



## President's Message

### CDR Bill "Bullet" Kirkpatrick, USN (Ret)

Veteran's Day was observed several days ago, on November 11<sup>th</sup>. (See photos on page 11.)

So, what is veteran's Day and why do we celebrate it? To many citizens, Veteran's Day is a day off to relax, grill and enjoy time with friends and family. However, Veteran's Day is much more than that. It is the Day that we pay tribute to all veterans, current and past.

Originally observed as Armistice Day, the 11th day of the 11th month marked the anniversary of the end of World War I and honored its fallen.

As our country and much of the world mourned, there remained a desperate glimmer of hope that the Great War could indeed be "the war to end all wars."

Of course, we know that it wasn't a war to end all wars. World War II followed less than two decades later.

So, on Veteran's Day, we honor all of our veterans ... who unselfishly placed their lives on the line for our freedom. Those men and women were ordinary people... until they heard the call of duty and answered it.

They left their families ... their homes ... and their lives ... not for recognition or fame or even the honor we bestow upon them today. They fought to protect our country ... to maintain our way of life.

Veteran's Day is not only a day of celebration, but a day of remembrance. We, who are alive today, remember those who are not. We, who love freedom, acknowledge those that gave the ultimate sacrifice.

As we honor our veterans and remember their great deeds, let us also salute those who are currently fighting for our freedom.

## December Program

Our installation of officers and directors will occur on 4 December 2024. We are fortunate to have Florida Council of Chapters President Steve Bond, COL USA, (Ret) visiting to address the chapter and to do the swearing in.

The following slate of officers and directors will be inducted at our December Meeting:

### OFFICERS (6)

1. President: CDR Bill Kirkpatrick, USN (Ret)
2. 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President: Col Danny Melton, USMC (Ret) - Program Chair
3. 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President: Maj Kirk Faryniasz, USAF (Ret) - Membership Chair
4. Secretary: Lt Col Joe Mulhberger, USAF (Ret)
5. Treasurer: Lt Col Bill Patterson, USAF (Ret)
6. Immediate Past President: COL Eunice Patxot, USA (Ret) - Webmaster
- 7.

### BOARD MEMBERS/DIRECTORS (5)

1. Lt Col Ferris Garrett, USAF (Ret) - Universal Affairs
2. CDR Cliff Korn, USNR (Ret) - Newsletter Editor
3. LTC Jeff Camp, USA (Ret) - Legislative Affairs
4. Ms. Jean Bennett Stratis, Surviving Spouse Liaison
5. Maj Tom Smith, USAF (Ret) - Chaplain

## 2024/2025 Chapter Officers

### PRESIDENT

CDR Bill Kirkpatrick, USN (Ret).....(805) 506-3269  
[president@sccmoaa.org](mailto:president@sccmoaa.org)

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Col Danny Melton, USMC (Ret).....(808) 589-6553  
[danny.melton@gmail.com](mailto:danny.melton@gmail.com)

### Program Chair

### 2nd VP

Maj Kirk Faryniasz, USAF (Ret).....(813) 677-2606  
[membership@sccmoaa.org](mailto:membership@sccmoaa.org)

### Membership Chair

### TREASURER

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### SECRETARY

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### IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

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### Legislative Liaison

### DIRECTOR

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### Newsletter Editor

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### DIRECTOR

Jean Bennett Stratis.....(813) 758-7330  
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### Surviving Spouse Liaison

### DIRECTOR

Maj Tom Smith, USAF (Ret).....(813) 919-6645  
[tsmith0750@hotmail.com](mailto:tsmith0750@hotmail.com)

### Chaplain

## **\$19.00 - 4 December LUNCHEON - \$19.00**

**To Register: 813-924-1983**

*Reservations no later than 6 p.m. Sunday, 3 Nov 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 Florentine
- Bourbon Glazed Salmon

Starch: Vegetable du Jour

**Desserts: Chef's selected desserts**

**Beverages: Decaf Coffee, Iced Tea, and Ice Water**



"No doubt about it, captain ... it's definitely an Italian sub."

