



President's Message

CDR Bill "Bullet" Kirkpatrick, USN (Ret)

***** PLEASE PAY YOUR 2024 DUES *****



Many of you were at the December Luncheon when COL Steve Bond, Vice President of the Florida Council of Chapters, performed the installation ceremonies for your **2024 SCC Chapter Officers**. We were delighted that COL Bond took the time to make this lengthy round trip to lend gravitas to these formalities.

At our January Luncheon, I advocated for a few people to volunteer for various tasks. I am very happy that a number of you stood up to volunteer. Dan Melton volunteered to help set up for the luncheon (By the way - a number of our members arrive early and help with this task. If you'd like,



feel free to help) and Steve Browning has agreed to back up Betsy Korn in Merchandise Sales. However, we still need more help for upcoming tasks and committees. One committee that we are forming is the Membership Committee. If you would like to serve on this important committee, please contact one of your Board members. As you know our motto is: *"Never Stop Serving."*

Your 2024 Board: Seated L to R: Harriet Jordan, Eunice Patxot, Jeannie Stratis; Standing L to R: Jeff Camp, Cliff Korn, Bill Patterson, Bill Kirkpatrick, Danny Melton, Kirk Faryniasz, Ferris Garrett, and missing due to temporary illness Benny Blackshire

A group of our Chapter volunteers participated in the "Wreaths across America" program last month. Wreaths across America's yearlong mission is to Remember the fallen, Honor those that serve, and Teach the next generation the value of freedom. In 2008, Congress proclaimed a Saturday in December as National Wreaths across America Day. Citizens donate to procure the wreaths and volunteers honor our heroes by placing the wreath on the grave, stating the name, and rendering honors with a salute. The ceremony was scheduled to be held on Saturday, Dec. 16, 2023, but the weather didn't cooperate with our plans. Councilman Michael Owens was scheduled to speak, several youth groups (Boy Scouts, Sea Scouts, Civil Air Patrol, JROTC and 4H) volunteered to lay wreaths on the graves of our veterans and numerous adults were scheduled to attend.

Initially, we had only received pledges to honor 48 Veterans at the Ruskin Memorial Cemetery. After a drive to solicit additional wreaths, we received a total of 207 wreaths to acknowledge those that answered their country's call to duty. Thanks to all of you that contributed to making this program a great success!



Thank you everyone! I'm looking for a very productive 2024 for our Chapter.

January 2024 Program

CDR Daniel Matz, USN (Ret)

Daniel Matz attended Marquette University on a Navy ROTC Scholarship. Upon graduation in 1978 with a BS in Electrical Engineering he was commissioned as an Ensign in the US Navy and assigned to the Headquarters on the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Directorate in Arlington, Virginia. He worked on the staff of ADM Hyman Rickover for the first two year of his career.



Carol and Dan Matz visiting Waimea canyon on the island of Kauai

Dan spent 9 years working in the Reactor Servicing Directorate, primarily on refueling of Nuclear Submarines. He was then transferred to Ballston Spa, New York where he provided oversight for the refueling overhaul of the MARF Prototype reactor. Upon return to Headquarters in 1992 Dan worked as a Project Officer and then as Program Director for Emergency Preparedness. He retired as a Commander in 2001 after 23 years of service.

On February 7th Dan will share with us his perspectives on the future of the Nuclear Power Industry and try to put into context some of the major events that impacted all of us over the past 45 years.

From the President!

***** PLEASE PAY YOUR 2024 DUES *****

Our Treasurer has asked me to make a request for your 2024 dues. He informed me that only **30%** of our Chapter has paid their dues. This year's dues have not changed from 2023. Officers \$20, Surviving Spouses \$15, and member's Spouses are Free.

Please, while you are thinking about it, mail your check to:

Sun City Center MOAA Chapter, PO Box 5693, Sun City Center, FL 33571-5693

Much appreciated,
Bill

IT'S THAT TIME OF THE YEAR AGAIN!



YOUR 2024 MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE NOW DUE!

PAST DUE!

CHAPTER 2024 ANNUAL DUES

- Officers: \$20.00
- Surviving Spouses: \$15.00
- Spouses: Free

HOW TO PAY YOUR DUES

1. Cash or check at our Luncheon
2. Mail your check to:
Sun City Center MOAA Chapter
P.O. Box 5693
Sun City Center, FL 33571-5693
3. Online
 - Go to moaa.org
 - Login if you have an ID and password. If not click on "Join" and create your account.
 - After you login click on "Chapters" Then Click on "Pay Dues Online" and follow the instructions.

