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CCMOAA Monthly Breakfast Meeting

*Second Saturday
of the Month*

*January - May
September - December*

NEXT MEETING: **Saturday, October 11**

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)*



CAPE CORAL COMMUNICATOR

October 2025

Volume 6 • Issue 7

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Col Gary Nolan, USAF (Ret)

Our next breakfast meeting will be on October 11, at 10 a.m., Cape Royal Golf Club.

Our guest speaker will be fellow member Lt Col Gary Peppers, USAF (Retired).

He is a former F-15 and Predator pilot.



He will give a presentation on some recently unclassified missions he flew in Afghanistan.

Your Vice President, COL Tom Wagner, will conduct our October meeting, because Cindy and I will be in Chicago for our youngest son's wedding.

Please RSVP to Cindy by October 8 at capecoralmoaa@gmail.com or call 618-580-2368.

"Never Stop Serving"

CAPE CORAL MOAA BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

September 13, 2025, Cape Royal Golf Community

Vice President Tom Wagner called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. with 16 present for breakfast.

President Gary Nolan was out of the country and many of our snowbird members had yet to return to Florida.

Our guest speaker was Kevin Karnes, Lee County Clerk of Courts & Comptroller.

Following breakfast, Marilyn Stout introduced Karnes, who then spoke to the members about the various county functions he is involved with. He manages a \$2.5 billion investment portfolio for the county to pay the bills the county commission authorizes. His office handles most routine documents from jury summonses to traffic tickets and records such legal documents as property deeds and marriage licenses. Carnes advised anyone concerned about property fraud to visit their website to log into the Lee County anti-fraud protection program at www.leeclerk.org.

After Karnes's most informative presentation, Vice President Wagner asked for committee reports and any new business

issues from the members. Secretary Gary Peppers, as Finance Committee Chair, reported that CCMOAA's invested funds stood at \$37,588, reflecting a \$5,000 transfer of funds into our checking account to cover convention reimbursements and two scholarships of \$2,000 each that had recently been paid out. Vice President Wagner then asked for the attending board members to approve the payout of an additional \$2,000 scholarship check to Malia Lo that had been submitted for payment last May before our summer hiatus. The board unanimously approved the immediate payment.

Vice President Wagner then reminded the members that the next Florida Council of Chapters convention would be held in Orlando the last weekend in January, Jan. 29-31, 2026.

With no further business issues to discuss, Vice President Wagner adjourned the meeting at 11:10 a.m.

*Gary Peppers, Lt Col, USAF (retired)
Chapter Secretary*

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

October Speaker

Lt Col Gary Peppers to speak on missions he flew in Afghanistan

Cape Coral MOAA member Lt Col Gary Peppers, USAF (Retired) will be the featured speaker at the monthly breakfast meeting at 10 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 11, at the Cape Royal Golf Club, 11460 Royal Tee Circle, Cape Coral.

The former F-15 and Predator pilot will give a presentation on recently unclassified missions he flew in Afghanistan.

Lt Col Peppers served 4.5 years in the U.S. Army as a Chief Warrant Officer 2 before transferring to the U.S. Air Force, where he served for 24.5 years.

He was the last active-duty Air Force member to have served during the Vietnam War and served in every decade from the 1970s to the 2010s.

His military career included roles as a helicopter pilot, flight instructor, fighter pilot, and commander in various locations, including Germany, Iceland, Japan, and the U.S. He flew aircraft such as the UH-1 Huey, Cobra, OV-10 Bronco, F-15, and MQ-1B Predator. He also worked as a civilian pilot for United Airlines and Aeronautical Charters, Inc. and was recalled to active duty in 2009, serving until 2013.

Lt Col Peppers holds degrees in Aeronautical Studies, Business Administration, and National Defense Studies. His awards include three Air



Medals, one for intercepting Soviet bombers and another for safely landing an F-15 with a critical stabilator failure, which led to a design change preventing future incidents.

He is active in veteran affairs, serving as a speaker and holding leadership roles in organizations like the Air Force Association and MOAA, where he currently serves as the Cape Coral MOAA Chapter secretary and finance officer.

He is a native of Herculaneum, Missouri, has three children and five grandchildren.



**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

Officers Election

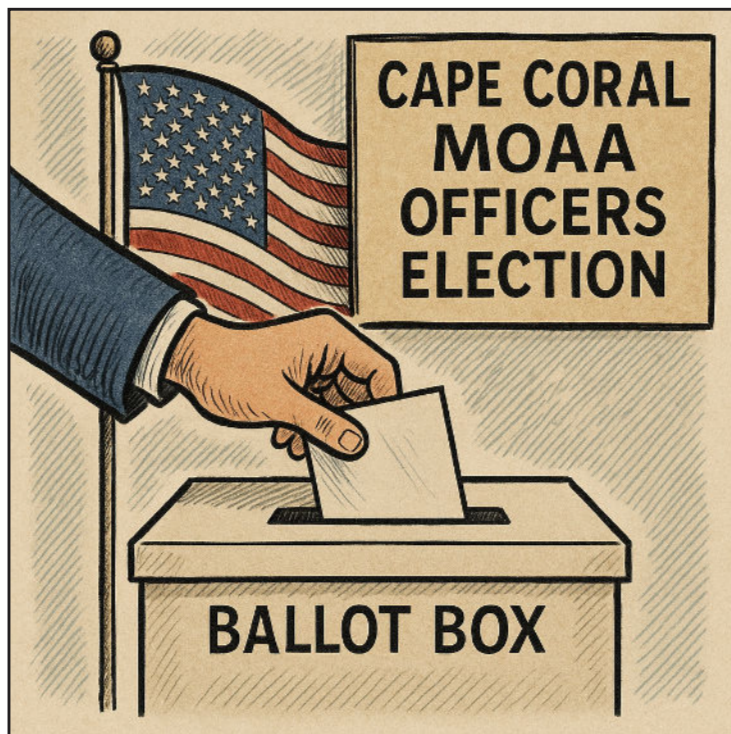
Cape Coral MOAA to elect chapter officers in November

Cape Coral MOAA will elect its chapter officers for the coming year in November.

