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# CAPE CORAL COMMUNICATOR

February 2025

Volume 6 • Issue 2

## PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE: Col Gary Nolan, USAF (Ret)

February’s breakfast meeting will be on Saturday, Feb. 8, at 10 a.m., Cape Royal Golf Club.

Our guest speaker will be former State Representative



Spencer Roach. Spencer is a retired Coast Guard Judge Advocate, having served 20 years on active duty as both an enlisted member and a commissioned officer.

Please RSVP to Cindy by Feb. 6 at capecoralmoaa@gmail.com or call 618-580-2368.

“Never Stop Serving”

**CCMOAA  
Monthly Breakfast Meeting**  
 Second Saturday of the Month  
 January - May  
 September - December

**NEXT MEETING:**

Saturday, February 8  
 10 a.m.  
 Cape Royal Golf Club  
 11460 Royal Tee Circle  
 Cape Coral

Cost \$12  
 (Prefer exact change please)

Breakfast Reservations to:  
 Cindy Nolan  
 capecoralmoaa@gmail.com  
 618-580-2368

PLEASE WEAR YOUR  
 NAMETAG  
 (If you need one, contact  
 Gary Nolan)

## FINANCES REPORT

LtCol Gary Peppers  
 USAF (Retired)  
 Finance Committee  
 Chairman

Cape Coral Military Officers Association of America has:

**\$48,214**

in our investment accounts as of Jan. 31, 2025.

## TREASURER’S REPORT

**CAPT Timothy Cook, USN (Ret)**

**December 28, 2024 – January 31, 2025**

Beginning Balance: Dec. 28, 2024: .....\$454.22

Deposits:

MOAA .....\$110.00

Raymond James transfer..... \$3,000.00

**TOTAL DEPOSITS: ..... \$3,110.00**

Expenses:

Website.....\$210.00

Insurance .....\$445.41

**TOTAL EXPENSES:..... \$2,908.81**

Ending Balance: Jan. 31, 2025:..... \$2,908.81



The 2024 officers for the Cape Coral Military Officers Association of America were re-elected to the same positions for 2025. They are (Left to right): CAPT Tim Cook (USN, Ret), treasurer; COL Bill Deile (USA, Ret), member-at-large; LtCol Gary Peppers, (USAF, Ret), secretary; COL Tom Wagner (USAR, Ret), vice president; and Col Gary Nolan (USAF, Ret), president.



## Officers

### **PRESIDENT:**

Col Gary Nolan  
US Air Force (Retired)

### **VICE PRESIDENT:**

COL Tom Wagner  
USAR (Retired)

### **SECRETARY:**

LtCol Gary Peppers  
US Air Force (Retired)

### **TREASURER:**

CAPT Timothy Cook  
US Navy (Retired)

### **BOARD MEMBER:**

(at large)

COL Bill Deile  
US Army (Retired)

### **FINANCE:**

LtCol Gary Peppers

### **CHAPLAIN:**

Cindy Nolan

### **WAYS & MEANS:**

Col Gary Nolan

### **SPEAKER PROGRAMS:**

Marilyn Stout

### **WEBMASTER:**

COL Tom Wagner  
USAR (Retired)

### **HISTORIANS:**

LtCol Gary Peppers

### **LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS:**

COL Tom Wagner

### **PERSONAL AFFAIRS:**

(Vacant)

### **VETERANS AFFAIRS:**

(Vacant)

### **MEMBERSHIP:**

Col Gary Nolan

### **PUBLIC AFFAIRS:**

(Vacant)

### **PARLIAMENTARIAN:**

Marilyn Stout

### **NEWSLETTER EDITOR:**

Capt Larry Atkinson  
US Air Force

### **TOPS:**

(Vacant)

### **SURVIVING SPOUSES:**

(Vacant)

### **FCOC SW AREA VP:**

Col Gary Nolan

# Former Florida Rep. Spencer Roach to speak at Feb. 8 breakfast meeting

Outgoing Florida District 76 Rep. Spencer Roach will be the guest speaker at the Saturday, Feb 8, breakfast meeting of the Cape Coral Military Officers Association of America at the Cape Royal Golf Club.

Roach recently completed his third and final term in the Florida House of Representatives, where he served as chairman of the Constitutional Rights, Rule of Law, and Government Operations Subcommittee.

While in office, he passed legislation focused on stamping out indoctrination in Florida's higher education system, reforming Florida's child welfare system, and increasing transparency in government.

Roach describes himself as a "Tenth Amendment Conservative."

He is a retired Coast Guard Judge Advocate, having served 20 years on active duty as both an enlisted member and a commissioned officer.

During his two decades of service, Roach's assignments included tours of duty in Alaska, a six-month combat deployment to the Middle East enforcing UN sanctions against Iraq, and service in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina ravaged the Gulf Coast. His last assignment with the Coast Guard was as a staff attorney in the Office of Member Advocacy in Washington, DC, where he was responsible for providing legal counsel to members with service-related disabilities.

For his military service, he was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal, Coast Guard Commendation Medal, Coast Guard Achievement Medal, and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal.

Roach graduated from Edison State College with an Associate of Arts in 2003, from Florida Gulf Coast University with a Bachelor of Arts in 2005, and from University of Miami School of Law with a Juris Doctor in 2012.

He has served as a volunteer for Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Southwest Florida,



as a Guardian ad Litem in the 20th Judicial Circuit, and is a licensed foster parent. He currently serves on the Board of Directors for Goodwill of Southwest Florida, the Florida Gulf Coast University Alumni Association, the statewide Foster and Adoptive Parent Association, and the Florida Repertory Theatre.

Roach grew up in what he calls "a proud blue-collar household," working with his father and uncles in a fourth-generation family-owned plumbing company. From an early age, he gained an appreciation for the trades and an unwavering belief that a superior personal work ethic is the great equalizer in pursuit of upward mobility.

He is a certified English as a Second Language teacher, an avid reader, scuba diver, world traveler, occasional talk-show host, and an aspiring Expat with a particular love for Central and South America.

A native of Louisiana, Roach moved to Florida in 2000 and lives in North Fort Myers.



**Marvin C. Harris  
Newsletter**

**Communications Award**

**FIVE STARS**

2003, 2018, 2019,  
2020, 2021, 2022, 2023  
& 2024



**FIVE STARS  
Chapter Excellence  
Award**

2006, 2008, 2009,  
2010, 2011, 2012, 2018,  
2019, 2020, 2023 &  
2024



**FOUR STARS  
Chapter Excellence  
Award**

2005, 2007, 2013,  
2016, 2017 & 2021

## Troy Meink picked to be Air Force Secretary

President Donald Trump has selected Troy Meink to be Secretary of the U.S. Air Force.

“Troy will work with our incredible Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, to ensure that our nation’s Air Force is the most effective and deadly force in the World, as we secure PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH,” Trump said in a post on Truth Social.

Meink has nearly 40 years of experience in military service and national security, including managing satellite intelligence operations.



He began his career in 1988, joining the U.S. Air Force as an ROTC cadet at South Dakota State University in Brookings, SD, where he earned a bachelor of science degree in mechanical engineering. He also earned a master of science degree and a Ph.D. in aeronautical and astronautical engineering from Ohio State University.

In the Air Force, he served as a KC-135 tanker aircraft navigator before taking on key roles in national security agencies.

Previously, Meink served as deputy director at the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), where he oversaw a budget of more than \$15 billion. In his role at the NRO, Meink managed critical satellite programs and military space capabilities.

Meink still must be confirmed by the U.S. Senate.

## Daniel Driscoll picked to be Army Secretary

President Donald Trump has picked businessman and Army veteran Daniel Driscoll as secretary of Army.

“As a former Soldier, Investor, and Political Advisor, Dan brings a powerful combination of experiences to serve as a disruptor and change agent,”

Trump said in a post on Truth Social. “Dan will be a fearless and relentless fighter for America’s Soldiers and the America First agenda.”



Driscoll was a senior advisor to now Vice President J.D. Vance when he was the Republican senator from Ohio.

He served in the Army for three and a half years and was deployed to Iraq in 2009. Upon returning to the U.S., he attended Yale Law School, where he met Vance.

In 2020, Driscoll ran to represent North Carolina’s 11th district, but lost in the party’s primary contest to former Rep. Madison Cawthorn (R-N.C.). He has also worked in North Carolina as an investment banker.

Driscoll would oversee more than a million active-duty soldiers and the branch’s annual budget. The Army is the military’s largest branch.

Driscoll needs to be confirmed by the Senate.

## John Phelan picked to be Navy Secretary

Financier John Phelan has been named by President Donald Trump to be the next Secretary of the Navy.

Phelan is the founder of private equity firm Rugger Management LLC and previously served as the chairman and chief investment officer of the firm that oversaw the fortune of Dell Technologies founder Michael Dell. He is also on the board of the Spirit of America non-profit, a non-partisan group with a mission to support American troops abroad that has also supported troops in Ukraine.



“John will be a tremendous force for our Naval Servicemembers, and a steadfast leader in advancing my America First vision,” Trump said in a post on the social media site Truth Social. “He will put the business of the U.S. Navy above all else.”

Phelan was a major fundraiser for the Trump campaign, which included hosting a dinner for the president-elect at his home in Aspen, Col., in August 2024.

Originally from Coral Gables, Fla., Phelan is a 1986 graduate of Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, and has an MBA from Harvard Business School. He is also an avid art collector and on the Board of Trustees at the Whitney Museum of American Art and at the Aspen Art Museum.

Phelan needs to be confirmed by the U.S. Senate.

## Rep. Giallombardo covers wide range of topics at Jan. 11 meeting

Florida District 79 State Representative Mike Giallombardo, at the Jan. 11 breakfast meeting of the Cape Coral MOAA, discussed a wide range of topics, from cybersecurity and military defense to infrastructure challenges and healthcare innovations.

The representative, a seasoned military officer with over 17 years of service who was recently promoted to CW3 in the Florida Army National Guard, outlined his priorities and ongoing efforts to tackle pressing issues in Florida.

### Cybersecurity and Legislative Action

Giallombardo emphasized the importance of bolstering the state's cybersecurity infrastructure, citing several high-profile incidents.

