



**MILITARY OFFICERS CALL**  
**Sun City Center Chapter**  
Military Officers Association of America  
P. O. Box 5693, Sun City Center, FL. 33571  
Website: [www.sccmoaa.org](http://www.sccmoaa.org)



Volume 41 Number 5

May 2025

## President's Message

CDR Bill Kirkpatrick, USN (Ret)

### Our Motto: Never STOP Serving

You might have noticed that at every luncheon meeting, I solicit, ask, implore, and beseech our members to volunteer for different projects that our chapter is supporting. (Fighter Pilots never beg!) Some of these projects are helping with tidying up and placing American flags at our diseased veterans' gravestones. During the season, we place wreaths on these American heroes' stones as part of Wreaths across America. Other projects include manning a table at venues like Hi Neighbor, Fun Fest, Kings Point community center and other venues. This is an outstanding way to meet members of your community and garner **new** members for our MOAA chapter.



MOAA / MOWW table  
at Kings Point 2025

You can do as much activity as you can or as much activity as you are able. We invite everyone to participate!!

If you have a sparkling personality, the gift of gab and like meeting new people, **Volunteer!** Just showing up, sitting (you don't have to be active) at the table shows our 'esprit de corps' and may convince someone to become a new member.

My wife Sue and I are joiners and have volunteered at most of these events. It gives us a sense of belonging to the community and that truly we have never "Never Stopped Serving." There are several of our members that show up regularly at the events to volunteer.

BTW: These community events have been a terrific way to bring in new members!!

AND while on the subject of VOLUNTEERS.... We are looking for several Memorial Day Coordinators for our Memorial Day Commemoration. Sun City Center MOAA chapter is and has been the lead, for a number of years. We need new energy in the positions. This will be a fantastic way to meet with our community leaders and be an incredibly positive influence on the community.

If you are interested, please contact Benny Blackshire or Bill Kirkpatrick for information.



Bill and Sue Fun Fest Set UP 2025. Not pictured and many thanks to Betsy Korn, Benny Blackshire and Dan Melton. They helped run the afternoon shift.

## May 2025 Program

Dr. Susan MacManus, PhD

Dr. Susan A. MacManus is a University of South Florida Distinguished University Professor Emerita (Department of Government and International Affairs, School of Interdisciplinary Global Studies). From 1998 to 2015, she was a political analyst for WFLA News Channel 8 (Tampa's NBC affiliate). Since 2016, Dr. MacManus has been the political analyst for ABC Action News (Tampa's ABC affiliate). She is a featured columnist on [sayfiereview.com](http://sayfiereview.com), a widely read Florida-based political website, and has appeared on every major broadcast and cable television and radio network. **Dr. MacManus is Florida's most-quoted political scientist. She is not affiliated with any political party.**



Dr. MacManus has authored or co-authored numerous publications on Florida politics, including *Florida's Minority Trailblazers: The Men and Women Who Changed the Face of Florida Government*, *Politics in Florida*, *Young v. Old: Generational Combat in the 21st Century*, and *Targeting Senior Voters*. She and her mother, Eliza-

beth, also authored two local Florida history books: *Citrus, Sawmills, Critters & Crackers: Early Life in Lutz and Central Pasco County* and *Going, Going, Almost Gone: Lutz-Land O' Lakes Pioneers Share Their Precious Memories*.

Dr. MacManus received her M.A. from the University of Michigan and Ph.D. from Florida State University. **She will present about local Florida politics on May 7th, 2025.**

## 2024/2025 Chapter Officers

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Chaplain

**\$20.00 - 7 May LUNCHEON - \$20.00**

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

*Reservations no later than 6 p.m. Sunday, 4 May 2025*

**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 \$20.00/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 the next meeting or send check to:

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

### May Buffet Luncheon Menu

**Garden Salad Bar with Dressing Assortment,  
Rolls & Butter**

#### Entrees:

- Red Wine Braised Beef Short Ribs
- Bourbon Glazed Salmon
- Spinach & Mushroom Lasagna, Vegetarian

**Starch & Vegetable du Jour**

**Desserts: Chef's selected desserts**

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



## Chaplain's Devotional for May

Rev. Dr. Tom Smith

### The problem is not the problem

"For the righteous falls seven times and rises again, but the wicked stumble in times of calamity" (Proverbs 24:16).