Positions open for election are president, vice president, treasurer, secretary and member-at-large.

The election will be held at the November breakfast meeting on Nov. 8.

Any member is eligible to run for one of the board positions. Anyone interested in running for any of the openings should email Larry Atkinson at publisherlarry@gmail.com.



Vet Fest set for Nov. 13 in Fort Myers

Vet Fest, which will celebrate and honor current and former military service members during a free community event will be held on Thursday, Nov. 13 in Meeting Room A (LK) at Lakes Region Library at 15290 Bass Road, Fort Myers, FL 33919. The event will be held from 1 to 4 p.m.

Local organizations will be on site providing free and low-cost community resources. This event will have food trucks, crafts, activities and more!

Special services like sign language interpretation and assistive listening can be provided at events to

patrons upon request. Please give at least up to five business days notice to library staff in order to schedule services at events. Call 239-479-4636 or stop by the reference desk at your local library.

TREASURER'S REPORT

CAPT Timothy Cook, USN (Ret)

August 29, 2025 -- September 24, 2025

Beginning Balance: 8/9/25:\$4,689.16

Deposits:

TOTAL DEPOSITS:..... \$0

Expenses:

Scholarship (Malia Lo)\$2,000.00

TOTAL EXPENSES:.....\$2,000.00

Ending Balance: 9/24/25:.....\$2,689.16

Local Events

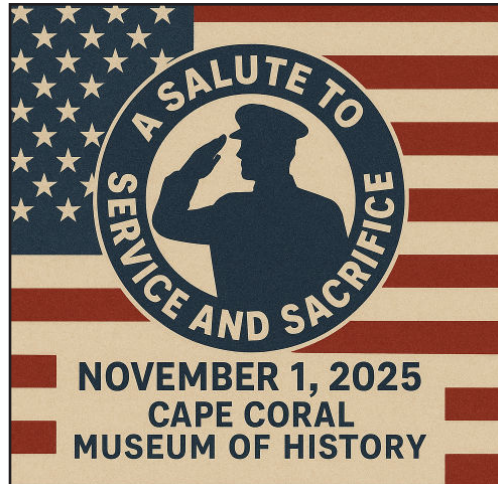
Salute to Service and Sacrifice to be held Nov. 1 at Cape Coral Cultural Park

The Cape Coral Museum of History and Incredible Bank have teamed up to create Salute to Service and Sacrifice, an event that will honor and celebrate those who are currently serving in the Armed Forces, veterans, and their families.

It will be held at Cape Coral Cultural Park on November 1 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The free event will showcase many of the veteran support organizations within the city, along with a full day of patriotic entertainment, food trucks, and a vendor village on site.

Bring a chair or blanket.



As an added bonus, the museum, which is located at 544 Cultural Park Blvd, Cape Coral, will be open to tour for free during the event. Attendees can grab

a scavenger hunt sheet at the museum's booth and enter to win a prize basket.

Music and Entertainment will include:

- Guard Presentation of the Colors
- Isabella Clark singing the National Anthem
- Robert Gonnelli and Associates – "A Moment In Time"
- Performance by the Calendar Girls
- Performance by Guns and Hoses
- Mariner High School JROTC Rifle Demonstration

Veterans Day Parade is Nov. 1 in Cape Coral

The City of Cape Coral will hold its annual Veterans Day Parade on Saturday, Nov. 8, starting at

11 a.m.

The parade route is on the south side of Cape Coral Parkway heading west from Cape Coral Street to Chester Street.

The South Cape parade will be an event where the community honors America's heroes and pays tribute to those who lost their lives, those who served honorably, and those still proudly serving our country.

The Veteran's Day celebration is a cooperative effort of the City of Cape Coral Parks and Recreation and local community volunteers.

Anyone interested in joining the parade, should fill out the [Veterans Day Parade Application PDF](#) and return either by mail or email.

The parade will feature various local organizations, military groups and community members, including:

- American Legion
- Disabled American Veterans
- Local JROTC units
- Fire and Police departments
- Vintage military vehicles
- And much more.

Cape Coral Communicator Member Profiles

The Cape Coral MOAA newsletter each month strives to publish a profile on one of our members.

We started with the officers, so you can learn about those leading our organization and will then feature other members.

An online Microsoft Word form can be found on the CCMOAA Website at: 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.

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.

State convention to be Jan. 29-31, 2026

By COL Steve Bond, USA (Ret)
President
MOAA Florida Council of Chapters

We are excited to announce that registration is now open for our Annual Leadership Training Seminar and 49th Statewide Convention!