# **MOAA Sun City Center Holiday Support James A Haley Veterans Hospital**

**For the past two years, our chapter members have made generous donations to Veteran patients at the Hospital. Can we top our effort this year?**

**Let's show them some**



**Donations will be collected at the Dec meeting.**

## **Money Donations**

Donations are accepted at <https://www.cdceportal.va.gov>

## **Amazon Wishlist**

<https://tinyurl.com/JAHVHAAmazonWishList>

<https://tinyurl.com/JAHVHAAmazonWishListFisherHouse>

Send a note to [VHATAMCDCE@va.gov](mailto:VHATAMCDCE@va.gov) so they know to expect it

## **Gift Cards**

\$10 Gas cards – Social work service, Patient Advocates, Homeless Program

\$20 – Walmart and Publix – refreshments and snacks for recreation therapy activities/ Social Work and Homeless Program

\$50 VISA & Master cards – Women's Program Baby Shower

\$50 VISA & Master cards – newly housed Veterans or those facing housing issues

## **Fleece TWIN size blankets**

**Athletic pants / Athletic shirts/t-shirts – all sizes**

**Underwear / Undershirts – all sizes**

**Sweatshirts – all sizes – NO hoods, zippers, or strings**

**Shoes – slip on/close toe/ NO laces, Sizes 8-13**

**Swim trunks – Med- XXL for rehab /aquatic therapy program**

**Sports bras (all sizes)**

**Athletic shorts (Women) – all sizes**

**Underwear / Undershirts (Women) – all sizes**

**Body Wash – liquid / full size**

**Combs / Hairbrushes**

**Denture Adhesive / Denture cleaner tablets (please check expiration dates)**

**Deodorant / hand & body lotion**

**Nail clippers**

**Disposable razors**

**Shampoo**

**Mouthwash (alcohol free) large, full size**

# Surviving Spouse Corner

Jeannie Stratis

## Navigating the Holidays After a Loss

The holiday season can be an especially difficult time for spouses who have recently lost their partner. It's a time traditionally filled with family gatherings, festive meals, and joy—yet for those grieving, it can feel like a painful reminder of what's missing. Whether you're facing the first holiday without your spouse, or you are years down the road, here are some strategies to help you navigate this challenging time, along with ways to support a grieving friend.

**Coping with Grief During the Holidays** - The holidays can amplify the sense of absence and grief that comes with losing a spouse. The rituals and traditions that once felt comforting may now feel overwhelming or hollow. Here are some ways to help you cope:

**1. Give Yourself Permission to Grieve** - Grief is not something that can be scheduled or planned. It's unpredictable, and it doesn't follow a set timeline. Allow yourself to feel what you feel—whether it's sadness, anger, loneliness, or even moments of joy. There's no right or wrong way to grieve, and no expectation for how you “should” feel during the holidays. If you need to cry, cry. If you need to smile, smile. Acknowledge your feelings without judgment.

**2. Honor Your Loved One's Memory** - Sometimes, it can feel healing to find ways to honor your spouse's memory during the holidays. This could be as simple as setting a place for them at the dinner table or sharing their favorite holiday stories with others. Some people choose to create a memorial tradition, such as lighting a candle in their memory, donating to a charity they supported, or writing a letter to their spouse about what they miss and for what they're grateful. Whatever feels right for you, let it be a way to celebrate their life. Consider sponsoring a wreath from Wreaths Across America.

**3. Create New Traditions (or Modify Old Ones)** - The holidays don't have to be a repeat of the past; they can be an opportunity to create new memories. Consider adjusting your traditions in a way that feels manageable for you. If hosting a big holiday dinner feels overwhelming, perhaps a quieter evening with close family or friends is more fitting or eating at a restaurant. Alternatively, you could volunteer for a cause your spouse was passionate about, turning the day into an opportunity for service and remembrance. It's okay to let go of old traditions if they no longer bring comfort and to create new rituals that offer healing.

**4. Reach Out for Support** - Don't try to go through the holiday season alone. Grief can be isolating, but you don't have to carry the weight of it by yourself. Lean on trusted family members, friends, or your church community. Grief support groups, either in person or online, can provide a sense of community and shared understanding.