When you pay your dues, please consider making a donation for one (or more) of the following Chapter advocacy programs:

<input type="checkbox"/> My Warrior's Place	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> JROTC	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Operation Warm Heart	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Scholarships	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Surviving Spouses	\$ _____

2023/2024 Chapter Officers

PRESIDENT

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2nd VP

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Membership Chair

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Surviving Spouse Liaison

DIRECTOR

LTC Benny Blackshire, USA (Ret).....(813) 260-3105
bwblacks@aol.com

Chaplain

\$19.00 - 7 February LUNCHEON - \$19.00

To Register: 813-924-1983

***Reservations no later than 6 p.m. Sunday,
4 February 2024***

**Florida Room, Atrium Building
945 North Course Lane , Sun City Center, FL 33573**

Please give full names of members and guests, total number attending. Cost is \$19.00/person payable at the door (cash, check, or credit card). Social hour begins when you arrive, and the Business meeting starts at 11:00 followed by a speaker and lunch.

Remember, if you make a reservation and do not attend, you are expected to pay. Bring payment to next meeting or send check to:

***Military Officers Association of America
Post Office Box 5693
Sun City Center, FL 33571-5693***

Buffet Luncheon Menu

Garden Salad Bar with Dressing Assortment, Rolls & Butter

Entrees:

- **Red Wine Braised Beef Short Ribs**
- **Chicken Piccata**
- **Onion Crusted Salmon**

Starch & Vegetable du Jour

Desserts: Chef's selected desserts

Beverages: Decaf Coffee, Iced Tea, and Ice Water

The Chaplain's Corner

LTC Benny Blackshire, USA (Ret)

MEMORIAL DAY is Monday, May 27, 2024. That seems like a long way off, but Paul Wheat and I begin the planning for Memorial Day in January and continue until the day of the ceremony. Each year we update the **Memorial Day requirements checklist**, which is four pages long, to begin the process. At the January board meeting on January 10, the new board members got to see the requirements for January through March. In January, the reservations for the King's Point Veterans Theater were confirmed for the day of the ceremony and the prior Sunday for rehearsal. The guest speaker for 2024 was confirmed to be the Executive Director of James A. Haley Veterans Hospital, David K. Dunning, MPA, for 2024, and Executive Director of Florida Department of Veterans, Major General James S. Hartsell, USMC (Ret), for 2025. The selection of a Chief Usher, Ferris Garrett, was confirmed at the board meeting.

During February, the Trinity Baptist Church choir will be asked to provide the musical interlude as they have done in past years. Paul Wheat will begin to assemble the list of names of deceased veterans since the last Memorial Day. This is an ongoing process that continues up until the day of the ceremony. The George Mercer Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution will be asked to provide the Living Flag Tribute as they have done in past years.

For our new members, Memorial Day is MOAA's annual community event. The American Legion does Veterans' Day and MOWW does the Military Ball. Memorial Day is one of the largest events put on by the military organizations. Even though MOAA has the lead on Memorial Day, all the veterans service organizations (VSOs) participate in the ceremony. As a MOAA member, or a member of any of the VSOs, you can be a part of the ceremony by volunteering to be an usher or being a flag bearer in the living flag tribute. There will be sign-up sheets at some of our future luncheons. This is a ceremony that you should plan on attending. So, mark your calendars now for May 27, 2024.

I leave you with this prayer from the "Book of Prayers for Military Chaplains," by Chaplain (Major) Thomas E. Cook, Fort Hood.

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father and Provider, we come before Your throne of Grace this day very much aware of our need for Your Providential care during this New Year. We pray that You will provide for us as You have so graciously done in the year which is now past. Help us not to be bogged down by anything which has happened in the past year. For the sins we have committed, we pray that You will provide us with forgiveness. For the mistakes and failures of the past, we pray that You will renew us with hope and optimism for the future. For those who can't seem to let go of the past, we pray that You will break their hold and help them to look to what lies ahead. For those with broken hearts and tearful eyes, we pray that You will provide true friendship and bring back joyful smiles. For those with physical injuries or bad health, we pray that You will provide Divine comfort and speedy recovery. For our soldiers who face danger in times of peace, as well as in times of war, we pray that You will provide safety and protection. For our country which was founded on trust in You as our God, we pray for peace and a renewal of our faith. Help us to move boldly into the future knowing that our Lord will be with us every step of the way, for it is in His precious name that we pray, Amen.