"We've seen massive data breaches affecting agencies like the Department of Juvenile Justice and the Department of Health," he said, referencing ransomware attacks that exposed sensitive information. He is championing legislation to improve standards and protect entities meeting those standards from negligence lawsuits. "We need to ensure that our systems are robust and that we don't leave critical sectors vulnerable," he added.

For the past two years,



Giallombardo has chaired the Cybersecurity, Energy and Communications Committee in the Florida House of Representatives.

### Military and Veteran Support

Drawing on his military background, Giallombardo discussed his advocacy for hyperbaric oxygen therapy as a treatment for traumatic brain injuries and PTSD among veterans.

He suffered a couple of concussions in the military and tried the hyperbaric oxygen therapy treatment for the problems caused by the injuries. "I went through 40 sessions, and I can tell you, I sleep better, I feel sharper, and the headaches are gone," he shared, underscoring the therapy's potential benefits.

The Florida legislature passed

a \$8 million five-year University of South Florida, Tampa, research initiative to validate the treatment, aiming to make it accessible through VA programs and insurance.

### Protecting Florida's Defense Assets

Florida's military installations contribute significantly to the state economy, generating over \$130 billion annually. Giallombardo noted efforts to prevent encroachments on

critical areas like the Gulf Range, which supports F-35 training missions.

"It's about ensuring we don't lose these missions or assets due to incompatible developments," he explained.

### County Single-Member Districts

The representative also addressed a proposal for single-member county commission districts in Lee County.

He has introduced a bill in the Florida Legislature that would give people in their counties the ability to vote for single member county commission districts, if desired.

He noted that Lee County has five county commissioners and everyone in the county votes on all five, even though each commissioner has a district in which they live and are supposed to represent. "What happens is

# Speaker Report (continued)

that because we're so large, those five county commissioners could lose their own district and still win with the at-large population, which allows them the ability to win," Giallombardo said.

*(Continued on next page)*

*(Continued from previous page)*

"Our population is growing rapidly, and it's time to let voters decide if commissioners should focus on their specific districts," he said.

The measure, which would appear on the 2026 ballot if approved, aims to enhance accountability and equitable development across the county.

## Local Infrastructure

Giallombardo also talked about the efforts to finish converting Burnt Store Road from two lanes to four lanes from North Cape Coral up to Burnt Store Marina, where Charlotte County has already finished the conversion all the way to Interstate 75.

"So, you notice Cape Coral finished their part, Charlotte County finished their part and the only part that is not even started is the county," Giallombardo said. "It's not a priority for them."

He noted a group has formed in Burnt Store Marina to work on getting the county to finish the last stretch of Burnt Store Road expansion. Burnt Store Road is a hurricane evacuation route, and the short stretch of two-lanes is getting increased traffic and is dangerous.

Giallombardo said the city of Cape Coral and Lee County Commissioner Brian Hammond have also been trying to get Pine Island Road, which is a county road, expanded. He noted areas like where the road intersects with Del Prado Boulevard, the traffic gets badly backed up. Officials have been trying to get the road's needed expansion projects on the MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) plan so the expansion can be approved.

## Balance in the Military and Politics

Responding to questions about the intersection of military service and politics, Giallombardo expressed his commitment to meritocracy in leadership.



Cape Coral MOAA President Gary Nolan presents a MOAA Tervis mug to Rep. Mike Giallombardo in appreciation for speaking at the January meeting.

"The military should be about knowledge, skills, and abilities—not politics," he stated, reflecting on personal experiences and the importance of maintaining focus on readiness and effectiveness.

The representative concluded with a call for collaboration and engagement. "We're working on solutions for the challenges ahead, and I encourage everyone to stay informed and involved."



**HOPE FLORIDA**

A PATHWAY FOR PATRIOTS

HopeNavigators@fdva.fl.gov

833-GET-HOPE

*FDVA Hope Navigators have been deployed in hurricane impacted areas helping to bring normalcy to those in need. Hope Florida brings together the vast resources of our community to create a seamless network of support. When you call (833) GET HOPE, you'll be connected to a caring Hope Navigator, ready to guide you on an individualized pathway to achieve prosperity, economic self-sufficiency and hope. Hope Florida serves our state's Veterans among many others.*

## MOAA lists legislative priorities for the 119th U. S. Congress

By: Jeff Goldberg

*(This article originally appeared in the January 2025 issue of Military Officer, a magazine available to all MOAA Premium and Life members.)*

As the legislative slate resets for the 119th Congress, MOAA member engagement will become even more vital to achieving our advocacy objectives.

Your advocacy ensures that MOAA and the broader community of military and veteran service organizations (MSOs/VSOs) maintain momentum for existing priorities such as the Major Richard Star Act, which would benefit tens of thousands of combat-injured veterans.

We also need your help to build support for new objectives and emerging issues, often via immediate action, to respond to the sporadic nature of the legislative process.

First step: Register as an advocate in our [Legislative Action Center](#). If you're already registered, send the link to a family member or friend. Remember, the Legislative Action Center is open to all who support the uniformed services community.

While our advocacy team remains active on many issues not listed here, our priorities are shaped throughout the year depending on policy developments or emerging issues that necessitate an all-hands approach. Additionally, we share many interests with The Military Coalition and other stakeholders. MOAA leverages those relationships to expand our reach on Capitol Hill.

These are among MOAA's priorities for this year:

### Currently Serving

**Military housing:** Recent reporting from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) reveals the myriad challenges servicemembers in unaccompanied housing are facing. The health, safety, and privacy



concerns outlined by GAO show the need for action.

[\[RELATED: GAO Report Finds Flaws in DoD's Approach to Housing Challenges\]](#)

MOAA seeks to improve funding and condition transparency for unaccompanied housing by requiring an annual, publicly available report, which will highlight areas that require the most attention from both DoD and Congress.

### Retirees/Veterans

**Toxic exposure:** MOAA will focus on capitalizing on our recently released report, Ending the Wait for Toxic-Exposed Veterans, to advocate for veterans exposed to toxic materials during their service.

While the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act has made major improvements to how toxic exposures are treated by the VA, additional measures are required. In cooperation with other VSOs, MOAA will advocate for Congress to pass legislation that shortens the time veterans must wait before their toxic exposures are acknowledged and conceded by the VA.

### Family/Survivors

**Spouse employment:** Rates of unemployment for military spouses

continue to be four to five times higher than the national average. This persistent challenge requires not only providing education and employment resources for spouses, but also incentivizing businesses to hire someone who will likely move in two to three years.

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit program was established to support populations who face significant barriers to employment, and adding a military spouse target group is long overdue. Passing the Military Spouse Hiring Act will provide another important lever needed to address the critical issue of spouse unemployment.

### DoD Health Care

**Access to care:** DoD has acknowledged that congressionally directed reforms to the Military Health System (MHS), together with U.S. medical workforce volatility, exacerbated long-standing access challenges and led to a destabilized MHS that does not consistently deliver timely care to beneficiaries.

[\[RELATED: What a Major DoD Health Care Shift Could Mean for Your TRICARE Benefit\]](#)

Current patient resources for reporting access problems and getting assistance navigating the MHS are inadequate. Also, it is unclear if there are mechanisms for reporting up to the Defense Health Agency so systemic access challenges can be identified and addressed.

MOAA seeks a digital MHS assistance platform allowing beneficiaries to report access-to-care challenges and receive help navigating the MHS, including reporting requirements to increase visibility on barriers to access so fixable issues can be addressed.

*(Continued on next page)*

# MOAA Legislative Affairs (continued)

(Continued from previous page)  
**VA Health Care**

**Support for caregivers:** MOAA has long advocated for legislation that would improve caregiving support for veterans' families. This includes enhancements to the VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) and expansion of home health and long-term care services to meet current and future needs of veterans, their caregivers, and families.

This year, MOAA strongly supports the reintroduction and enactment of the Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement Act. This legislation acknowledges caregivers' invaluable contributions while addressing the significant economic and emotional burdens they face. By offering education, employment, and retirement opportunities, the legislation empowers caregivers to achieve financial security while potentially

reducing the federal government's long-term economic burden.

## **Persistent Efforts**

There are certain issues that MOAA will always advocate for until they are passed. Among these are concurrent receipt for combat wounded (Major Richard Star Act), Arlington National Cemetery access, and cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs).

[\[RELATED: MOAA's COLA Watch\]](#)

MOAA will also continually monitor certain issues and will immediately mobilize the entire association, our membership, and VSO/MSO allies to ensure these issues are not negatively impacted. These issues include:

- Decrements to scheduled pay increases.
- New TRICARE or TRICARE Pharmacy Program fees.

• TRICARE cost-sharing increases that exceed military retired pay COLA or TRICARE Pharmacy Program cost sharing that exceeds common industry practice.

• Unequal decrements of compensation and benefits based on rank, age, family composition, retirement status, or disability benefits.

As the work of the 119th Congress gets underway, MOAA will continue its efforts to advocate on behalf of our members and the entire uniformed services community. We will leverage our experience and our relationships on Capitol Hill and with our partners to navigate an increasingly partisan environment.

Through our efforts, MOAA will seek to ensure that servicemembers, veterans, and retirees and their families — who have sacrificed so much — continue to receive benefits earned through their service.

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## Three tips to engage your lawmakers

**By: Jen Goodale**

MOAA members and staff take part in our annual spring Advocacy in Action event on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. (Photo by Mike Morones/MOAA)

With a new congressional session underway, many MOAA members may find themselves represented by new lawmakers – whether due to redistricting, retirements, or election results. This change presents a valuable opportunity to connect with your legislators and advocate for the uniformed services community.

A few simple steps can help MOAA build strong grassroots connections and advance our legislative agenda.

### **1. Join MOAA's Legislative Action Center**

MOAA's Legislative Action Center is your gateway to staying informed and taking action on pressing issues. The online portal allows you to find your elected officials, track legislation, and learn about key priorities like housing improvements, health care access, and pay increases.

You can also send messages directly to your lawmakers urging support for MOAA-endorsed legislation; campaigns will begin as new legislation is filed.

Signing up ensures that your voice, and those of your fellow advocates, contributes to meaningful change at the federal level.

### **2. Reach Out to the Military Affairs Contact**

Every congressional office has a staff member dedicated to military and veterans' affairs. Identifying and engaging with this point of contact can establish a direct communication line to your representative.

A well-crafted email introducing yourself, highlighting MOAA's advocacy priorities, and offering your perspective as a constituent can pave the way for a productive relationship. Personal engagement sends a strong message that military issues matter to voters in the district.