At the event, MOAA members and guests from around Florida, nearby states, and from Washington, DC will converge at the Rosen Centre Hotel, 9840 International Drive, in Orlando, FL from Thursday, January 29, through Saturday, January 31, 2026. All MOAA members and guests are invited!

Come to learn, have fun, or just enjoy the camaraderie. We have many planned activities for you to choose from including golf at the Celebration Golf Course or a (discounted) visit to a nearby theme park.

Or you can just stay in the hotel for personal learning workshops to better understand your VA benefits, improve on your financial planning, and learn what you need to know as a surviving spouse. There are chapter leadership learning opportunities to help build strong MOAA organizations and make a difference in our communities, including sessions on writing successful grants, being a chapter



leader, recruiting new members, and learning more about MOAA's mission

support veterans. On Saturday, there is a MOAA sponsored "Dining Out" where you'll hear from senior MOAA leaders about our great organization.

All of this is what "Camaraderie with a Purpose" is all about--Come join us!

You can go here on our website to find out more information, see the [full agenda](#), and to register at www.FLMOAA.org/Events Page.

Get your tickets today!

We request you register early however, reservations close on January 7, 2026, and the last day for a full refund is January 23, 2026.

Come find out how we are making a difference across the state and in our communities for the serving military, other veterans, and their families in Florida.

We hope to see you in Orlando in January!

activities. We will hold a memorial service for those members we lost in 2025, and more.

We are attempting to keep costs low for participants and have negotiated a low, tax-exempt rate of \$159 per night to stay at the Rosen Centre. We'll have a stocked hospitality suite in the hotel. On Friday night there is a dinner with costs for participants offset by our chapters, and a play for prizes, Casino Night Fundraiser for The MOAA Foundation to help raise money for their worthy efforts to



Honor Flight Welcome Home



★ NEXT ★

HONOR FLIGHT

SATURDAY
OCTOBER 18TH

JOIN OTHER PATRIOTS
AT RSW 7:30PM FOR

WELCOME HOME PARADE



MOAA partners on mental health issues

By: René Campos

Note from MOAA: If you or someone you know is in crisis, contact the Veterans Crisis Line at 988 (press 1) or via www.veteranscrisisline.net.

MOAA joined fellow veterans service organizations at a September VA stakeholders partnership meeting as part of both National Suicide Prevention Month and National Recovery Month, with the discussion focused on progress in mental health and suicide prevention.

Leaders from the Veterans Experience Office (VEO), the Office of Mental Health, and the Office of Suicide Prevention shared updates on innovative programs and critical resources available to veterans, families, and caregivers. Here are some of the ways the VA is advancing veteran mental health care:

Strengthening Connections:

The VetResources Community Network (VRCN) continues to expand its outreach, connecting more than 10 million veterans and their loved ones with trusted local and national partners. By building relationships across communities, the VRCN helps bridge gaps in care, fosters trust, and ensures veterans can access resources that support their overall well-being.

[\[RELATED: VA Hospital Ratings Show Gains, But Challenges Remain\]](#)

Predictive Modeling to Save Lives:

The VA recently upgraded its predictive analytics tool, REACH VET 2.0 (Recovery Engagement and Coordination for Health-Veteran Enhanced Treatment), to better identify veterans at elevated risk of suicide or self-harm. By leveraging expanded clinical and social data contained in veteran electronic medical records, the program allows providers to proactively connect



with veterans most in need. Results show fewer suicide attempts, reduced hospital visits, and more veterans engaging in safety planning.

Veterans Crisis Line (VCL):

The Veterans Crisis Line remains a cornerstone of VA's suicide prevention strategy. The 24/7 service, accessible by dialing 988 and pressing 1, answers calls in less than 9 seconds on average. In addition to crisis response, the VA is piloting a program called Caring Letters, which sends brief, supportive messages to veterans after they reach out to the VCL. Originally developed for civilian use, the approach has been shown to reduce suicide risk. VA is now testing its effectiveness with veterans through a multiyear evaluation initiative. These wraparound supports reinforce the message that no veteran has to face crisis alone.

[\[RELATED: Veterans Face Access, Payment and Records Delays When Seeking Medical Care at Military Bases, Watchdog Finds\]](#)

Face Your Dragon:

The VA Face Your Dragon campaign, part of VA's Keep It Secure initiative, uses the metaphor of confronting a dragon to represent the struggle of a suicide crisis. Developed with input from

veterans, the campaign encourages safe firearm storage to create time and space for intervention, reduce stigma, and ultimately prevent suicide. The campaign uses the dragon as a symbol of life's burdens and the fight against suicidal thoughts in an effort to promote secure firearm practices as a simple, effective step to protect veterans in crisis.

MOAA's Commitment

MOAA strongly supports VA's continued investments in mental health services and suicide prevention. Programs such as REACH VET, the VCL, peer support, and community partnerships highlight the power of combining data-driven tools with compassionate outreach.

As we mark National Recovery Month, MOAA reaffirms its commitment to working with the VA, Congress, and partners to strengthen services, expand access, and ensure no veteran faces crisis alone.

Resources for Veterans and Families

- Veterans Crisis Line — Dial 988 (press 1) or text 838255.
- Make the Connection — Veterans share real stories of recovery and resilience.
- VA Mental Health — Tools, information, and support for veterans and families.
- VA Suicide Prevention — Learn about programs, training, and ways to help.
- Face Your Dragon — Secure your firearm. Create time and space.