See our website for everything you ever wanted to know about our chapter!

<https://moaaf1.org/chapters/SCCMOAA/>



Find us on
Facebook

Did you know we have a Facebook Page? We do! It's a great place to see what's happening in our chapter, and it allows you to express your opinions on our activities and keep in touch with other members. If you have a Facebook account, click the logo/link to "like" and follow our page. If you don't yet have a Facebook Account, Facebook makes it easy to establish one.

Like what you see in this newsletter? There's even more in the Florida Council of Chapter's newsletter at this link!

<https://moaaf1.org/communique.aspx>

Sun City Chapter Honorary Member Bill Hodges has an award winning podcast that has information that will interest you. To listen to this Veteran's Corner Radio podcast, click on the link below.

<https://feeds.buzzsprout.com/952243.rss>

Legislative Liaison Corner

February Update

LTC Jeff Camp, USA (Ret)

What's New in the MOAA Legislative Quorum

In 2024, several new laws and adjustments have been made that impact veterans and military retirees. Key changes include:

Increase in Veterans Benefits: Disabled veterans and military retirees will see a 3.2% increase in their monthly compensation benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA): The COLA for 2024 applies to various VA benefits, including wartime disability compensation, clothing allowance, and dependency and indemnity compensation. This adjustment is aligned with the Social Security COLA and is determined by the national Consumer Price Index (CPI).

VA Disability Law Changes: There are several impacts due to the changes in the VA Disability Law for 2024, such as broader access to benefits, enhanced financial support, a faster and simpler claims process, and improved mental health services.

Veterans' Bills Passed in the House: The House has passed several bills that include modernizing the disability exam claims process and strengthening benefits for children of Vietnam veterans with spina bifida.

Major Richard Star Act: Advocates are urging Congress to pass the Major Richard Star Act, which aims to resolve the issue of concurrent receipt. This act would allow combat-wounded veterans medically discharged before serving 20 years to receive both retirement and disability pay without any offsets.

These changes represent significant steps towards improving the support and benefits for veterans and military retirees. While these changes are making an impact for many of us, there is more work to do. The MOAA Legislative Quorum (<https://moaa.quorum.us>) is the starting place for us to tell our elected representatives our thoughts and provide them with insight as to what we all think is important. When you visit the site, you can read the current legislative agenda and select pre-written letters that you can email to your Representatives. They can be emailed from the site, printed, and mailed, or copied, pasted, and edited into your own email. Now more than ever it is imperative that we reach out and let our elected leadership know these issues are to us all.

Surviving Spouse Corner

Jeannie Stratis

We are kicking off 2024 with a no-host luncheon for our surviving spouses to meet and to reconnect. Let's get together and see how everyone is doing and what you have been up to, as well as chat about things we can do this year for fun or any assistance you may need.

Surviving Spouses Luncheon on Wednesday, January 31, 2024, at 11:30 am, Ybor Grille, 339 19th Ave NE, Ruskin, FL.



Here is a link to the menu:

<https://yborgrille.com/menu/>

I will need a firm head count by Friday, January 26th. Please email jbstratis@gmail.com or call 813-758-7330 to RSVP by January 26th.

Submitting Articles and Pictures for [Military Officers Call](#)

Articles can be attached to an email. Microsoft Word works best (Arial or Calibri 12). You can also type your information into the body of an email where it can be copied and pasted into the newsletter.

Pictures should have a .jpg or .png extension. If you are sending pictures, please include the activity and the names of those in the picture. A few words on what the event is about will help interest the readers. Please ensure that you have the permission of the persons in the photos for publishing.

If you have questions about your submission, contact Cliff Korn newsletter@sccmoaa.org.

JROTC Volunteer needed!

We have a need for someone to take over our JROTC advocacy program. The Chapter provides ten MOAA medals and a \$100 donation to the top performing High School JROTC cadets in the county. The MOAA Junior ROTC (JROTC) awards program recognizes an outstanding cadet or midshipman in his or her next-to-last year in the program who has demonstrated exceptional potential for military leadership. The presentation of an MOAA JROTC medal and certificate is an excellent way for chapters to gain exposure in their community and, at the same time, foster a positive military recognition among the youth of the community.