To connect with your lawmaker, visit their website and click the "contact" tab.

### **3. Connect With Your Local**

### **MOAA Chapter**

Your local MOAA chapter offers a ready-made network of passionate advocates. Joining forces with your peers allows you to collaborate on outreach efforts, share legislative updates, and strengthen ties with congressional offices.

### **Make an Impact Today**

The arrival of a new member of Congress, especially a member with prior service in uniform, is a pivotal moment for advocacy. By joining MOAA's Legislative Action Center, connecting with military affairs representatives, and participating in local outreach efforts, you can help ensure our issues remain front and center. Together, we can champion the causes that matter most to servicemembers, veterans, and their families.

Take action today by visiting [MOAA's Legislative Action Center](#) and joining the movement to create a stronger future for all those who serve.

## Dole Act becomes law: What it means to veterans and caregivers

By: René Campos

The president signed the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act into law Jan. 2, after years of arduous advocacy by MOAA and more than 40 other veterans organizations.

This landmark bipartisan bill, representing more than 90 pieces of legislation developed throughout the 118th Congress, provides significant relief to veterans and their families by expanding benefits, enhancing services, and improving long-term care solutions.

“This is a momentous day for the veterans’ community and for the health and well-being of our veterans, their caregivers, and survivors,” said MOAA President and CEO Lt. Gen. Brian T. Kelly, USAF (Ret). “The Dole Act’s passage is a testament to what can be achieved when advocates, policymakers, and the veterans, their families, survivors, and caregivers work together to support those who have served.”

Leaders of both the House and Senate Veterans’ Affairs committees in the 118th Congress — chairmen Rep. Mike Bost (R-Ill.) and Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.), along with ranking members Rep. Mark Takano (D-Calif.) and Sen. Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) — played pivotal roles in advancing the Dole Act to its successful conclusion.

Bost praised the law for addressing veterans’ needs, not adding to government bureaucracy.

“From expanding job training opportunities for transitioning servicemembers and veterans, to improving mental health care for caregivers, to protecting veterans’ healthcare options for day-to-day services to more elderly care options, and much more in between – I know this legislation will make a difference for veterans and their families,” Bost said.

The act honors former Sen. Elizabeth Dole, a lifelong advocate and champion for veterans and their caregivers. It advances her efforts and addresses some of the most critical issues facing veterans, their caregivers, and the broader community today.

Some key benefits of the legislation:

### Home Care and Caregiver Support



- Full Coverage for Home Nursing Care: Increases the VA’s share of home nursing care costs from 65% to 100%, expanding access to these essential services.
- Mental Health Grants for Caregivers: Provides grants and contracts to mental health service providers for family caregivers.
- Streamlined Application Processes: Reduces bureaucratic hurdles for caregivers seeking benefits.
- Expanded Support Programs: Offers training, financial aid, and mental health resources for caregivers not eligible for VA’s Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC).
- Home Health Aides Pilot Program: Launches a pilot program to hire nursing assistants for in-home care in underserved regions.

### Fighting Veteran Homelessness

- Higher Per Diem for Transitional Housing: Boosts rates from 115% of costs to 133%, with higher rates for regions with elevated costs.
- Basic Necessities for Unhoused Veterans: Allows the VA to supply bedding, hygiene products, food, and transportation to medical appointments.
- Prevention Efforts: Strengthens initiatives to identify veterans at risk of homelessness and includes funding for job training, mental health services, and substance abuse treatment.

### Access to VA Health Care

- Home- and Community-Based Care: Allocates funds for in-home care services and related items.
- Same-Day Scheduling: Mandates a plan for same-day appointment scheduling.
- Dental Benefits: Establishes a pilot dental program for veterans with heart disease and improvements to existing

programs and services.

- Telehealth Services: Enhances telehealth options for rural and underserved veterans.
- Rural Ambulance Coverage: Provides reimbursements for ambulance transportation in remote areas.
- Mobile Mammography: Expands funding for mobile mammography services.
- Mental Health

Services: Strengthens reporting requirements on VA mental health services and suicide prevention efforts, while increasing non-VA mental health support options for veterans in the community.

### Education, Employment, and Economic Benefits

- Education Benefits: Enhances the Fry Scholarship and the GI Bill housing stipend.
- Oversight of Institutions: Tightens oversight of educational providers serving veterans.
- Technology Training: Expands access to high-tech training and education programs for veterans transitioning to civilian careers.
- Home Loan Adjustments: Introduces changes benefitting Native American veterans.
- Updated Burial Allowances: Broaden eligibility for burial allowances and revises definitions for surviving spouses.

### More Work Ahead

This achievement is a direct result of persistent advocacy from MOAA members and partners. Your efforts, including letter-writing campaigns and active engagement, made the Dole Act a reality. If you or your family will benefit from the legislation, MOAA encourages you to share your story by contacting [msc@moaa.org](mailto:msc@moaa.org).

While the signing of the Dole Act is a significant victory, the work is far from over. MOAA remains committed to ensuring the law’s effective and efficient implementation.

With the new Congress, we have new opportunities to advocate for the needs of our uniformed services and veteran communities. MOAA will continue to be a leader in ensuring those in and out of uniform receive the care, support, benefits, and recognition they earned.

## Survivors who lost benefits to scams will be reimbursed

By: Kevin Lilley

A bipartisan bill signed by the president last month will ensure survivors don't lose VA benefits if a veteran passes away before a fraud case is resolved.

The MOAA-supported Restoring Benefits to Defrauded Veterans Act (H.R. 4190) requires the VA to reimburse a veterans' estate for benefits misused by a fiduciary should a veteran die before such payments are processed. A VA report from 2021 found more than 100 such cases from Jan. 1, 2018, through Sept. 30, 2019, and under previous law, survivors lost out on these repayments.

Veterans Benefits Administration personnel fielded more than 12,000 "allegations of misuse" during that period, per the report. The reimbursement process is prone to delays; the report highlighted one case where a beneficiary recouped more



than \$20,000 in misused funds after a 19-month wait.

"Today, countless families will be able to claim the money they're due," said Rep. David Trone (D-Md.), who co-sponsored the House legislation alongside Rep. Juan Ciscomani (R-Ariz.). "The passage of this bill into law is a reaffirmation of

our commitment to protecting and honoring our veterans."

Sens. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) and Tommy Tuberville (R-Ala.) sponsored their chamber's version of the legislation.

The new law represents one of many ways MOAA seeks to protect members of the wider uniformed services committee from financial fraud. This includes work to combat VA "Claims Sharks" as well as frequent MOAA.org articles, a web series on scam avoidance, and recorded webinars (available to Premium and Life members):

- An Overview of Scams and Frauds
- Outsmart the Scammers: How to Spot and Avoid Financial Fraud
- Protecting Yourself From Cybercrime and Scams

Learn more about MOAA's financial resources at this [link](#).

The graphic features the FDVA logo on the left, which includes three stars above the text 'FDVA' and 'FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS', with the tagline 'Honoring those who served U.S.' below. A blue banner with the word 'HELPLINE' in white is positioned below the logo. To the right of the logo, three bullet points are listed: 'Health Care', 'Education', and 'Earned Benefits'. At the bottom, a red banner contains the email address 'FDVA.VSO@FDVA.FL.GOV' and the phone number '727-319-7440' in white text.

To contact FDVA from anywhere in the State, call (727) 319-7440 or send an email to [FDVA.VSO@FDVA.FL.GOV](mailto:FDVA.VSO@FDVA.FL.GOV). A reminder that all services provided by the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs are free to the client.

**UPCOMING  
EVENTS:**

**Cape Coral  
MOAA  
Board  
Meeting**

10 a.m.  
Thursday, Feb. 6  
**Cape Royal  
Golf Club**

*All members are welcome*



**About CCMOAA**

*Serving All Military,  
Veterans, & their families  
in the Cape Coral area  
... and beyond!*

Members of the Cape Coral Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America, P.O. Box 100508, Cape Coral, FL 33910-0508, publish the Cape Coral Communicator monthly, except June, July and August. The Chapter is a non-profit, non-partisan, and tax-exempt IRS 501(c)(3) and a 501(c)(19) organization, affiliated with National MOAA and the Florida Chapter of Councils, MOAA, not associated with the Department of Defense. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of MOAA, the Florida Council of Chapters, this Chapter, or DOD.

# FEBRUARY Calendar of Events

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
						<b>1</b>
<b>2</b> <i>Ground Hog Day</i>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> <i>CCMOAA Board Meeting</i>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> <i>CCMOAA Breakfast Meeting</i>
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> <i>Valentine's Day</i>	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> <i>President's Day</i>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> <i>Coast Guard Reserve Birthday</i>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	

## TRICARE for life enrollment fees, cost shares are part of new budget report

By: Karen Ruedisueli

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has once again targeted TRICARE For Life (TFL) in its biennial report outlining options for reducing the deficit.

The December 2024 report highlights savings that could be achieved by introducing a TFL enrollment fee or minimum out-of-pocket cost requirements. Similar concepts have been presented in past CBO reports, which are issued every two years to provide information to lawmakers confronting budgetary challenges.

Last year, nearly 200 MOAA members and staff took this issue to Capitol Hill as part of our Advocacy in Action campaign, ensuring elected officials understand the intense opposition to TFL fees. Retirees already have fulfilled all the requirements to earn their health care benefit, and MOAA will fight any attempts to cut it, including fee increases designed to shift costs from DoD to seniors who rely on TFL.

[\[RELATED: From TRICARE Fees to Lower COLA, These Budget Options Could Gut Service-Earned Benefits\]](#)

While no current legislation proposes TRICARE fee increases, MOAA takes these threats seriously given pressures on the DoD budget and precedent for such proposals. From FY 2013 to FY 2017, MOAA's efforts helped to block five consecutive administration budget request proposals for TFL enrollment fees.

Some details on the options included in the CBO report:

### **TFL Enrollment Fee**

TFL enrollment is automatic once a beneficiary starts paying Medicare Part B premiums. There is no enrollment fee or monthly premium for TFL coverage.

A CBO proposal would require



Medicare-eligible beneficiaries who choose to enroll in TFL to pay an annual enrollment fee of \$610 for individual coverage or \$1,220 for family coverage.

The enrollment fees would be indexed to grow at the same rate as average Medicare costs in later years.