(CDR René Campos, USN (Ret) currently serves as MOAA's Senior Director of Government Relations, managing matters related to military and veterans' health care, wounded, ill and injured, and caregiver policy.)

MOAA-backed change will preserve improvements to VA experience

By: René Campos

A new law will secure a stronger voice for veterans, caregivers, families, and survivors in how the VA delivers care and benefits.

The Veterans Experience Office (VEO), created in 2015, helps VA beneficiaries navigate the department's complex health care and benefits systems. Over the past decade, the office has improved veteran trust in VA services through better digital access, more responsive feedback channels, and more accountability across the department.

MOAA supported standalone legislation, first introduced in the 118th Congress, to make this office permanent. A Senate bill signed Aug. 14 by the president includes this provision, known as the Improving Veterans' Experience Act.

By codifying the VEO, Congress ensures its permanence within the VA and strengthens its authority: The office is now formally housed in the VA Office of the Secretary, led by a chief veterans experience officer, with clear mandates to oversee metrics, policies, and feedback-driven improvements across the department.

MOAA welcomes this legislation's passage, which guarantees that veterans' voices will continue to drive efforts to expand access and enhance the quality of VA services.

Why This Law Matters to Veterans

- **Reliable Veteran Feedback Loop:** With the VEO now embedded in law, veterans' voices will continually inform how care and benefits are delivered.

- **Improved Navigation of VA Services:** From streamlined hotlines



to better digital platforms like VA.gov, this codification reinforces initiatives making VA engagement simpler and more effective.

- **Stronger Oversight and Policy Impact:** Regular reporting from the VEO ensures accountability and helps shape more responsive VA policy.

What's Next

While codifying the VEO marks an important milestone, MOAA continues to push for multiple reforms that would strengthen the VA health care system. Key bills are listed below; links in some of the listings will allow you to reach out to your lawmakers via our Legislative Action Center and urge them to move these pieces of legislation forward:

- **Veterans Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement (3R) Act (H.R. 2148 and S. 879):** Provides job training, professional relicensure support, retirement planning, and bereavement counseling to family caregivers who are enrolled in VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC), which will assist them

after their caregiving duties conclude.

- **Veterans' Assuring Critical Care Expansions to Support Servicemembers (ACCESS) Act (H.R. 740 and S. 275):** Expands residential rehabilitation treatment program for veterans with mental health and substance use disorders, particularly in geographic areas where VA services are limited or not available. Also enhances veterans' access to community care.

- **Improving Veteran Access to Care Act (S. 607):** Requires the VA to establish an interdisciplinary patient team to modernize scheduling, coordinate services, and cut wait times.

- **Servicemembers and Veterans Empowerment and Support Act (H.R. 2576 and S. 1245):** Strengthens health care and benefits for survivors of military sexual trauma and assault.

- **Veterans Accessibility Advisory Committee Act (S. 1383):** Creates an independent advisory body to improve accessibility for veterans with disabilities.

Your voice makes a difference — and MOAA's advocacy is strongest when members, friends, and partners speak up together. Help us advance these priorities to improve VA health care, and keep up with the latest on these and other MOAA advocacy efforts by registering at our Legislative Action Center.

(CDR René Campos, USN (Ret) currently serves as MOAA's Senior Director of Government Relations, managing matters related to military and veterans' health care, wounded, ill and injured, and caregiver policy.)

MOAA president outlines pillars of TotalForce+ on 'Drive On' Podcast

By MOAA Staff

Attendees at the inaugural TotalForce+ conference Oct 28-29 can expect insights and information on topics covering the spectrum of service – and, just as important, they can expect the chance to build meaningful solutions alongside fellow stakeholders.

“The idea would be that they make those networking connections, they have collaboration opportunities, they meet new people, and ... they get exposed to new ideas,” Lt. Gen. Brian T. Kelly, MOAA’s president and CEO, said in a recent appearance on the Drive On podcast, hosted by Army veteran Scott DeLuzio. “Maybe they contribute a piece to the puzzle, somebody else puts a puzzle piece down, and sooner or later ... you have the whole puzzle solved because you were able to network and bring these capabilities together.”

The discussions at the people-focused conference will center around four topic areas, Kelly explained.

Talent Management and Innovation: Guests will look at how the services are “taking care of and developing and utilizing the force so that they can maximize the work that they do” in pursuit of a strong



MOAA President and CEO Lt. Gen. Brian T. Kelly, USAF (Ret), center, discusses TotalForce+ with ZeroMils CEO Lt. Col. Kevin Schmiegel, USMC (Ret), during the 2nd Annual Military Thriving Change Forum at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., on June 12. Kelly’s most recent interview on the upcoming conference came with the “Drive On” podcast. (Mike Morones/MOAA)

national defense, Kelly said.

Leadership Development and Performance: Discussions will look at personal improvement methods – everything from leadership tactics and strategies to nutrition and wellness programs – to “maximize the performance of each soldier, each airman, each sailor, each Marine, each guardian that’s out there ... to make sure people can use their brainpower the best they can.”

Quality of Life: From housing to child care to medical concerns to spouse employment, “quality of

life is really not just an individual issue for the servicemember, but for the whole family,” Kelly said. “It helps us from a readiness standpoint make sure that the individual uniformed member can focus on their job and they’re not worried about what’s happening day to day at home.”