**5. Practice Self-Care** - The emotional toll of grief can be exhausting, so it's crucial to practice self-care during this time. This doesn't have to mean big gestures; it can be as simple as taking a walk, enjoying a cup of tea, or setting aside time for reflection. Pay attention to your mental and physical well-being and be gentle with yourself. Acknowledge your need for rest, both physically and emotionally.

**6. Allow Yourself to Find Moments of Joy** - It's okay to smile, laugh, or feel joy even while grieving. The holidays often feel like a “test” of how sad you should be, but it's possible to experience moments of peace amidst the sorrow. Embrace those moments when they come. Your spouse would want you to find happiness again, even if it looks different from before.

**How to Support a Grieving Friend During the Holidays** - If you know someone who is grieving the loss of a spouse, it can be difficult to know how to help. The holidays can intensify feelings of loneliness, and while your friend may not always express it, your support can make a world of difference. Here are some thoughtful ways to offer comfort:

**1. Acknowledge the Loss** - It can be tempting to avoid talking about the deceased spouse, especially if you don't want to bring up painful memories. However, acknowledging the loss directly is often appreciated. Let your friend know you're thinking of them. Simple statements like, "I'm here for you," or "I know this is a tough time for you," can show empathy without needing to "fix" the situation.

**2. Offer Practical Help** - Grieving individuals may not have the energy to manage daily tasks like grocery shopping, cooking, or even managing household chores. Offer specific help, such as picking up groceries, preparing a meal, or looking after others. Avoid saying, "Let me know if you need anything," and instead, offer something concrete: "I'm going to the store today—can I pick up anything for you?"

**3. Be Present Without Pressure** - Sometimes the best thing you can do is simply be there. Let your friend know you're available for a phone call, a visit, or even just to sit in silence. If they don't want to talk, that's okay. Just being present, without expectations, shows them they're not alone in their grief.

**4. Invite Them to Participate Without Forcing It** - The holidays can be overwhelming for someone who is grieving, and they might not feel up to participating in every event. Extend invitations, but don't pressure your friend to accept. If they decline, offer to visit them on a different day or to bring the celebration to them. Grief doesn't have a set timeline, and your friend may appreciate the option to join in when they're ready.

**5. Create a Safe Space for Their Emotions** - People who are grieving may have a hard time expressing their emotions, especially during the holidays when there's a lot of pressure to be happy. Make it clear that it's okay for them to feel however they feel. Don't try to "fix" their grief, but instead, listen with compassion. Sometimes the most powerful support is simply offering a safe space for them to cry, vent, or reminisce about their spouse.

**6. Respect Their Need for Solitude** - While some people need the support of others, others may prefer solitude during this time. Respect your friend's need for space and let them know you're there if they change their mind. Grief is highly individual, and everyone processes it differently.

**Conclusion** - The holidays after losing a spouse are undeniably hard, but with time, patience, and support, it's possible to find ways to move through this challenging period. Whether you are grieving yourself or helping a friend, remember that kindness, understanding, and gentle compassion are powerful tools for healing. The holidays may never feel the same as they once did, but by honoring your loved one's memory, adjusting traditions, and leaning on your community, you can begin to find a path forward, one step at a time.

SHOWING LOVE TO THOSE  
GRIEVING DURING THE HOLIDAYS





## The Chaplain's Corner LTC Benny Blackshire, USA (Ret)

This is my farewell message as I will be turning over the Chaplain duties to Dr. Rev. Tom Smith after the December luncheon. I have enjoyed being your chaplain for the last several years and thank you for the support you have given me.

It was great to see so many of you at the November luncheon/meeting. As we finish up with the Thanksgiving weekend and prepare to go into December, let us remember the purpose of the Holiday Season. There will be many get-togethers, dinners, and parties and that is good to have fellowship with your friends and neighbors.

But we also need to get together with God during the season. No matter what your faith or religion might be, take time out this season for some quiet prayer time.

Here is a little verse about Mistletoe By Walter De La Mare.