[\[RELATED: What Is IRMAA, and What Does It Mean for My Medicare Premium?\]](#)

### **TFL Cost Sharing**

The other CBO measure affecting TFL would introduce minimum out-of-pocket requirements, including an \$850 deductible – TFL would not cover any of the first \$850 of a beneficiary's Medicare cost-sharing. For the first \$4,250 in total medical expenses each year, Medicare would pay its 80% (or \$3,400) while the TFL beneficiary would be responsible for the full \$850 not covered by Medicare.

After the deductible was satisfied, TFL would cover only 50% of the next \$7,650 in Medicare cost-sharing. This means TFL beneficiaries could face up to \$4,675 in cost-sharing per year. Similar to the enrollment fee proposal, cost-sharing requirements would increase annually at the rate of

Medicare cost increases.

### **Protecting Your Earned Benefit**

The options outlined in the CBO report come from various sources including past proposed legislation or budget proposals, congressional offices, federal agencies, and the private sector. "As a collection, the options are intended to reflect a range of possibilities, not a ranking of priorities or an exhaustive list," the report states. "Inclusion or exclusion of any particular option does not imply approval or disapproval by CBO, and the report makes no recommendations."

[\[FOR PREMIUM AND LIFE MEMBERS: Transitioning Into Medicare and TRICARE For Life\]](#)

MOAA appreciates the importance of addressing the deficit, but our nation must fulfill obligations to those who serve a full career in uniform. We will fight any proposal that increases costs to seniors who rely on TFL for their health care. The TFL benefit was a key component of the compensation and benefits package that sustained the all-volunteer force throughout two decades of war – MOAA will also protect the future of TFL for current working-age retirees and career servicemembers who are counting on TFL as a critical part of their future retirement plans.

We will be monitoring for any signs that CBO's concepts have gotten traction. The administration budget request, due in February but sometimes delayed during the first year of a new administration, will likely give us our first glimpse at any potential proposals to increase TRICARE fees. Look for updates on these and other legislative issues in The MOAA Newsletter and at MOAA.org, and register at our Legislative Action Center so you can take part in upcoming grassroots efforts designed to preserve service-earned benefits.

## President Trump signs a number of executive orders affecting the Department of Defense

President Donald Trump wasted no time implementing a key campaign promise by signing an executive order shortly after his inauguration, directing U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) to strengthen security along the U.S.-Mexico border. This move is part of a broader effort to address illegal immigration and bolster national security.

The executive order instructs Acting Defense Secretary Robert Salesses, serving temporarily while awaiting Pete Hegseth's confirmation as Secretary of Defense, to revise the Unified Command Plan within 10 days. This revision will outline NORTHCOM's expanded role, including a level 3 contingency plan to manage large-scale emergencies requiring significant resources and coordination. The directive also emphasizes countering threats such as illegal immigration and drug trafficking.

### Expanded Military Deployment to the Border

In line with the executive order, the Department of Defense announced on January 22 the deployment of an additional 1,500 active-duty troops to the southern border. These forces will support Customs and Border Protection (CBP) operations, including real-time monitoring of individuals, vehicles, and aircraft. According to Pentagon estimates, troop numbers could rise to as many as 10,000 personnel as operations expand.



“Active-duty personnel will provide critical situational awareness and assist with the movement and staging of CBP assets,” a senior military official explained. Additional airborne intelligence and surveillance resources may also be deployed to enhance border operations.

### Air Force to Assist in Deportations

The U.S. Air Force will play a significant role in deportation efforts, utilizing C-17 and C-130 aircraft to transport approximately 5,400 detained individuals. Flights are expected to depart from El Paso, Texas, and San Diego, California, with destinations coordinated by the State Department in collaboration with foreign governments. This initiative underscores the administration's commitment to addressing border security challenges comprehensively.

### Federal Hiring Freeze with Defense Exemptions

The Trump administration's government-wide hiring freeze,

announced shortly after the inauguration, includes exemptions for defense-related positions. The Department of Defense confirmed that its 750,000 civilian jobs are excluded from the freeze, ensuring critical roles in immigration enforcement and public safety remain staffed. This decision highlights the administration's prioritization of defense and national security needs during the transition.

### Strategic Realignment Toward China

In addition to border security measures, the Trump administration is signaling a strategic pivot toward countering threats from China. Recent appointments of Austin Dahmer and Alexander Velez-Green as senior defense advisors emphasize this shift. Both are known advocates for reallocating U.S. military resources from Europe to focus on China's growing geopolitical influence. Their views align with those of Elbridge Colby, the nominee for Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, whose confirmation would solidify this strategic realignment.

As the Pentagon begins to implement the administration's directives, questions remain about the broader implications of these policies. However, these early moves suggest a significant shift in U.S. defense priorities, balancing immediate border security challenges with long-term global strategy adjustments.

## Service members dismissed for refusing COVID vaccination to be reinstated

In his inauguration speech on January 20, President Donald Trump pledged to reinstate over 8,000 service members who were dismissed for refusing the COVID-19 vaccine, promising them full back pay.

This commitment, which Trump said would be implemented within the week, was part of a broader outline of military policy priorities for his new term. He also emphasized plans to strengthen the military and avoid unnecessary conflicts.

“I will reinstate any service members who were unjustly expelled from our military for objecting to the COVID vaccine mandate with full back pay,” Trump announced, receiving applause from a supportive crowd at the U.S. Capitol. He added that he would sign an executive order to prevent service members from being subjected to what he called “radical political theories and social experiments.”

This promise aligns with remarks from Trump’s Defense Secretary nominee, Pete Hegseth, during his Senate confirmation hearing. Hegseth characterized the



vaccine mandate as an “experimental policy” and vowed to apologize to those removed from service while facilitating their return.

The Department of Defense required the COVID-19 vaccine for all troops between August 2021 and January 2023, allowing limited exemptions for medical or religious reasons. Approximately 8,000 service members—less than 0.5% of the total military force—were discharged for refusing the vaccine. Although Pentagon officials have stated that these dismissals did not impact force readiness or morale, the mandate’s critics, particularly among conservative

lawmakers, have argued otherwise. They have called for the reinstatement of affected individuals, citing the decision’s potential harm to military capabilities.

The Pentagon introduced procedures allowing discharged personnel to reapply for service following the mandate’s repeal, but only a small number have done so. Military members are generally required to receive multiple vaccinations during onboarding, but the COVID-19

vaccine became contentious due to the speed of its development during Trump’s previous term.

In addition to his vaccine-related promise, Trump vowed to rebuild the military into “the strongest the world has ever seen” and expressed hopes that his legacy would reflect efforts as a “peacemaker and unifier.”

White House officials have not yet provided a specific timeline for signing the executive order on the vaccine mandate.

## Hegseth outlines his priorities

Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, outlined his priorities in written responses submitted to Congress ahead of his Senate Armed Services Committee confirmation hearing. Among his main goals is a strategic military focus on the Indo-Pacific region, emphasizing the importance of countering China’s growing military influence.

In a 75-page document addressing lawmakers’ questions, Hegseth stressed the urgency of enhancing deterrence in the Pacific. “Given China’s rapid military buildup, we must accelerate efforts to strengthen our force posture and operational capabilities in the region,” he stated. He also plans to request funding to bolster the U.S. presence in the Indo-Pacific.

Hegseth’s written testimony also touched on U.S. commitments in other regions. In the Middle East, he proposed empowering regional allies to combat terrorism, though he refrained from specifying military resources he would

allocate to the area. He suggested that his anticipated force posture review would evaluate U.S. military missions in Africa, Europe, and the Middle East, potentially reshaping the Pentagon’s global operations.

Regarding Europe, Hegseth underscored the need for NATO allies to take on more responsibility for their own security. He highlighted the threat posed by Russian President Vladimir Putin’s ambitions to expand Russian influence and undermine NATO. “European allies and partners must increase their contributions to defense matters,” he wrote, adding that the U.S. role in Europe should focus on nuclear deterrence and providing advanced capabilities to NATO.

Hegseth’s views align with those of Elbridge Colby, nominated for the position of Undersecretary of Defense for Policy. Colby, a key architect of the National Defense Strategy during Trump’s first term, advocates for a U.S.

military focus on high-end capabilities while encouraging European nations to assume greater responsibility for conventional defense forces within NATO. Hegseth reiterated this approach, emphasizing the strategic value of U.S. nuclear weapons in maintaining NATO’s deterrence posture.

Hegseth’s testimony also addressed Iran’s regional activities, calling for enhanced cooperation with European and regional allies to counter Iranian threats. In Africa, he emphasized leveraging partnerships to address security challenges without directly detailing changes to U.S. commitments on the continent.

Hegseth’s leadership is expected to reflect a shift in U.S. defense priorities, focusing on strengthening alliances, redistributing resources to confront emerging threats in the Indo-Pacific, and ensuring NATO’s continued resilience against Russian aggression.

## Drones to remain DOD Priority, Secretary of Defense nominee says

Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth has indicated that advancing the military's use of drones and autonomous technologies will be a top priority if he is confirmed.

During his recent Senate Armed Services Committee confirmation hearing, Hegseth emphasized the importance of unmanned systems in modern warfare and the need to counter drone threats that pose risks to U.S. national security.

"Unmanned platforms will play a critical role in future conflicts," Hegseth stated. He highlighted their potential to enhance survivability, reduce costs, and save time compared to manned systems. In his responses to the committee's advanced policy questions, Hegseth pledged support for integrating drone technologies across all branches of the military and the joint force.

The Defense Department has already prioritized unmanned systems under previous leadership, influenced by lessons from conflicts such as the ongoing war in Ukraine and operations in the Middle East. These efforts have included significant investments to expand the military's drone capabilities and explore the use of unmanned swarms in combat scenarios.

Hegseth's nomination sparked debate, with critics questioning



his suitability for the role due to controversies surrounding his past professional conduct and alignment with Trump's defense policies. Despite these concerns, Hegseth reiterated his belief that unmanned systems are a cornerstone of the future battlefield.

He also addressed challenges in U.S. shipbuilding, noting manpower shortages and workforce limitations. Hegseth pointed to unmanned systems as a potential solution, particularly unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs), to enhance the Navy's capabilities amid a decline in the number of operational ships. "We need to accelerate the integration of unmanned systems into our surface and undersea fleets to ensure our Navy remains competitive," he told the committee.