There is a common thread woven among all people: **everyone will fail.** Studies show that successful people fail almost as often as unsuccessful people. We all fail often. We will continue to fail until we die. Why is it that failure destroys some and builds others up? How can I allow failure to make me a better person? Let's talk about that today.

**Principle 1: Concentrate on success.** "As a man thinks in his heart, so he is", (Proverbs 23:7). Those who concentrate on failure program themselves to fail. Think of the computer proverb, "Garbage in, garbage out." What are you putting into your mind today? It will determine success or failure tomorrow.

**Principle 2: Treat failure as a friend.** Everyone will fail. Too many people treat failure as an enemy. They say, "The flop is my foe." Wrong! The flop can be your best friend. When viewed objectively, failure becomes a mentor to make you better, not bitter. Failure, when viewed properly, becomes a teacher of lifelong learning. A person is not a failure until he places blame on someone else. Take responsibility and learn from your mistakes.

**Principle 3: Treat failure as a moment.** Too many people, when they fail, erect a monument. "I tried it, and it did not work." It can't be done." Moments are small occurrences in time. Yesterday is a check already cashed, today is but a moment in eternity, and tomorrow may never come. Yet we fail when we don't look forward to the potential of tomorrow. Instead of living in the moment, we construct a monument to failure. It prevents us from seeing the potential of tomorrow.

**Principle 4: View failure inwardly.** "It can't work" is failure viewed outwardly. "Let's find how it will work" is failure viewed inwardly. The Hollywood producer who scrawled *Reject* on the screenplay *Gone with the Wind* (outward view) must have been shocked to see the success of movie (inward view). The world is famous for putting labels on some events that have changed the course of history.

**Principle 5: Never quit.** Tear down the monuments of failure and concentrate on building the moments God gives you every day to succeed. Everyone will fail. That is the cold fact of life. Success is determined by realizing the problem is not always the problem. The real problem is often how we view success or failure. Keep swinging the bat!

Be abundantly blessed today.



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://flmoaa.org/news/#>

### Upcoming Events

#### Chapter Meetings & Luncheons

May 7  
June 4  
September 3  
October 1  
November 5  
December 3

#### CAMARADERIE - SPEAKERS - LUNCH

Luncheons are the first Wednesday of each month (except January) 11am-1pm. Cost is \$20

Atrium Florida Room  
945 North Course Lane, Sun City Center  
Register to 813-924-1983 NLT 6pm the Sunday prior to the luncheon.

**MEMORIAL DAY COMMEMORATION**  
MAY 26

**NOVEMBER 11**  
VETERANS THEATER

**VETERANS DAY**  
COMMEMORATION



## Surviving Spouse Corner

Jeannie Stratis

### A Month of Remembrance

By: Pat Green (Submitted by Jeannie Stratis)

May is a month with many special events and memories. For some, it means graduations or wedding showers. For gardeners, seedlings are fulfilling their promise; perennials are blooming; and the scent of lilacs and peonies enter the home as windows are finally opened. For children, it's the promise of lazy summer days or the opening of the community pool. For schools, it's the month of awards and scholarships. For the family, it's the appreciation of mothers. My May memories are of Mother's Day and Memorial Day traditions.

When I was young, we had a lovely tradition of women and girls wearing corsages and men wearing boutonnieres to church on Mother's Day. In my family, we made our own. If you wore white flowers that meant your mother was dead. Colored flowers signified your mother was living. Nearly everyone wore flowers on Mother's Day.

After church, we changed into our work clothes and went to the graveyards. We cleared away dead leaves and weeds, overturned the earth in front of the headstones, and planted flowers and watered them so they would be blooming when we came to visit the gravesites on Memorial Day.

Memorial Day usually meant a parade through town. Afterward, there was often a picnic. We always visited the graves of our loved ones and shared memories of them. Flags were placed at the gravestone of each veteran.

Today still, there are many commemorative ceremonies. I usually go to the national cemetery where my husband and many of our friends are buried. The American flags are beautiful, lining every street and positioned at each headstone. The music is inspiring, and the speaker's message is notable.

May is a month for remembering those we've lost. There is an atmosphere of sadness, patriotism, and pride. I've known sorrow, we all have, but I can't imagine the grief of a Gold Star Mother in May. Remember her in your prayers on Mother's Day and hold her in your heart on Memorial Day.