Sitting under the mistletoe  
(Pale-green, fairy mistletoe),  
One last candle burning low,  
All the sleepy dancers gone,  
Just one candle burning on,  
Shadows lurking everywhere:  
Some one came, and kissed me there.

Tired I was; my head would go  
Nodding under the mistletoe  
(Pale-green, fairy mistletoe),  
No footsteps came, no voice, but only,  
Just as I sat there, sleepy, lonely,  
Stooped in the still and shadowy air  
Lips unseen—and kissed me there.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY HOLIDAYS to all.**



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### **HOW TO PAY YOUR DUES**

1. **Cash or check or Credit Card 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](http://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**

# Consider Joining us!



*Florida Council of Chapters*



## **Leadership Training Seminar & Mini-Convention!**



**17-19 January 2025**



**Rosen Centre Hotel | Orlando, Florida**

**Registration is Now Open on our Website @**

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

- Training for Chapter Leaders
- Information about MOAA
- Annual Business Meeting & Election of Area Vice Presidents (AVPs)
- Board of Directors Meeting
- Awards Presentations & Reception
- Memorial "Taps" Service for Chapter Members lost in 2024
- Low Room Rates-\$156/Night
- Hospitality Suite w/Snacks & Beverages
- MOAA Sponsored Dinner
- Casino-Themed Charity Fundraiser for The MOAA Foundation
- Interact with Other MOAA Members and Leaders
- Opportunity for Shopping and Visiting Orlando-area Parks



**All MOAA Members & Guests Invited,  
Chapter Leaders  
Encouraged to attend!**





## Our November Meeting Highlights



A special remembrance from Normandy



Our presenter, former combat helicopter pilot, CDR Hillary Darby, USN (Ret)



All smiles in the buffet line. Thank you, Banquet Masters!



It gets very quiet after the plates are filled!



Thanks for a job well done!



"This is historical fiction and will give the reader insight into one of the pivotal battles of the Vietnam war. Matt's work putting this together was prodigious. I don't know how he did it. As a historical novel, I think it is great."

General Walter Boomer, US Marine Corps (Ret)  
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or log onto our website at  
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# Highlights from Veterans Day in SCC





# Sun City Center Chapter Member Application

PO Box 5693, SCC, FL 33571-5693

(Please Print Carefully)

## Applicant Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Cell \_\_\_\_\_ Alt Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Rank \_\_\_\_\_ Branch \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

## Spouse Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Alt Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Are You a National MOAA Member?** If yes supply MOAA Number \_\_\_\_\_

**Do You Wish a Chapter Name Tag at \$10?** Names? \_\_\_\_\_

**Are You a Member of Another MOAA Chapter?** Which One? \_\_\_\_\_

**To complete enrollment:** fill out application and mail to SCC MOAA Chapter, PO Box 5693, Sun City Center, FL 33571-5693

**More information?** Contact [kfaryniasz@hotmail.com](mailto:kfaryniasz@hotmail.com) Phone: (813)255-5178

### Other Information:

Chapter annual dues are \$20 and \$15 for Surviving spouses. Spouses and significant others are welcome and free.

Chapter luncheons/meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month except July and August. Guest speakers are part of the program each month.





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

### **Florida House District 70**

**Mike Beltran**

#### **Offices and Addresses:**

Local - 3618 Erindale Drive  
Valrico, FL 33596-6311

State - 303 House Office Bldg.  
402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee 32399-1300

**Tel.** Local - 813-653-7097  
State – 850-717-5057

Legislative Assistant - James Jacobs

### **Florida Senate District 20**

**Jim Boyd**

#### **Offices and Addresses:**

Local - 717 Manatee Ave.  
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Bradenton 34205

State - 312 Senate Bldg.  
404 South Monroe Street  
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### **Florida Congressional District 16**

**Vern Buchanan**

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**Tel.** Local – 813-657-1013  
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Hillsborough County Field Representative/Constituent  
Service – MarDee Buchman

### **U.S. Senators**

**Marco Rubio**

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**Rick Scott**

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Legislative assistant:

Kyle Joshua Hill

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