Veteran and Retiree Experience: Life after service takes on many challenges, from initial professional transition to navigating VA health care and benefits. The conference will cover all of this ground, Kelly said, including discussions on using artificial intelligence as part of a job search, a series of networking opportunities, and spotlighting mental health and suicide

prevention resources.

“MOAA’s goal would be that leaving that conference, people see these great opportunities to further their work on whatever challenge, whatever problem they’re trying to solve because they made some great connections and were exposed to some great things at TotalForce+,” Kelly told DeLuzio.

Visit the [Drive On website](#) for more episodes of the podcast and links to subscribe via multiple podcast platforms.

Pentagon takes step on commissary privatization

By: **Jen Goodale**

The Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) issued a Request for Information (RFI) to the grocery industry, investment firms, and other potential partners Sept. 19 seeking feedback on the possible privatization of commissary operations.

The request, which covers all 178 commissary locations in the U.S. and Puerto Rico, represents the latest chapter in a decades-long debate over whether the commissary system should remain a government-managed benefit or transition to private sector control. While industry feedback may highlight opportunities to reduce costs or improve operations, history offers a clear warning: Once privatized, it becomes far harder to safeguard quality and affordability for the military community.

Privatization Priorities/Problems

The RFI has two goals: to determine whether commercial operators are interested in and capable of managing commissary operations, and to assess whether such a shift could occur without government subsidy (or with a substantially reduced subsidy) while still preserving the military community's critical benefit of 23.7% average savings for authorized patrons.

In recent years, DeCA has introduced variable pricing and private label products as part of its work to maintain these savings – changes that initially worried patrons (and military and veterans organizations) but are now accepted. The piloted expansion of commissary privileges at 16 locations demonstrates future opportunities for improving the system. MOAA supports this expansion, which would benefit civilians working in support of the total force, yet privatization would represent a fundamental shift in mission and intent.

Congress appropriates about \$1.4 billion annually to cover DeCA's operating costs. A private company

taking over commissary operations would need to recoup those costs, most likely through higher prices and diluting the very benefit the system is meant to provide.

For military families living on tight budgets, retirees on fixed incomes, and survivors reliant on commissary savings, even a modest increase in prices could erode a benefit that has stood for more than 150 years.

[\[RELATED: A Privatized Commissary System Would Put Your Service-Earned Benefit at Risk\]](#)

Long-Standing Debate

Commissary privatization is not a new concept. The Grace Commission floated the idea as part of a broader effort to improve government efficiency in the late 1980s.

In 2001, then-Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld asked whether the Pentagon should even be running a chain of grocery stores. And Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) pushed for a similar privatization pilot program in the mid-2010s.

Each time, the outcome was the same: The prevailing consensus has been that the system must remain under Pentagon management to ensure the quality of life benefit is protected for servicemembers, retirees, veterans, and survivors. Unlike commercial grocery chains, commissaries are not designed to maximize revenue. Instead, they exist to deliver a benefit that will attract, retain, and support morale and readiness for the military community.

Lessons From Housing Privatization

The Pentagon has explored privatization before, most notably through the Military Housing Privatization Initiative (MHPI). Established in 1996, MHPI was designed to address the overwhelming backlog of housing repairs that the government could not afford to tackle

alone. Early results were promising, with newly built and renovated homes improving the quality of life for military families.

By 2005, when Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) was increased to cover 100% of housing costs, the initiative still appeared successful. But by 2019, military families had become increasingly vocal about mold infestations, pest problems, and other unsafe conditions found in privatized housing.

[\[RELATED: Urge Congress to Restore the Basic Allowance for Housing\]](#)

Such widespread failures prompted Congress to act, establishing the Tenant Bill of Rights in the FY 2020 National Defense Authorization Act.

In 2021 and 2022, two privatized housing companies settled lawsuits tied to falsifying maintenance logs to achieve performance incentives. Despite fines totaling over \$65 million, the companies still own and operate military family housing due to the long-term, restrictive nature of these privatization agreements.

The MHPI experience serves as a cautionary tale. While privatization can work under certain conditions, quality of life for military families will suffer when revenues are squeezed or oversight falters.

Path Ahead

As policymakers weigh the future of your commissary benefit, the lessons from MHPI loom large. Cost-cutting and privatization may offer short-term savings, but when the quality and integrity of a critical benefit are at stake, the consequences fall directly on servicemembers, veterans, retirees, and survivors.

(Jen Goodale is MOAA's Director of Government Relations for Military Family and Survivor Policy.)

ACT NOW: Urge your lawmakers to pay our troops during a shutdown

By: Kevin Lilley

A MOAA-backed bill which would keep paychecks coming for servicemembers and many service-connected civilians if the government shuts down had more than 55 cosponsors as of Sept. 23, showing bipartisan support to shield the total force from budget fallout.

The Pay Our Troops Act of 2026 (H.R. 5401) would allow the government to use funds “not otherwise appropriated” to cover pay and allowances for armed services personnel as well as civilians and contractors supporting those in uniform. The legislation “provides the financial certainty military families deserve, protecting them from the instability of government shutdowns while they protect us,” said MOAA President and CEO Lt. Gen. Brian T. Kelly, USAF (Ret), in a news release announcing the bill’s Sept. 16 introduction.

[\[TAKE ACTION: Ask Your Lawmaker to Protect Servicemembers’ Pay\]](#)

“Military service is more than a career; it’s a commitment to defend this nation at all costs,” said Rep. Jen Kiggans (R-Va.), a former Navy pilot who introduced the bipartisan bill. “This legislation ensures that we honor the commitment of our troops by guaranteeing their pay, no matter what happens in Washington.”