Hegseth intends to direct Pentagon leadership, including service secretaries and undersecretaries responsible for acquisitions and research, to

fast-track the adoption of cost-effective, advanced unmanned technologies. He also plans to strengthen the Marine Corps' ability to operate in contested coastal environments by focusing on precision strikes, advanced reconnaissance, and the use of drones to support distributed operations.

Additionally, Hegseth has committed to reviewing how the Department of Defense counters larger unmanned aerial systems (UAS) and evaluating the current roles of the Joint Counter Small Unmanned Aerial Systems Office (JCSO). He acknowledged that recent conflicts have highlighted the need for effective strategies to counter small UAS threats and pledged to prioritize joint efforts to address these challenges.

Hegseth's leadership is expected to reinforce the Pentagon's focus on leveraging unmanned systems to maintain military superiority and address emerging security threats.

## Trusted Traveler Program reinstated at military installations nationwide

*Editor's note: This article by Thomas Novelty originally appeared on Military.com, a leading source of news for the military and veteran community.*

Military bases throughout North America will resume a program that makes it easier for Defense Department personnel to bring visitors onto base, one week after it was suspended amid heightened security concerns from public attacks on New Year's Day.

Capt. Mayrem Morales, a U.S. Northern Command spokesperson, told Military.com in an emailed statement Friday afternoon that the Trusted Traveler Program -- which allowed those with Common Access Cards or Defense Biometric Identification System cards to escort people onto base -- was reinstated following last week's order.

"U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) has returned the use of [the] Trusted Traveler Program subject to installation commanders' local policy," Morales said. "This follows recent increased force protection measures directed by USNORTHCOM in response to attacks in New Orleans and Las Vegas."

One main benefit of the Trusted Traveler Program is making waiting lines move more efficiently at base gates. When the initiative was stopped last week, meaning visitors needed to secure base passes and there were 100% identification checks, service members posted photos on social media of long lines to enter installations.



### [\[MOAA RESOURCES: ID Cards\]](#)

The security measures came after Shamsud-Din Jabbar, an Army veteran, killed 14 people in New Orleans when he drove his rented truck down Bourbon Street in the city's French Quarter, and was killed by police shortly after the New Year's Day attack.

That same day, Master Sgt. Matthew Livelsberger, an Army Green Beret, drove a rented Tesla Cybertruck in front of the Trump International Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada, where he detonated an explosive and died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound prior to the blast.

It was not clear how the Trusted Traveler Program would have stopped those attacks, since both men would have had access to bases.

"These measures, which cover installations, facilities and units within the USNORTHCOM Area of Responsibility -- including the

continental United States and Alaska -- were implemented as a precautionary step to ensure the safety and security of personnel and installations," Morales added in the emailed statement.

There has been at least one public security situation during the week that the Trusted Traveler Program was shut down.

On Thursday, Patrick Space Force Base in Florida closed its East Gate amid an "ongoing investigation" starting around 2 p.m. local time, a Facebook post from the installation detailed.

"For everyone's safety and security, the area has been closed to ensure the investigation proceeds without interruption," Emre Kelly, a Space Launch Delta 45 spokesperson, told Military.com in an emailed statement.

By 8 p.m. local time, the gate and State Road A1A were reopened, but there was no explanation as to the cause or details of the incident provided by Patrick Space Force Base or the Brevard County Sheriff's Office.

## New Ford-Class aircraft carriers to be named after Bill Clinton, George W. Bush

*Editor's note: This article by Konstantin Toropin originally appeared on Military.com, a leading source of news for the military and veteran community.*

The White House announced Monday that the Navy will name the two latest Ford-class aircraft carriers after former Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush.

The future USS William J. Clinton and the future USS George W. Bush will become the fifth and sixth ships of the Ford class -- the class of ships that is slated to eventually replace the venerable Nimitz-class carriers that are in operation today.

"When I personally delivered the news to Bill and George, they were deeply humbled," Biden said in the statement released by the White House.

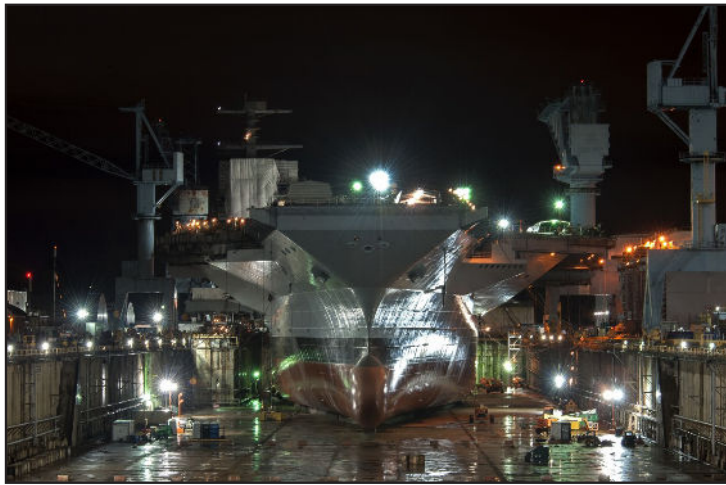
Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said that the Pentagon was "honored" by the choice of names.

"These two future carriers are named after historically significant commanders in chief who served our country with determination and dedication," Austin said in a statement released shortly after the White House made the announcement.

While the White House publicized the decision, the responsibility and authority to name ships lies squarely in the hands of the Navy secretary.

Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro has spent the last several weeks making a spate of ship naming announcements that ranged from a Navy destroyer honoring Bob Kerrey, a former Navy SEAL and U.S. senator, to an amphibious transport dock ship for Silver Star recipient Lt. Travis Manion.

[\[RELATED: Explorer-Class Ships Named for Don Walsh, Victor](#)



USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN-78), the first ship in the Navy's new carrier class, sits in drydock in 2013 at Virginia's Newport News Shipbuilding. The carrier was commissioned in 2017; the fifth and sixth ships of the class also will be named for U.S. presidents. (Photo by John Whalen/Newport News Shipbuilding)

[Vescovo | MOAA Interview: Cmdr. Victor Vescovo, USNR \(Ret\)\]](#)

On Monday, Del Toro also named three future Virginia-class submarines after the Potomac River; the city of Norfolk, Virginia; and the New York City borough of Brooklyn, as well as a Columbia-class ballistic missile submarine after the city of Groton, Connecticut.

Only the lead ship of the class of aircraft carriers, the USS Gerald R. Ford, has actually been built and is serving in the Navy.

The next two carriers in the class -- the future USS John F. Kennedy and the USS Enterprise -- are under construction. The USS Doris Miller, the fourth planned Ford-class carrier named after an enlisted sailor in World War II, is scheduled to begin construction next year.

Modern U.S. Navy aircraft carriers have typically been named after U.S. presidents, though there have been a few notable exceptions -- the USS Enterprise, USS Nimitz and the USS John C. Stennis.

The Navy decided to carry that tradition over to the new Ford class of ships but has also kept up the tradition of occasionally breaking the naming convention.

The future USS Enterprise was named in honor of her predecessor -- the Navy's first nuclear aircraft carrier -- but when commissioned, she will also be the ninth U.S. Navy vessel and third aircraft carrier to bear the name.

The future USS Doris Miller honors Messman Second Class Doris Miller, who not only behaved heroically during the attack on Pearl Harbor but would become the first Black recipient of the Navy Cross and a nominee for the Medal of Honor. Miller was killed in action in 1943.

In his statement on the naming, Del Toro noted President Bush's role in rallying the nation after

the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and President Clinton's role in forging the historic Oslo Accords that established a framework of peace between Israel and Palestine and the Good Friday Agreement that put an end to the violence in Northern Ireland.

Del Toro's statement said that, during a private ceremony at the White House on Jan. 3, he announced that the sponsor for the future USS William J. Clinton will be Clinton's daughter, Chelsea Clinton.

"She will represent a lifelong relationship with the ship and crew," the statement said.

Meanwhile, in the Navy's statement, former President Bush said that he was "honored that my name will be associated with the United States Navy and a symbol of our nation's might."

Bush's father, President George H. W. Bush, has a Nimitz-class aircraft carrier named after him.

"I have a special admiration for the men and women of our Navy -- including my dad -- and ask God to watch over this ship and those who sail aboard her," he added.

Del Toro did not announce a sponsor for the future USS George W. Bush.

## Carrier John F. Kennedy sent to Texas scrapyard

The Navy's decommissioned aircraft carrier John F. Kennedy (CV-67) has departed the Philadelphia Inactive Ship Maintenance Facility, beginning its final journey to a dismantling facility in Brownsville, Texas. Early in the morning, tugboats guided the vessel down the Delaware River, where it was secured to the tow ship Laney Chouest for transit to the Atlantic Ocean.

Commissioned on September 7, 1968, at Newport News Shipbuilding and christened by a nine-year-old Caroline Kennedy, the carrier was named to honor President John F. Kennedy. Jacqueline Kennedy designed its in-port cabin, making it the only room on a Navy ship with wood paneling. Known as "Big John," the carrier was celebrated as a symbol of American power and freedom during its decommissioning ceremony at Mayport, Florida, in 2007.

Following its decommissioning, the Kennedy spent more than a decade in Philadelphia under donation status, awaiting potential

transfer to a nonprofit organization for preservation as a museum. However, the Navy ultimately sold the carrier in 2021 to International Shipbreaking Limited/EMR Brownsville for a symbolic one cent. Delays postponed the dismantling process until late 2023, and work is now set to commence.

The carrier has a storied service history, with 18 deployments to regions such as the Mediterranean and the Middle East during times of significant geopolitical tension. Highlights include:

- Yom Kippur War (1973): Responding to conflict between Israel and Arab states.
- 1983 Lebanon Deployment: Supporting operations following the Marine Barracks bombing.
- Operation Desert Storm (1991): Launching 114 strikes and nearly 2,900 combat sorties in the liberation of Kuwait.
- Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom (2003): Dropping over 62 million pounds of ordnance

on Taliban and al-Qaeda targets and providing close air support for U.S. and Coalition forces.

Meanwhile, the second carrier to bear President Kennedy's name, John F. Kennedy (CVN-79), is under construction as part of the Ford-class. The Navy's current strategy involves incorporating baseline work into the construction phase to enhance the ship's capabilities at delivery. Like its predecessor, the CVN-79 is being built at Newport News Shipbuilding.

