and medals.

A note about disbursing the funds: The initial plan was to provide a certificate stating the award, which we did, and then coordinating with the various colleges that the students would be attending to place the funds into their student accounts to be accessed for tuition, books, and other school costs. The administration of such distribution, however, proved overly complex and the Board authorized mailing the checks directly to the students. With Board approval to continue these scholarships next year, these disbursements will not only be made easier by awarding the checks at the ceremony but will also certainly be more impactful for those cadets.

One last note: Saint Petersburg High School is commencing a JROTC program. I have met with the newly appointed senior instructor and I will be asking the Board to add this school to those that we currently support.

MOAA® JROTC/ROTC

Ribbon and Medal





Chaplains Corner



COL Tony Clark (USA Ret)

Chapter Chaplain

O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. Psalm 63:1

Many of us know the hot and dry conditions of the desert. And we all know the hot and dry conditions of Florida in the summertime. And when it's hot and dry, I hear the medic's reminders: "Hydrate!" and "Drink more water!" and "Remember, if you're thirsty, you're already dehydrated!"

The psalmist plays off the idea of physical thirst to express a soul's spiritual thirst for the Lord. Our souls and spirits were created with a longing and thirst for the Lord, the Divine, the Other. And like our bodies, our souls and spirits can know a sort of spiritual dehydration when we don't quench or satisfy that thirst or desire with regular visits to "refreshing springs." (Psalm 66:12)

Who, where, or what are the refreshing springs in your life? The people, the places, or the activities that hydrate and restore your soul and spirit? For me, the people include friends, coworkers, and colleagues with a positive and encouraging outlook on life. They lift me up when I'm down with positive energy and a positive outlook. Who are those refreshing people in your life?

The places include the "green spaces" in and around Tampa Bay. Waterfronts along the bay or beach, wooded areas in the municipal parks, or even the fairways and greens of the golf course. Fresh air, sunshine, water: so basic, yet so restoring and refreshing for the body, mind, and spirit. Where are those refreshing places for you?

Refreshing places and activities often go hand in hand. Walking through a wooded area or along the sand. Visiting a local art museum. Reading an inspiring book or sacred text in your "Thoughtful Spot." What are those refreshing activities for you?

Our bodies AND spirits need regular hydration. They both thirst: one for H₂O, one for those "refreshing springs" that satisfy our spirits and souls. As you fill your water bottle to start the day, remember to make time in your day to visit a refreshing spring for your soul and spirit.

Membership Corner



LTC Pauline Mallory, USA Ret

Chapter Membership Coordinator Needed!!!!!!

Join the fun of being part of the committee/leadership structure of our Chapter. Membership is the life blood of any organization! Could you donate a couple of hours a week to head up this effort to grow our Chapter??

Responsibilities include:

- Coordinate Annual Membership Renewal Drive in January/February
- Update local, Florida Council of Chapters, and National MOAA databases
- Send invitation to join letters based on National MOAA roster of recent members
- Send welcome email or letter to new members

Questions about this critical position??

Please reach out to LTC Mallory pmallor50@gmail.com or President John Kieffer @ johnkief-fer234@gmail.com

Legislative Update

The May 2024 edition of Military Officer contains an excellent article on the progress of the Richard Star Act as it winds its way through Congress.

To summarize this bill which MOAA fully supports: MAJ Richard Star, USAR (ret) was a combat engineer in Iraq and Afghanistan. Following his deployments he was diagnosed with cancer and continued to speak about the proposed legislation until his death in 2021.

The proposed law would permit combat-injured veterans to receive both DOD retirement concurrently with their VA disability pay.

It is long past time to support this bill. Go to page 19 in the May Military Officer and in the lower right-hand corner you will notice a QR code with a direct link to the Legislative Action Center where you can add your support. Alternatively, you can navigate directly to www.moaa.org/takeaction.

Although 74 Senators and 327 in the House are listed as co-sponsors, there remains some concern over the long-term cost of the bill. Tell our elected representative that it is time to pass this bill.

If you or someone you know has made an Agent Orange-related claim with VA and been turned down, new rules now allow for “presumptive exposure” for Agent Orange. This means whether you developed symptoms or not, being present in these designated areas, including some in the United States allows a veteran to file a claim with VA. Another significant win for us, the March 5, 2024, decision to allow veterans who faced toxic exposure during service – deployed or stateside, can enroll in the VA medical care system. This brings the PACT act up to date.

I would finally like to remind you of Florida’s Department of Veteran Affairs (FDVA). Look at <https://floridavets.org/benefits-services/> for a complete list of benefits you have earned as a Florida resident and veteran. I would also suggest this as a resource for any recently separated veteran. The site also allows for scheduling a virtual conference to discuss a veteran’s particular situation and answers to our questions. Since many of us are transplanted Floridians this is an excellent resource.