While the legislation would cover Coast Guard members, it does not ensure continued paychecks for members of the commissioned



corps of the U.S. Public Health Service or NOAA; MOAA will continue to advocate for their protection should the shutdown move forward.

[\[RELATED: What Would a Shutdown Mean for Retirement Pay?\]](#)

Along with MOAA, other groups supporting the legislation include the National Military Family Association, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA), and Blue Star Families.

Familiar Territory

MOAA supported similar legislation last year as the budget debate moved toward its deadline and has worked on multiple fronts to ensure those in uniform and their families do not suffer financial hardship because the federal government cannot enact a budget on time.

[\[FROM MILITARY TIMES: Here’s How Looming Government Shutdown Could](#)

[Affect Troops, Families\]](#)

Coast Guard members were not paid during the 2018-19 government shutdown, as funding for the Department of Homeland Security was not restored until the shutdown ended (the Pentagon had been funded by a spending bill in advance of the deadline). Tens of thousands of servicemembers continued their duties during the funding lapse, unsure when their next check would arrive.

The Pay Our Troops Act offers some stability to many who wear the uniform (and their families) as the budget situation remains unclear – lawmakers aren’t set to return to Washington until Sept. 29, just hours before the end of the fiscal year. Ask your legislators to prioritize this fix today.

(Kevin Lilley serves as MOAA’s digital content manager. His duties include producing, editing, and managing content for a variety of platforms, with a concentration on The MOAA Newsletter and MOAA.org. Follow him on X: @KRLilley)

UPCOMING EVENTS:

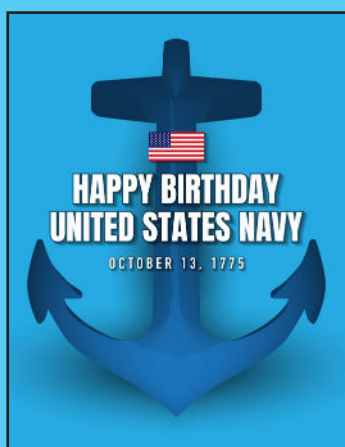
Cape Coral MOAA Board Meeting

10 a.m.

Thursday, Oct. 9

**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.

OCTOBER Calendar of Events

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
			1 <i>National Coffee with a Cop Day</i>	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9 <i>CCMOAA Board Meeting 10 a.m.</i>	10	11 <i>CCMOAA Breakfast Meeting 10 a.m.</i>
12	13 <i>U.S. Navy Birthday 1775 Columbus Day</i>	14	15	16 <i>National Veterans 'BBQ Day</i>	17 <i>Women in Military Service for America Memorial Anniversary</i>	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 <i>Day of the Deployed</i>	27 <i>Navy Day</i>	28	29	30	31 <i>Halloween</i>	

CENTCOM launches task force to speed drone, tech delivery to troops

By Zita Ballinger Fletcher, Military Times — Adapted by ChatGPT

U.S. Central Command has created a new task force aimed at cutting the time it takes to get combat-ready technology, including drones, into the hands of deployed forces, Military Times reporter Zita Ballinger Fletcher wrote.

The Rapid Employment Joint Task Force, announced Tuesday, will be led by CENTCOM's chief technology officer, Joy Shanaberger. The group will bring together experts in logistics, data integration, resourcing and information systems with a goal of fielding new technology within 60 days. "Our goal is to rapidly deliver innovation, meaning putting combat-credible capability into the hands of our warfighters in 60 days or less," Shanaberger said in the release. "Equipping skilled warfighters faster with cutting-edge capabilities will deter bad actors."

ADM Brad Cooper,



CENTCOM announced a new task force Tuesday that aims to deliver drones and other tech to service members and units in the field within 60 days. Here, a drone stands ready at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar, Nov. 5, 2020. (Tech. Sgt. Brigitte Waltermire/U.S. Air National Guard)

CENTCOM commander, said the initiative will unify existing service efforts and align with Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's July directive to accelerate drone acquisition. "The new task force will synergize existing efforts among our Service components and support Secretary Hegseth's drive to rapidly equip our warriors," Cooper said, according to Fletcher.

Hegseth's July 10 memo outlined three priorities: boosting U.S. drone manufacturing, delivering thousands of low-cost systems to units within a few years, and

integrating drone training into military programs. Fletcher reported that the Pentagon has since advanced those goals, with the Navy awarding contracts for Collaborative Combat Aircraft drones, the Army testing short-range unmanned systems in the field, and the Defense Department launching its first "Top Drone" operator school.

The task force reflects growing urgency across the military to streamline procurement and ensure that frontline forces can access emerging technology quickly amid rising global competition.

Pentagon revamps MREs for 2026 with new meals, protein snacks, caffeine

By Matthew M. Burke, Stars and Stripes — Adapted by ChatGPT

The Pentagon will roll out revamped Meals, Ready to Eat in 2026, swapping out unpopular entrees and adding more protein-packed snacks and caffeine-infused items to meet the needs of younger troops, Stars and Stripes reporter Matthew M. Burke wrote.