Robert Berry, vice president of International Shipbreaking Limited, noted the increased security measures surrounding the Kennedy's dismantling, describing it as more stringent than past projects. This highlights the Navy's attention to detail and commitment to safeguarding the carrier's legacy during its final phase.

The journey of the John F. Kennedy (CV-67) to Brownsville marks the end of an era, concluding decades of distinguished service and contributions to U.S. military operations worldwide.



## Republicans to push for extended access to private health care for veterans

The start of a new Congress and President Donald Trump beginning his second term have brought a renewed focus on reforms to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Republicans are pushing for expanded access to private health care for veterans, igniting a debate over the future of VA services.

The GOP contends that the VA's bureaucracy is limiting veterans' ability to access community care, advocating for measures to reduce wait times and improve flexibility. Meanwhile, Democrats argue that these proposals could disrupt the VA's ability to deliver coordinated care and escalate costs significantly.

Republicans have introduced several bills to alter how veterans receive care:

- **“Complete the Mission Act 2024”:** Proposed by Rep. Mike Bost, this bill seeks to codify eligibility standards for community care, locking in distance and wait-time metrics. It would also allow veterans to schedule community care appointments directly.

- **Health Savings Accounts:** Rep. Chip Roy's proposal would enable veterans to use health savings accounts for private primary care.

- **Preapproval-Free Community Care:** A bill from Rep. Andy Biggs would launch a pilot program allowing veterans to seek community care without prior VA approval.



- **Expanded Tricare Access:** Rep. Greg Steube has suggested opening Tricare Select to veterans with service-related disabilities, giving them more choices in accessing care.

Supporters of these initiatives argue that they will empower veterans to choose care providers closer to home, especially in rural areas. “If you live hours from the nearest VA facility, being able to see local doctors makes a big difference,” said John Byrne of Concerned Veterans for America.

However, critics worry about the potential consequences. Joy Ilem of Disabled American Veterans highlighted the risks of weakening the VA's integrated care system. “Many veterans have complex health needs best managed by VA's coordinated approach,” she said.

The debate over community care is not new. The 2014 Choice Act allowed veterans to seek private care if VA wait times exceeded 30 days or if they lived more than 40

miles from a VA facility. The 2018 MISSION Act expanded these options but also increased costs, with community care expenses rising from \$15 billion in 2018 to \$28.5 billion in 2023.

Despite efforts to balance community care and direct services, the VA has faced criticism for allegedly obstructing access to private care. Cole Lyle of The American Legion noted that some veterans' community care appointments have been abruptly canceled. “Veterans need timely access to care, regardless of where it's provided,” he said.

Outgoing VA Secretary Denis McDonough defended the department, calling claims of intentional obstruction “fundamentally inaccurate.” He acknowledged the need to manage community care growth carefully, warning that unchecked expansion could undermine the VA's ability to provide specialized services.

As Trump's nominee for VA Secretary, Doug Collins has expressed strong support for giving veterans more choices in their health care. “Veterans should be able to see their preferred doctors without unnecessary barriers,” he said in a recent interview.

The ongoing debate reflects broader questions about the balance between cost, access, and quality in veterans' health care. While both parties agree on the need for reform, their approaches differ significantly, leaving the future of VA services uncertain.

## Are you eligible for additional VA education benefits: What to know

*By: Kevin Lilley*

More than 1 million veterans may qualify for more VA educational assistance, but many of those veterans will not receive notification or instructions regarding this benefit expansion.

Under a 2024 Supreme Court decision, veterans

no longer must waive Montgomery GI Bill eligibility to use Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits, and previous Montgomery GI Bill waivers can be revoked. This means some beneficiaries can claim additional benefits, up to a 48-month limit.

VA beneficiaries who received an education claim decision on or after Aug. 15, 2018, will have their claim reviewed and be notified of any new benefit eligibility, according to the VA's webpage outlining the benefit change. But veterans who have never filed a claim, or who last filed a claim before that date, must act if they want to secure their new benefits.

- Those using VA education assistance for the first time can apply at this link and will



have their application reviewed regarding expanded eligibility.

- Those who last received a VA education claim ruling before Aug. 15, 2018, should file VA Form 22-1995 online and request a “Rudisill review” via the online application.

There is no time limit to access the expanded benefits, but claims must be submitted by Oct. 1, 2030, if a veteran is seeking a recalculation for their delimiting date (when their benefits expire).

Veterans using the Veteran Readiness & Employment (VR&E) program, or who used the program after Aug. 15, 2018, who are eligible for expanded benefits may be eligible for a retroactive Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) payment. Those in the program should receive an automatic adjustment; others can

call 1 (800) 827-1000 for more information.

Montgomery GI Bill and Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits cannot be used at the same time. VA's webpage offers answers to frequently asked questions about the benefit change, to include transfer rules and waiver protocols.

### Further Support

Additional questions about the benefit expansion can be directed to the VA via multiple platforms:

- AskVA (VA account required)
- Phone: 1 (888) 442-4551 (domestic); 1 (918) 781-5678 (international)
- Email: Subscribe to VA email updates

## VA eases benefits rules for cancers from post-9/11 service, K2 tours

*This article by Leo Shane III originally appeared on Military Times, the nation's largest independent newsroom dedicated to covering the military and veteran community.*

Veterans who served in the first Gulf War or Post-9/11 conflicts suffering from leukemia, bladder cancer and other related illnesses will be granted presumptive benefits status under plans announced by Veterans Affairs leaders.

That includes troops formerly stationed at Karshi-Khanabad Air Base in Uzbekistan, a group that has long lobbied for better recognition of the damaging long-term health effects connected to that site.

The decision is the latest in a series of moves by department officials to ease the burden associated with applying for veterans disability benefits for former troops exposed to toxic chemicals during their time in service.

[\[MOAA/DAV REPORT: Ending the Wait for Toxic-Exposed Veterans\]](#)

“Adding these presumptives lowers the burden of proof for veterans to get the benefits they deserve for the conditions that followed them home from war,” VA Secretary Denis McDonough said in a statement. “We encourage veterans with these conditions — and all veterans — to apply today for the benefits they deserve.”

Typically, veterans applying for disability benefits must prove that their injuries were directly connected to time in the military. That can be difficult for indirect injuries caused by exposure to toxic chemicals at military bases from hazards like burn pits or groundwater contamination.

Presumptive status allows veterans applying for benefits to skip paperwork establishing their condition as a result of military service. That can cut months of wait



MOAA President and CEO Lt. Gen. Brian T. Kelly, USAF (Ret), speaks during a Sept. 18 launch event in Washington, D.C., for a joint MOAA/Disabled American Veterans report entitled “Ending the Wait for Toxic-Exposed Veterans.” (Photos by Mike Morones/MOAA)

times off the benefits process, as well as reduce the frustration of families waiting for answers.

Additionally, when veterans are established as having a service-connected health condition — either through the claims process or by the presumptive process — they become eligible for free VA health care for that condition.

[\[RELATED: How MOAA Is Making a Difference for Toxic-Exposed Veterans\]](#)

The new announcement covers acute and chronic leukemias, multiple myelomas, myelodysplastic syndromes, myelofibrosis, urinary bladder, ureter and related genitourinary cancers.

Veterans who served in the Middle East during the first Gulf War or in Afghanistan, Iraq, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen or Uzbekistan after Sept. 11, 2001, will be granted presumptive disability status for those conditions, starting next week.

That includes the so-called K2 veterans. The Uzbekistan base was used by U.S. troops as a point into and out of Afghanistan during the early 2000s. Individuals who served there were exposed to numerous contaminants, including jet fuel in groundwater and lead-based paint.

About 13,000 of the 16,000 troops known to have served there are already enrolled in VA health care. At least 11,800 have already been rated as disabled for at least one service-related condition, with many topping more than a dozen related health issues.

The decision on the new presumptives is connected to the 2022 PACT Act, which dramatically expanded benefits for troops with toxic exposure injuries.

Since it was signed into law, nearly 900,000 veterans have enrolled in department health care, an increase of about 40% from the comparable period before the bill was adopted.

More information on how to apply for benefits is available on the VA website.

## Survivors face pressure tactics, delays from home loan servicers

By: Kevin Lilley

Survivors of veterans with VA-backed loans face inaccurate information, delays, and other frustrations when dealing with mortgage servicers, a new report found, complicating an important financial process during a time of grief.

Some homeowners faced “pressure to refinance at higher interest rates rather than helping them manage existing mortgage” after the death of a loved one or a divorce, a December report from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) states. Examples involving VA-backed loans included:

- A Missouri widow who was told she would need to refinance her loan to remove her dead husband’s name from the mortgage.
- A divorced couple in Oklahoma whose mortgage servicer would not accept their divorce decree as part of the loan assumption process.
- An Illinois homeowner whose loan assumption required 20 phone calls to his mortgage servicer, “each time with call lengths over 15 minutes,” and had yet to be resolved.

“Assumptions are a fundamental feature of a VA-guaranteed loan, and when a veteran passes away, their qualified surviving spouse should be able to assume the loan without further delay,” said Joshua Jacobs, VA’s undersecretary for benefits, in a CFPB press release accompanying the report. “It’s unacceptable that anyone



would target surviving spouses in their time of need. VA has published guidance to remind holders and servicers of assumption guidelines — and we’ve outlined how VA will address any failure to comply with these requirements.”

Surviving spouses can learn more about their VA loan eligibility at this link.

[\[RELATED: What Is a VA Loan Assumption?\]](#)

The report outlined examples of VA- and non-VA loan assumption irregularities, to include pressure to refinance, multiple requests for the same documentation, and denials of requests to remove original borrowers from the loan despite proper procedures being followed.

While the VA does not service

loans, VA-backed borrowers who cannot resolve assumption-related disputes with mortgage servicers can call (877) 827-3702 to connect with their nearest VA Regional Loan Center for guidance.

Servicers found to be delaying the process or providing false information regarding their loans could face punishments up to including legal sanctions.

[\[FROM VA.GOV: Noncompliance in Processing Assumptions \(PDF\)\]](#)

VA- and non-VA-backed loan-holders who have been pressured into refinancing a loan or faced unreasonable delays during the assumption process can file a CFPB complaint via the bureau’s website or by calling (855) 411-2372.