VETERANS FLORIDA

# SAVE THE DATE!

VETERANS FLORIDA EXPO

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- **Networking**  
Reception and meet-and-greet opportunities to expand your professional connections.
- **Earned Benefits**  
Connect with state agencies for veteran-specific resources and assistance with Florida and federal benefits.

## Admission is free!

GREATER SUN CITY CENTER AREA

## MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY

A TRIBUTE TO OUR DECEASED VETERANS



The Sun City Center Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America is sponsoring the Memorial Day Ceremony to be held at the Veterans Theater in the Kings Point Clubhouse at 10:00 am on May 26, 2025. Those attending are requested to be seated by 9:45 am.

All Veterans in the Greater Sun City Center Area who have died since the 2024 Memorial Day Ceremony will be honored during the Living Flag Tribute and the Roll Call, the reading of names of the deceased veterans.

The guest speaker will be Chief of Staff of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs, Colonel Alfred (Al) Carter, USA (Ret). The retired Army Colonel provides operational and administrative oversight of the department's functional entities and activities involving nearly 1,506 employees with an annual budget of more than \$181 million, impacting more than 1.5 million veterans and their families.

Colonel Carter served in numerous command and staff leadership positions in the U.S. Army as a Military Police Officer with duty assignments encompassing more than 40 countries including combat tours in Qatar, Afghanistan and Iraq.

No reservations are required, and the public is encouraged to attend.

Special seating will be reserved for the families of the deceased veterans.

For additional information contact Paul Wheat, LTC USA (Ret), at 813-391-7309.

# Legislative Affairs

## LTC Jeff Camp, USA (Ret)

### Legislative Spotlight: Key Veterans Initiatives Moving Through Congress

As we approach the midpoint of 2025, several important legislative initiatives aimed at improving veterans' benefits and services are gaining momentum in Congress. These bills represent bipartisan efforts to address persistent challenges facing America's veterans, from healthcare access to economic opportunity.

#### PACT Act Implementation Oversight Bill Advances

The "PACT Act Implementation and Accountability Act of 2025" recently cleared a key Senate committee with strong bipartisan support. This oversight legislation aims to address implementation challenges that have emerged since the landmark PACT Act was signed into law in 2022.

The bill would establish enhanced reporting requirements for the VA's processing of toxic exposure claims, create a dedicated ombudsman office for veterans navigating the claims process, and allocate additional resources to reduce the backlog of pending claims. Senator Mark Kelly (D-AZ), a lead sponsor, emphasized that "passing the PACT Act was just the first step—we must ensure it delivers on its promises to veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxins."

#### Veterans Housing Affordability Act Gains Traction

With housing costs remaining a significant challenge nationwide, the "Veterans Housing Affordability and Stability Act" has gained momentum in the House. This comprehensive legislation would:

- Increase VA home loan limits in high-cost areas
- Expand rental assistance programs for at-risk veterans
- Create new grant programs for veteran-focused affordable housing developments

Streamline the VA home loan approval process

Representative Mike Bost (R-IL), chair of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, noted that "ensuring veterans can afford stable housing is not just a matter of fairness—it's essential to preventing homelessness and supporting successful transitions to civilian life."

#### Mental Health Services Expansion Bill

The "Veterans Mental Health Care Enhancement Act" has emerged as a priority following concerning data about veteran suicide rates. This legislation would significantly expand telehealth mental health services, increase funding for community-based providers in underserved areas, and establish new peer support programs at VA facilities nationwide.

The bill also includes provisions for expanded research into innovative treatments for PTSD and traumatic brain injury. During recent hearings, VA Secretary McDonough expressed strong support for the legislation, calling it "essential to meeting veterans where they are and providing the mental health support they deserve."

#### Looking Ahead: Possible Legislative Action

While these bills have shown promising progress, several other veterans-focused proposals are in earlier stages of development:

- Legislation to improve the GI Bill's coverage of emerging education and training models
- A bill addressing disability claims related to military sexual trauma

Proposals to streamline the transition from military to VA healthcare

Veterans service organizations remain actively engaged in shaping these initiatives, with the American Legion, VFW, DAV, and others conducting coordinated advocacy campaigns to ensure veterans' voices are heard as these bills move through the legislative process.

As Representative Takano (D-CA) recently stated, "Our commitment to veterans must extend beyond words of gratitude to concrete action that improves their lives and recognizes their service."

Veterans and their families are encouraged to contact their representatives to share their perspectives on these important legislative initiatives through the MOAA Legislative Quorum <https://moaa.quorum.us/home2/>.