Beef taco filling, the pork sausage patty and jalapeño pepper jack meat patty will be cut from the lineup. In their place will be buffalo chicken, Cuban-style beef picadillo with vegetables and a Thai-style red curry with chicken and rice. New snack offerings include s'mores recovery bars and freeze-dried chocolate peanut butter bites, Burke reported.

The update will also feature caffeinated gum, jelly beans, beverages, chews and gels. Julie Edwards, a senior technologist in the Army's Combat Feeding Division, said the changes reflect shifting habits. "What we've noticed is caffeine is



Buffalo chicken, Cuban-style beef picadillo with vegetables and a Thai-style red curry with chicken and rice are some of the introductions coming to the Meal, Ready to Eat field rations for 2026, according to a Defense Department statement Monday. (Tyler Bolken/U.S. Air Force)

one of the least consumed items in the MRE," she said in the statement, as reported by Burke. "Previous generations were big coffee drinkers, but the newer generation of soldiers are not."

Other updates include a larger, more durable towelette. The Pentagon said the changes were based on service member feedback, with developers balancing nutrition with reduced weight and volume. Edwards told Burke that it takes about four years to vet and approve new items, which must remain edible after six months at 100 degrees and

three years at 80 degrees.

The Combat Feeding Division is already testing ideas for 2027, including plant-based animal crackers, new recovery and protein bars, fruit-flavored cereal and plant-based entrees to replace current vegetarian options. "Any new item that we get that can help bring variety and increase acceptability is important," Edwards said, according to Burke. "We know that eating an MRE isn't everyone's No. 1 thing. But we want to make it safe to eat — that's our No. 1 priority — and then to make it taste good as well."

Air Force wrestles with AI's limits as technology expands into operations

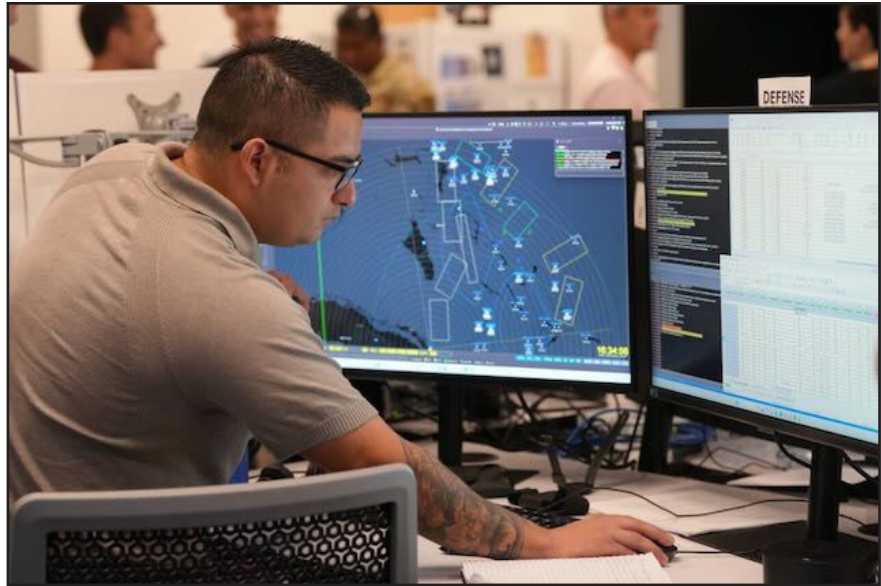
By Shaun Waterman, Air & Space Forces Magazine — Adapted by ChatGPT

As the Air Force begins putting artificial intelligence into real-world use, senior leaders and experts are cautioning that the technology still requires heavy human oversight and infrastructure support, Air & Space Forces Magazine reporter Shaun Waterman wrote.

At the Air, Space & Cyber Conference on Sept. 23, officers described both opportunities and pitfalls of AI. Maj. Gen. Robert Claude of the Space Force told reporters an experiment showed AI could generate a course of action in 10 seconds compared to 16 minutes for humans. But, as Waterman reported him saying, “they weren’t necessarily completely viable COAs,” sometimes proposing tactics that ignored conditions such as weather.

“While [the AI] was much more timely and there were more COAs generated,” Claude said, “there’s still going to have to be a human in the loop for the foreseeable future” to validate results.

Industry experts echoed those concerns. David Ware of McKinsey said all AI models struggle with accuracy and bias, not just generative systems that “hallucinate.” Ryan Tseng of Shield AI argued that military AI needs carefully segmented



A U.S. Air Force air battle manager participates in the Department of the Air Force's Advanced Battle Management System Cross-Functional Team second Decision Advantage Sprint for Human-Machine Teaming, or DASH, experiment, held at the 805th Combat Training Squadron's unclassified location in downtown Las Vegas, Nev., July 29, 2025. The image has been cropped to focus on the subjects. U.S. Air Force photo by Deb Henley

architecture to limit risks, telling Waterman such design “helps keep the AI in a box, so to speak.”

Maj. Gen. Luke Cropsey, who oversees command, control, communications and battle management programs, said restricted use cases will allow humans to cross-check results. He also warned that technical infrastructure is one of his biggest challenges. “It’s just the hard work of figuring out, how do you get the right infrastructure where you need it?” he said, according to Waterman.

Maj. Gen. Michele Edmondson, the Air Force’s

new deputy chief of staff for communications and cyber, agreed, pointing to shortages of skilled personnel and challenges with data integration. She said the service must build on the “digitally literate” skills of younger Airmen and improve data sharing at the tactical edge.