## Veterans can now tell their own stories on the VA's Veterans Memorial Website

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has introduced a new feature on its Veterans Legacy Memorial (VLM) website, enabling veterans to share their personal stories and achievements during their lifetime.

This expansion allows former service members eligible for burial in VA national cemeteries to create and upload content such as photographs, autobiographies, and military accomplishments to the secure platform. The submitted material will be published posthumously, following a family's request for burial or memorial benefits and the VA's review process.

Ronald Walters, the Acting Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs, highlighted the significance of this addition, stating, "Providing veterans with resources to document their stories while they are still with us ensures their voices are heard and allows family members, friends, and others to appreciate the experiences of those who served."

This new feature, titled "Your Story, Your Legacy," fulfills a commitment made by former Under Secretary Matt Quinn to expand the site for living veterans by the end of 2024. Quinn emphasized the importance of preserving these memories, encouraging individuals

to contribute to the VLM to keep veterans' legacies alive.

Launched in 2019, the VLM originally housed the names of nearly 10 million veterans interred in national cemeteries, VA grant-funded cemeteries, Department of Defense cemeteries, and other sites such as Arlington National Cemetery. It also included those with VA-provided grave markers since 1996. Future plans aim to expand the database to include veterans with markers from earlier years and those buried overseas in cemeteries managed by the American Battle Monuments Commission.

To date, the site has received more than 165,000 submissions to veterans' pages, all of which undergo a review process by National Cemetery Administration moderators. James LaPaglia, the VLM program officer, underscored the value of veterans

sharing their first-person accounts, saying, "Their narratives will have an enduring presence, offering family members and others a deeper understanding of the unique veteran experience."

Despite its growing database, the VLM's accuracy depends on the reliability of participating organizations' records. Families who encounter missing records can contact the VLM support team for assistance through the website's customer support link.

Veterans interested in contributing to the VLM can apply online to determine their pre-need eligibility. For additional details about VA burial benefits, veterans are encouraged to visit the VA's burial benefits webpage, contact their local national cemetery, or call the VA directly at 800-827-1000.

The screenshot shows the Veterans Legacy Memorial (VLM) website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the "Veterans Legacy Memorial" logo, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and National Cemetery Administration logos, and links for "Living Veterans", "Customer Support", "F.A.Q.", and "Login". Below this is a secondary navigation bar with links for "Find a Cemetery", "Access & Manage VA Benefits", "About this Website", and "User Policy". The main content area features a search form titled "Find Your Veteran" set against a background of many small American flags. The search form includes input fields for "Veteran Last Name (1 Letter Required)" and "Veteran First Name". Below these are dropdown menus for "Branch of Service" (set to "All"), "Year of Death" (set to "YYYY"), "Country/State/Territory" (set to "All"), and "Cemetery" (with a "Type Cemetery Name" input field). There is also an "Advanced search" link and a "Search" button.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
National Cemetery Administration

Living Veterans Customer Support F.A.Q. Login

Find a Cemetery Access & Manage VA Benefits About this Website User Policy

Find Your Veteran

Veteran Last Name (1 Letter Required) Veteran First Name

\* Required

Branch of Service Year of Death Country/State/Territory Cemetery

All YYYY All Type Cemetery Name

Advanced search Search

Welcome to the Veterans Legacy Memorial (VLM)

## More than 300,000 VA jobs exempted from hiring freeze

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced that over 300,000 health care positions within the agency are exempt from the federal hiring freeze instituted by President Donald Trump shortly after his inauguration. This decision, outlined in a memo by Acting VA Secretary Todd Hunter, was made to ensure essential health services for veterans remain unaffected.



agency operations unnecessarily. Meanwhile, the White House has defended the policy, asserting that it is a temporary measure to assess and reduce the size of the federal workforce, which comprises approximately three million employees nationwide.

In a related development, the hiring freeze has also temporarily halted the onboarding of unpaid volunteers at VA medical facilities, further prompting

concerns about operational impacts. Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee discussions have highlighted the need for continued support and resources for the VA as it navigates these changes.

The hiring freeze, aimed at slowing the expansion of the federal workforce, initially caused concern among lawmakers and veterans' advocates regarding its potential impact on veteran care. While the executive order included exemptions for roles related to public safety, military personnel, and immigration enforcement, it left other departments, including the VA, to determine which positions were critical.

According to the memo, new hires scheduled to start before February 8 will proceed as planned, while other pending hires will be temporarily halted. However, the VA has listed 39 health care professions—including mental health providers, nurses, physical therapists, and prosthetic specialists—as exempt from the freeze. These roles are considered vital to delivering care through the Veterans Health Administration, representing approximately two-thirds of the department's

workforce.

Positions related to processing veterans' benefits may also be exempted, but individual offices must provide justification for these roles. Hunter emphasized that the VA remains committed to maintaining a deliberate hiring approach to support modernization and reform efforts aligned with the Office of Management and Budget's guidelines.

Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Jerry Moran commended the VA for addressing concerns promptly. "Ensuring that health care and other critical employees can continue to be hired is essential for veterans and their families to receive timely care and benefits," Moran stated. He also called for a clear, long-term staffing strategy to avoid inconsistencies in the future.

Despite the exemptions, union groups have criticized the hiring freeze, arguing it could disrupt

concerns about operational impacts. Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee discussions have highlighted the need for continued support and resources for the VA as it navigates these changes.

The committee recently advanced the nomination of Doug Collins as VA Secretary to the full Senate. Although most members supported the nomination, some expressed reservations about Collins' stance on veterans' access to abortion services. Collins has assured lawmakers that any efficiency initiatives from the administration will prioritize improving veterans' access to benefits and services rather than cutting them.

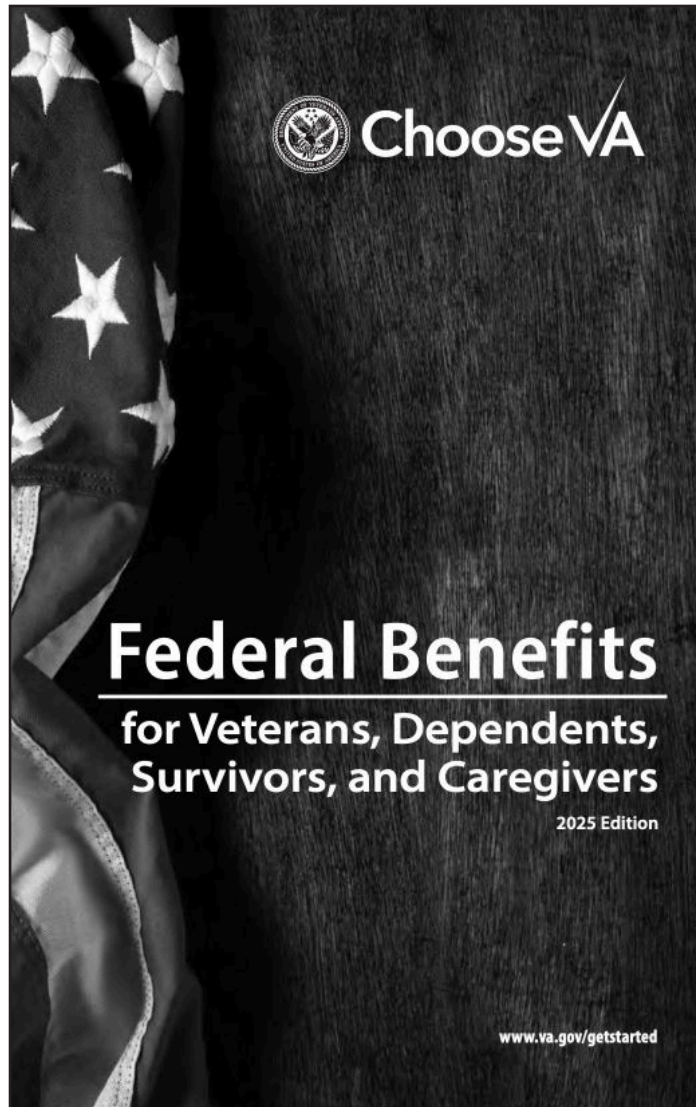
This decision underscores the administration's intent to balance fiscal responsibility with maintaining essential services for veterans, ensuring that the hiring freeze does not impede the VA's ability to meet its mission.

## 2025 VA Federal Benefits Guide is now available

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' "2025 VA Federal Benefits Guide for Veterans, Dependents, Survivors, and Caregivers" now is available for download [here](#). The guide contains a comprehensive listing of VA programs, including phone numbers and websites for easy reference. The annual Federal Benefits Guide contains information on most VA benefits and services, including:

- Compensation.
- Life insurance.
- Pension and fiduciary services.
- Education benefits.
- Economic development and employment.
- Home loan guaranty progress and housing assistance.
- Mental health resources.

The handbook is designed to help veterans, servicemembers and their families understand the full scope of VA resources available to them after their



service. It provides details on eligibility requirements for each benefit, and because VA serves different generations of veterans, it also outlines the qualification guidelines for distinct periods of service to clarify eligibility for veterans with service spanning both peace and wartime periods.

The VA Federal Benefits

Guide is available in both print and digital formats. Veterans and family members can access the booklet on VA's website, providing instant and convenient access to the wealth of information it contains. A limited number of printed copies may be available at local medical center, Vet Center or regional office. To find the nearest VA facility, go to [www.va.gov/find-locations](http://www.va.gov/find-locations).

The information in this guide is validated by VA as of Oct. 10, 2024. For the most up-to-date information, veterans and family members should visit [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov), or go to the specific links provided in

this publication to access information on the program that they're interested in, as regulations, payments and eligibility requirements are subject to change. You can also call VA at 800-827-1000 from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday to speak with a representative.

# FCoC Convention

## Cape MOAA members attend Jan. 17-19 FCoC convention/training

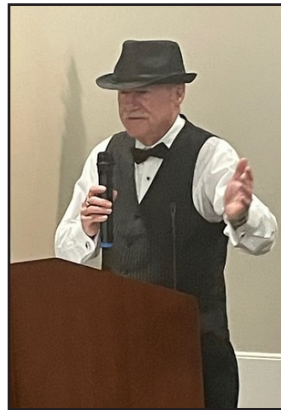
Seven members of the Cape Coral MOAA attended the Jan. 17-19 Florida Council of Chapters Leadership Training Seminar and Convention at the Rosen Centre Hotel in Orlando, FL.