Write to our Congressional representative, the Honorable Ana Patricia Luna (R-FL) urging her to support the Richard Star Act. Make sure to cc her legislative assistant Alyssa Holquin.
Alyssa.Holquin@mail.house.gov

Don’t forget to include our Senators as well!

Tom Hofer, CW5, USA, Ret.

Legislative Affairs officer.

KEEP ON SERVING.

Veterans Florida's Mission Enhanced With Gov. Ron DeSantis

As Veterans Florida nears its tenth anniversary of helping veterans transition to civilian careers, Gov. Ron DeSantis has signed [House Bill 1329](#) into law, providing a refined and enhanced scope of work for the next ten years and beyond.

"We are proud to contribute to the strongest economy in the nation by aligning veterans' skills with employer needs throughout the Sunshine State," said Joe Marino, Executive Director of Veterans Florida. "From entrepreneurship support to hands-on training in high-demand fields, veterans provide an incredible impact on the economy of our state and in the communities where they live. "

"Florida's unique focus on supporting veterans starting their civilian careers truly elevates our state above all others," said Robert Kirila, chair of the Veterans Florida Board of Directors. "This legislation will continue to keep Florida as the best place for veterans to work and live by supporting our focus on proven strategies that attract and retain these highly-trained men and women."

Passed unanimously in the Legislature, House Bill 1329:

- Designates Veterans Florida as the initial point of military transition assistance for veterans and their spouses connecting them with state benefits and resources, career placement, and entrepreneur training.
- Specifies the target market for Veterans Florida as servicemembers and their spouses with 24 months or less prior to their discharge and for up to 36 months after discharge.
- Prioritizes highly skilled employment opportunities as defined by the state's targeted industries list.
- Focuses scope of the Veterans Employment and Training Services Program to provide support for veterans seeking certifications or licenses in high-demand fields.
- Increases the membership of the Veterans Florida board from nine to 11 by including one ex-officio, non-voting member each from the Florida House and Senate.

House Bill 1329 also creates the Major John Leroy Haynes Florida Veterans History Program to collect and preserve stories and experiences from veterans, removes fees for veterans obtaining hunting and fishing licenses and requires instruction in middle school and high school on the history and importance of Veterans Day and Memorial Day

"Florida will remain the nation's top destination for veterans thanks to the support and vision of our elected leaders," said Marino. "Thank you Gov. DeSantis, Lt. Gov. Jeanette Nuñez, Florida Commerce Secretary Alex Kelly, Sens. Danny Burgess and Jay Collins, and Reps. Danny Alvarez and Mike Redondo, for your support of this important legislation."

<https://www.veteransflorida.org/2024/06/20/hb-1329-signed/>

Meeting Dates 2024

<u>Month</u>	<u>Executive Committee</u>	<u>General Membership</u>
July	2 (via Zoom*)	<i>No Meeting</i>
August	6 (via Zoom*)	<i>No Meeting</i>
September	3	20
October	1	18
November	5	15 Annual Mtg
December	3	20 Holiday Social

Note: All dates are subject to change due to venue availability or other matters beyond the control of the Executive Council.

***Zoom link for EC Committee Meeting in July and August**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89654780747>

Reservations with final locations and meal selections will be published in your Officers Call, our Chapter website <https://www.moaastpetearea.com/>

,or Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/925278824641972>.

Remember to bring your Officer or Surviving Spouse friends.

*****Happy 249th Birthday
USA!!!!

July 4th 2024!



Photo by [Stephanie McCabe](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Photos from the May meeting....President Kieffer with Guest Speaker Tammi Martin, Dental Veteran Outreach Program



Hospitality and Reservations

Denise & Maj Tom Pederson

Next membership luncheon September 20th Luncheon at the Bayou Country Club:

Menu and Cost: TBA

Questions?? Tom Pederson. Email: mtgfoodstpete@gmail.com or Text: 727-688-9908

Membership Dinner 21 June 20034 @ Bayou Club



Current Board Officers

President: John Kieffer MAJ USA FMR
1st VP: John Rummel CDR USN Ret.
2nd VP: Larry O'Hara MAJ USA Ret.
Treasurer: Brian Rau LTC USA Ret.
Secretary: Tina Manley
Spouse Liaison: Fran Chancy

VA Office of Survivor Assistance

<https://www.va.gov/SURVIVORS/FAQs.asp>

Executive Advisory Board,

Term Expires 31 DEC 25

Peter Gunderson CAPT USN Ret.

Christina Manley CPT USA Ret.

Richard Dusincki LTC USA Ret.

Term Expires 31 DEC 24

Tom Pederson Maj USAF Ret.