To be eligible for an award, a candidate must

- be in the next-to-last year of an JROTC program;
- be in good academic standing;
- be of high moral character;
- demonstrate a high degree of loyalty to the unit, school, and country; and
- demonstrate exceptional potential for military leadership.

If you would like to run a program where you will be involved with outstanding young men and women and have an impact on the future of our great nation, THIS PROGRAM IS FOR YOU.



Highlights from our January Meeting!



Joe Muhlberger thanked for his presentation.



Eunice recognizing MarDee Buchman



Cliff Korn receiving MOAA Leadership Award



Cliff getting "pinned" by his wife, Betsy



Member Spotlight

Sun City Center Chapter 1st Vice President, Col Dan Melton, USMC (Ret)

Col Dan Melton, USMC (ret) is from Texas. Upon graduating college in December 1980, he was commissioned as a 2nd Lt in the Marines. He and his family embarked on a nearly 41-year career in the Corps and federal civilian service, of which 34 years were in Japan, Korea, and Hawaii. Dan served in intelligence, international affairs, and leadership positions. His notable billets were Deputy Commander, U.S. Marine Forces, Korea; Marine Attaché, U.S. Embassy, Tokyo, Japan; and Director, Government and External Relations, U.S. Marine Corps Bases, Japan. After retiring from the Corps, he served as a Senior International Engagement Officer at the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency. He was responsible for engagement and strategy for personnel accounting activities in Japan, the Republic of Korea, North Korea, Indonesia, China, and Oceania. He coordinated joint U.S.-Japanese operations in Japan, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Palau, Saipan, and Kiribati, resulting in the recovery and identification of remains of U.S. military personnel. His personal awards (Dan considers unit awards) include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit (3), OSD Career Civilian Service Medal, and Japan’s Order of the Rising Sun. Dan attributes all personal success to a team effort: God, family (especially Sonny), wise servant-leaders, and dedicated military and civilian teammates.



Retirement aboard USS Missouri



PM Abe visit to DPAA



FM Kishida, PM Abe, DM Inada reception



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Favorite view of Windward Oahu



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- **Career Development Grants**- Grants for Florida high school seniors and recently graduated students
- **JROTC Awards & Certificates Program**- Champion Hillsborough County JROTC students & Florida public schools in citizenship
- **Service Dogs**- Partnership to help subsidize guide dogs and service dogs for veterans
- **Honor Flight Guardianship**- Fund 4 guardians annually for flights to Washington, D.C.

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Member Spotlight

Are you involved in a community event, activity, or service? Send us a picture and a description of 'you' in action and we will highlight you in the chapter newsletter!

Newsletter Editor: Cliff Korn
newsletter@sccmoaa.org

2023 Memorial Day Sponsor

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SUN CITY CENTER CHAPTER

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Sun City Center, FL 33571-5693
Website: sccmoaa.org

Sun City Center Membership Application

(PLEASE PRINT CAREFULLY)

Date _____

Name _____

Rank _____ Branch of Service _____

Active Retired Former Reserve National Guard Surviving Spouse

Spouse Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Date of Birth (M/Y) _____ Phone _____

Email _____

Are you a member of MOAA National? YES NO UNKNOWN If Yes, MOAA number _____

Do you want a name tag at \$10? YES NO If Yes, what name? _____

Do you want a name tag for your spouse at \$10.00? If Yes, what name? _____

Not a MOAA national member yet? Check here to receive a BASIC Membership at no cost to you.



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How did you hear about MOAA Chapter involvement? _____

Are you a member of any other Chapter(s)? Yes NO If yes, which one(s)? _____

To complete enrollment:

- Print this application, fill it out and mail it with your check made payable to "SCC MOAA Chapter" to the Chapter's address above.
- For additional information please email waltcawein@gmail.com

Other:

- Chapter annual dues for officers are \$20.00, and \$15.00 for Surviving Spouses. Spouses and significant others are welcome and free.
- Chapter luncheons/meetings are held the 1st Wednesday of the month except July and August. Guest speakers on multiple topics during each luncheon.

Revised 2/15/2023

(Your Signature)



Sun City Center Chapter
Military Officers Association of America
P.O. Box 5693
Sun City Center, FL. 33571-5693

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Mike Beltran

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Vern Buchanan

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Legislative assistant:

Kyle Joshua Hill

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