Attending were Cape Coral MOAA President Gary Nolan, Vice President Tom Wagner, Treasurer Tim and Christina Cook, Secretary Gary Peppers and Board Member At-Large Bill and Janet Deile.

Tom Wagner was also the Casino Night Fundraiser Host, which raised \$5,500 for the MOAA Foundation.

In addition, President Nolan had nominated Bill Deile and Tim Cook for the Florida Council of Chapters Council

Leadership Awards, which they won. The awards will be presented to them at the Feb. 8 breakfast meeting.



Tom Wagner at  
the Casino Night  
Fundraiser



Christina and Tim Cook



Cape Coral MOAA members attending the event were (left to right) COL Tom Wagner, USAR (Retired); Janet Deile; COL Bill Deile, USA (Retired); Christina Cook; CAPT Tim Cook, USN (Retired) and Col Gary Nolan, USAF (Retired).

# US Coast Guard Reserve Birthday

## U.S. Coast Guard Reserve celebrates 84th birthday on Feb. 19

The Coast Guard Reserve was established by the passage of the Coast Guard reserve and Auxiliary Act of February 19, 1941.

That act also established the Coast Guard Auxiliary under its present name (the Auxiliary had originally been called the Coast Guard Reserve). The new Coast Guard reserve was modeled after the Naval Reserve as a military component, composed of two broad classifications: Regular Reservists and Temporary Reservists. Regular Reservists and Temporary Reservists. Regular Reserve members served on active duty during World War II “for the duration,” while Temporary Reserve members consisted of volunteers and former Auxiliary members whose paid and unpaid services were still needed in a military capacity for coastal patrols and port security work.

On November 23, 1942, Congress enacted Public Law 773 establishing the Women Reserve as a branch of the Coast Guard. Members of this branch became known as SPARs, an acronym drawn from the Service motto, *Semper Paratus, Always Ready*. More than 92% of the 214,000 personnel who served in the Coast Guard during World War II were Reservists, with an additional 125,000 personnel serving in the Temporary Reserve. They served in all Coast Guard mission areas.

At the conclusion of World War II, most Reservists were released to inactive duty or discharged. The Women’s Reserve was terminated in July 1947 but reestablished in August 1949. By 1950, funds were earmarked by Congress for the establishment of a paid drilling Reserve in support of the Coast Guard, recently expanded port security responsibilities.



The first organized Coast Guard Reserve unit was formed in Boston in October 1950, setting the framework of today’s Coast Guard Reserve. The Selected Reserve reached a peak post-WWII strength of 17,815 in 1969, during the Vietnam Conflict.

In the Spring of 1973, the Reserve exercised its first involuntary recall to support flood response operations in the Midwest. Some 134 Reservists were recalled. Between then and 1990, only one other involuntary recall was invoked—for the Mariel Boat Lift exodus from Cuba in 1980. The 1980s also included augmentation of the Active Component to enforce Security Zones for space shuttle operations in Florida, logging over 5900 person-days from 1981 to date. The decade finished with major Reserve augmentation for the massive cleanup operations in Alaska following the Exxon Valdez oil spill where 65% of personnel used in that operation came from the Reserve.

The 1990s saw a growing demand for the Coast Guard’s unique domestic recall authority under 14 USC 712. The Reserve has provided personnel to the Active Component to support 12 hurricane and six

major flood operations, including Hurricane Floyd in 1999. Late that year, the Coast Guard also received authorization to recall reservists to respond to possible Y2K-related contingencies, but did not do so. Reservists volunteered for the 1999 search-and-recovery efforts following the crashes of a light plane piloted by John F. Kennedy Jr. and Egypt Air 990. During 2000, approximately 1,000 reservists served on active duty in support of Operation Sail.

In the Coast Guard’s national defense role, 1,650 reservists, over 15% of the selected reserve, participated in operations desert shield/storm. reserve-staffed port security units also participated with the joint community in operation uphold democracy in Haiti and they continue to participate in joint military exercises worldwide.

One unique and highly successful Reserve-sponsored program, Sea Partners, has earned high marks around the country since its inception in 1994. Its primary objective has been to educate communities at large in developing awareness of marine pollution issues and improving compliance with marine environmental protection laws and regulations. Over 300 Coast Guard Reservists have participated in the Sea Partners campaign, in which teams of Reservists are assigned to each of the 47 USCG Marine Safety Offices across the country. New members are recruited through on-the-job or formal training at Coast Guard Marine Safety Offices. Since June 1994, Sea Partners teams have reached over 2 million individuals in personal contacts and many thousands more through print media, radio and television coverage. They have distributed  
*(Continued on next page)*

# US Coast Guard Reserve Birthday

*(Continued from previous page)* over a million pieces of printed literature on various marine pollution topics. The popular Officer Snook campaign has educated hundreds of thousands of children on marine pollution prevention. Through the Sea Partners program, Reservists coordinated numerous beach and shore cleanups around the country in FY 00. Working relationships have been established with community and local government groups, such as the North Carolina Big Sweep, the Dade County, FL Dept. Of Environmental Resource Management and the Pacific Oil Spill Prevention Education Team.

With most Coast Guard Reservists assigned to the same active duty command that they would augment upon mobilization, they are better-prepared both administratively and operationally to report, in most cases, within 24 hours of call-up. The exceptions to this are the Coast Guard Port Security Units, which are nearly 100-percent reserve staffed, and Naval Reserve Harbor Defense Command Units, which have Coast Guard Reservists assigned. Under the Title 14 recall authority, the Secretary of Transportation may involuntarily recall Reservists to serve in domestic emergencies, in which case the local district commander determines which specialties and number of personnel to recall.

In Fiscal Year 2000, Coast Guard

Reservists contributed nearly 316,000 days of duty in all Coast Guard mission areas. In February 1998, the administration, in response to heightened tensions in the Middle East, invoked a Presidential Selected Reserve Callup (PSRC). Five hundred Reservists from all the military services were placed on standby status, including 130 Coast Guard Reservists assigned to PSU 305 at Ft. Eustis, VA. Coast Guard Reservists represented 26% of the entire authorized PSRC total. In August 1999, the commander of the Seventh Coast Guard District and the commander of the Coast Guard Atlantic Area requested and obtained authority for the involuntary call-up of 350 reservists in anticipation of damage and floods caused by Hurricane Floyd. Reservists from outside the projected area of impact were the first to be identified. Again, Reservists answered the call which allowed the Coast Guard to fulfill service needs.

The Reserve Component continues strengthening its ties with the other members of the "Team Coast Guard." The 1997 Coast Guard Reserve Roles & Missions Study has validated the need for a Selected Reserve strength of over 12,000 to meet current national defense tasking, operational contingency requirements and certain "mission critical" functions. The need for Active Duty for Special Work

(both ADSW-RC and ADSW-AC) to support Coast Guard domestic surge operations will continue. In addition, Reservists are increasingly answering the call to fill Active Component shortfalls in day-to-day operations through performance of both ADSW and Extended Active Duty as the Coast Guard strives to meet its motto, Semper Paratus, Always Ready

## Involuntary Recalls to Active Duty

The Coast Guard has recalled reservists for two defense contingencies and ten non-defense emergencies since 1973. Between 1973 and 1990 Coast Guard reservists were involuntarily recalled on just three occasions. Hurricane Andrew's devastation of South Florida in September 1992 changed all that. It is now routine for districts to request involuntary recall authority whenever a hurricane threatens the coastline of the U.S. or its territories. Authority to recall reservists was granted by the Secretary of Transportation six times during FY 1995. A total of 263 reservists were actually recalled to augment active duty forces for these emergencies. Authority was granted once in FY 1996 for Hurricane Opal, authorizing the recall of 275 reservists.

More Coast Guard Reserve historical information can be found with the [U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office](#).

## Cape Coral Communicator Member Profiles

The Cape Coral MOOA newsletter strives to publish a profile on each of our members each month

An online Microsoft Word form can be found on the CCMOOA Website at: [www.capecoralmoaa.org](http://www.capecoralmoaa.org). Members are encouraged to download the form, fill it out and return it to newsletter editor Larry Atkinson at [publisherlarry@gmail.com](mailto:publisherlarry@gmail.com).

For those who would rather just fill out the form by hand, copies of the questionnaire will be available at each monthly breakfast meeting.

We also request that photos be provided, including a current photo, one in uniform while in the service and any other photos you think other members might enjoy seeing.



# Membership

**Cape Coral**  
**Military Officers Association of America**  
**(CCMOAA)**  
*PO Box 100508, Cape Coral, FL 33910-0508*

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION • DIRECTORY UPDATE

Make sure all of your contact information is up-to-date by using this membership form

### ADD TO YOUR CONTACT LIST:

info@capecoralmoaa.org

*All correspondence from the chapter will come from this address only.*

**If you have any questions, please contact our membership chair:**

**Col Gary Nolan**

*Email:*

capecoralmoaa@gmail.com

*Phone:*

618-407-6945

### Websites

**Cape Coral MOAA**  
[www.capecoralmoaa.org](http://www.capecoralmoaa.org)

**FCoC**  
[www.moaafl.org](http://www.moaafl.org)

**MOAA National**  
[www.moaa.org](http://www.moaa.org)

**Legislative Action Center**  
[www.moaa.org/](http://www.moaa.org/)

**New Chapter Member**

**Change of Address/Information**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
*Please Print*

Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
*Please Print*  
*(Spouses, Widows, Widowers are welcome as chapter members)*

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Rank \_\_\_\_\_ Service \_\_\_\_\_

*Check appropriate boxes:*

**Retired**

**Active Duty**

**Widow(er)**

**Associate\***

\* Associate members have the same privileges as other members, except that they are ineligible to vote.

**Regular**

**Reserve**

**National Guard**

**Former Officer**

**Senior NCO**

MOAA National Membership No. \_\_\_\_\_ MOAA Life Member \_\_\_\_\_  
*A lifetime MOAA membership does NOT mean your chapter membership is lifetime*

MOAA National Website: <https://www.moaa.org>

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**NO FEES FOR MEMBERSHIP**

**Scholarship Program Donation \$** \_\_\_\_\_

*Please use this form for new membership and/or updating your information.*

Mail to: CCMOAA, ATTN: Secretary, PO Box 100508, Cape Coral, FL 33910-0508