# Our April Meeting!

Senior Chief Will Florez, USCG (Ret) is a Veterans Outreach Program Specialist who joined us in April to provide information about Tampa Vet Center, the only activity within the VA that serves active duty service members in addition to retirees and other veterans. His message was that earned benefits are not always easy to obtain, but worth continuing to fight for—and he and Vet Centers are here to help.



Attendees pitch in to help caterer setup for fabulous lunch!



A warm welcome!



SCPO Florez presents and is thanked.



## From Walt Cawein:

This is a “Heads Up” and “FYI.”

On April 3rd Nicole Humphreys and I visited the Riverview Mission BBQ to present their management and staff with two certificates of appreciation for their support to our Wreaths Across America (WAA) event December 2024 at the Ruskin Memorial Park Cemetery.

One certificate that I presented was provided by WAA and stated “Wreaths Across America would like to thank MISSION BBQ for their commitment to honoring local veterans and their support of the mission to Remember, Honor and Teach signed by Karen Worcester, Executive Director WAA and Nicole Humphreys as our coordinator with WAA.

The second Certificate of Appreciation presented was from the Sun City Center Charitable Foundation that expressed thanks and appreciation for exceptional support to the annual WAA event December 14, 2024, and their outstanding commitment to helping our community and honoring America’s veterans.

What was a great surprise was that the MISSION BBQ management then presented us with a faux check for \$1,870.00 that MISSION BBQ has spent to provide over 100 Wreaths for our December 2025 WAA event at the Ruskin Memorial Park Cemetery to honor our veterans.

Overall, it was a wonderful event and thanks to the folks who showed up. The staff at Mission BBQ are outstanding individuals who love supporting America’s veterans. They even provided us with a free lunch, and the food is great. Might I suggest that you visit the restaurant in Riverview and show your support for them? You will not regret it.

You will find Mission BBQ at 10440 Stelling Drive, Riverview. The restaurant faces US 301. Travel North on 301 past Big Bend Road and Summerfield Crossing Blvd (the road to the VA Clinic) and start looking to the left of 301 to locate mission BBQ that is on the South end of a small strip mall of stores. Heading North on 301 you will have to pass the restaurant and U-turn back South on 301 to access the restaurant.

I have attached copies of the two certificates we presented and two pictures celebrating the event.

**My best to everyone and I hope to see you on December 13, 2025, at 10:00 AM when we will be conducting our annual WAA event at the Ruskin Memorial Park cemetery.**





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## **Support Your MOAA Charities**

### **Bequests and Heritage Society**

A bequest – a gift made through your will – allows you to retain control of your assets during your lifetime and distribute them as you wish upon your death. After providing for loved ones, many people choose to include a gift to The MOAA Foundation.

Some of the most common types of bequests include a fixed-dollar amount, a specific property, a percentage of the estate, or the residual portion of the estate. A charitable bequest may reduce estate taxes. Consult an attorney when making or revising a will to ensure compliance with state law and to minimize applicable taxes.

Donors who provide for The MOAA Foundation either by means of a bequest or a planned gift are eligible for Heritage Society membership. For more information, please email our Development office at [foundation@moaa.org](mailto:foundation@moaa.org) or call (800) 234-6622, ext.169.

### **For bequests to The MOAA Foundation, your attorney may find the following wording useful:**

"I give and bequeath \_\_\_\_\_ (description of property) and/or the sum of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) Foundation, a Virginia nonprofit, charitable organization (EIN: 46-4219250) that is tax-exempt under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code doing business at 201 North Washington Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314-2539. These funds are to be used in support of all MOAA Foundation charitable programs offered by MOAA, its subsidiaries, its councils or its chapters to currently serving uniformed servicemembers and veterans of all ranks, their families and their survivors."



"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)  
Available on [Amazon and Kindle](#).

## 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](mailto:newsletter@sccmoaa.org)

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CELEBRATE  
MAY BIRTHDAYS



Happy May Birthday to the following members of the SCC MOAA Family!

Terry Hueser	May 2
Betty Stauning-Santiago	May 3
Michelle Halcomb	May 18
Bill Kirkpatrick	May 18

**Now and Always  
We'll be There.**



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## 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

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**Michael Owen**

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Kyle Joshua Hill

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MOAA's Legislative Action Center link: <https://moaa.quorum.us>