Anthony Clark COL USA Ret.

Monroe King CAPT USN Ret.

Your Executive Board for 2024



President
MAJ John Kieffer



1st Vice President
CDR John Rummel



2nd Vice President
MAJ Larry O'Hara



Secretary
Tina Manley



Treasurer
LTC Brian Rau



Spouse Liaison
LTC Frances Chancy

Executive Council Contributors



Hospitality & Reservations
Denise & Maj Tom Pederson



Chaplain
COL Tony Clark



Veteran Representative
LTC Frances Chancy

Contact Information

Committee	Chairperson
Advertising	MAJ John Kieffer
Awards	Pete Gunderson
Bylaws & Policy Book	MAJ Larry O'Hara
Help our Troops & VA Volunteer Service	LTC Fran Chancey
Hospitality & Reservations	Maj Thomas Pederson Mrs. Denise Pederson
Law	Maj Bert Carrier
Legislative	CW5 Tom Hofer
Membership	VACANT
Personal Affairs	LTC Pauline Mallory COL Tony Clark
ROTC & JROTC	CW5 Tom Hofer
Scholarships	CAPT Pete (Halvor) Gunderson
Surviving Spouses	Fran Chancey
Transition	VACANT
Visitation	VACANT
OC Editor	LTC Dave Warren

The chapter's 2024 directory contains phone #, email addresses

Visit your Chapter's Web page and social media accounts (Facebook and Instagram) on a regular basis.

Don't forget the Florida Council and National sites, chapter web and social media accounts!

National

<https://www.moaa.org/>

For general and Legislation Action Information.

Note: MOAA is an independent, nonprofit, politically nonpartisan organization!

State

<https://flmoaa.org/>

For Florida specific information about Florida Council of Chapters

Local

<https://www.moastpetearea.com/>

For membership eligibility and membership application as well as other chapter related information. **(NOTE: The below links are easily accessible on the front page of our website).**

Instagram:

https://www.instagram.com/moaa_st_pete_area/

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/925278824641972>



St Petersburg Area Chapter

PO Box 8462

Seminole, FL 33735-8462

Personal Data	Applicant		Spouse
Last name		Last name	
First name		First name	
Middle Init.		Middle Init.	
Nickname		Nickname	
DOB (dd/mm/yyyy)		DOB (dd/mm/yyyy)	May use 2050 as the year

	Applicant	Spouse
Phone		
E-mail		

Address					If snow bird	
Street	City	State	Zip+4	From month	To month	

Military Data		Status	Applicant
Rank or Spouse	Service	Active, Former or Retired	MOAA #

Membership Dues				
Member	Spouse	Member Name tag	Spouse Name tag	Total Amount Sent
\$30.00	\$25.00	\$10.00	\$10.00	

Local Life Dues for Member or Spouse				
Age	under 55	56 to 70	71 to 90	over 90
Cost	\$425.00	\$375.00	\$300.00	Free

Send check payable to SPA MOAA to the above PO address

Membership is open to Active Duty, Former, Retired, National Guard and Reserve, Commissioned and Warrant Officers of the Uniformed Services and their Surviving Spouses. Per chapter bylaws, all chapter members must be members of MOAA (national). If not a national member please call 1-800-234-6622 to speak to a service representative or visit MOAA.org to join. **Note: MOAA is an independent, nonprofit, politically non-partisan organization!**

Note: By joining, you authorize the use of your image in official MOAA publications!

HELPFUL LINKS AND CONTACTS

DFAS

<https://www.dfas.mil/>

1 888 332-7411

AARP

<https://www.aarp.org/>

1 888 687 2277

ELIZABETH DOLE FOUNDATION

<https://www.elizabethdolefoundation.org/>

TAPS

<https://www.taps.org/>

1 800 959 8277

MOAA

Moaa.org

1 800 234 6622

SURVIVING SPOUSE ADVISORY COUNCIL

Surviving Spouse Virtual chapter:

mssvc02@gmail.com

SSAC Chair and Board Member:

viriniagailjoyce@gmail.com

VA

<https://www.va.gov/>

1 800 698 2411

MILITARY.COM

WWW.MILITARYCOALITION.ORG

Health Care Committee-Survivors

WWW.MILITARYONESOURCE.MIL

MUST HAVE FOR ALL CHAPTER MEMBERS. DON'T LEAVE HOME WITH IT!!!! (You may be challenged to produce the coin at Chapter Events!!???)

Chapter Challenge Coins



1.5" diameter ... \$20 / 5 for \$60
Available for purchase at all chapter events

Sponsors

Please reach out to your shopping sources and ask them if they would like to advertise. The price per size is available on the web site. This is a direct add to over 150 military officers and spouses.



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