The discussions underscored both the promise and the hurdles of weaving AI into the military’s battle networks. Leaders emphasized that despite rapid progress, human judgment and robust infrastructure remain essential to making the technology work in practice.

Air Force plans single aircraft to replace C-17 and C-5 in mid-2040s

By Joseph Trevithick, The War Zone — Adapted by ChatGPT

The Air Force is developing a next-generation airlifter to take over the missions of both the C-17 Globemaster III and the C-5M Galaxy beginning in the mid-2040s, The War Zone reporter Joseph Trevithick wrote.

Air Mobility Command chief Gen. John Lamontagne said the effort, known as the Next Generation Airlift (NGAL) program, is still in the early stages. “When I say two-for-one, we’re probably going to procure one aircraft,” he told reporters during the Air & Space Forces Association’s Air, Space, and Cyber Conference. “We won’t get a C-5 replacement and a C-17 replacement. There’ll be one airplane that does strategic airlift.”

Lamontagne explained that officials are conducting a capabilities-based assessment to shape requirements. “As far as what we want in the next[-generation airlift] platform, we

want agility, we want speed, we want to be able to operate in a higher threat environment,” he said, according to Trevithick.

That includes countermeasures effective against long-range missiles expected to be fielded by adversaries like China and Russia by 2050.

He also pointed to threats on the ground, such as drones, and emphasized the need to reduce time spent refueling or loading. “We’re obviously at a lot of risk on the ground, sitting on the ground somewhere,” Lamontagne said. “So, [we] don’t want to sit on the ground for three hours ... three minutes would be better than 30 minutes.”

The C-17, in service since 1995, is valued for its ability to carry 82 tons and operate from rough airstrips, while the larger C-5 can haul 135 tons, including outsized payloads like satellites. Both fleets are aging, and neither is in production. Lamontagne said the goal is to recapitalize “on our timeline,” unlike

the retirement of the C-141 Starlifter, which effectively forced the Air Force’s hand after the Gulf War.

Gen. Randall Reed, head of U.S. Transportation Command, also underscored the urgency. “Strategic lift is very critical ... We rely heavily on both the C-5 and the C-17, both of which are aging, both are very capable,” he said. “It is also important that we start looking at what comes next. The environment is changing. We will need aircraft that have capabilities that we don’t have today.”

For now, the Air Force is upgrading C-17s with new communications and defensive systems while exploring concepts for NGAL. Lamontagne noted there are “no current plans” to restart C-17 production, despite early discussions with Boeing about potential options. The service hopes to complete another analysis of alternatives for the new airlifter within the next few years.



Air Force, industry leaders outline priorities for future airpower

By John A. Tirpak, Air & Space Forces Magazine — Adapted by ChatGPT

Winning future wars will require a mix of stealth, mass, spectrum dominance and the ability to adapt quickly, Air Force and defense industry leaders said at the Air, Space & Cyber Conference, Air & Space Forces Magazine reporter John A. Tirpak wrote.

Maj. Gen. Joseph Kunkel, head of Air Force Futures, said fiscal limits cannot change what's required to prevail. "Fiscal constraints don't change what it takes to win, so we've got to be clear-eyed on that," he said during a Sept. 23 panel, according to Tirpak. He added that history shows "if you want to win the fight ... you're going to win it in the air domain with support from space."

Kunkel pointed to Collaborative Combat Aircraft, or CCAs, as a key element in creating "affordable mass." Their modular designs will allow rapid adaptation, much like the fast-evolving fighter "Century Series" of the 1950s and 1960s, Tirpak reported. Brig. Gen. Jason Voorheis said the program is being developed with exports in mind so allies can also add scale to the U.S. fleet.

Industry leaders stressed survivability as the next evolution of stealth. Tom Jones, president of Northrop Grumman's aerospace unit, told Tirpak that



A second B-21 Raider, the nation's sixth-generation stealth bomber, joins flight testing at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., Sept. 11, 2025. The program is a cornerstone of the Department of the Air Force's nuclear modernization strategy, designed to deliver both conventional and nuclear payloads. (Courtesy photo)

warfare has always been about "measure, countermeasure, counter-countermeasure." He said Northrop emphasizes survivability as a layered mix of technologies rather than invisibility, noting that the B-2 bomber's technology is now five decades old yet still relevant.

Electronic warfare will also be central. Retired Lt. Gen. David Krumm of BAE Systems said modern technology has expanded the electromagnetic spectrum to the point where "almost every single [system] is going to have to either be supported or have this onboard support of electronic warfare," Tirpak reported. The Air Force's new EA-37B electronic attack aircraft is one step in that

direction.

Connectivity across the force will be essential, particularly to control large CCA fleets, but leaders also stressed the need for aircraft like the F-47 and B-21 to operate independently if adversaries disrupt U.S. command and control. "There will be times when long range kill chains are down and you're still going to want to be able to take the fight to the adversary," Kunkel said, according to Tirpak.

Panelists agreed that balancing affordability, rapid adaptation and survivability will be critical to ensuring the Air Force retains an edge in a contested environment dominated by near-peer adversaries.

Army to cut 6,500 aviation jobs as drone use expands

*By Todd South,
Military Times —
Adapted by ChatGPT*

The Army will eliminate 6,500 aviation positions over the next two years as it restructures its force to emphasize drones over manned aircraft, Military Times reporter Todd South wrote.

The cuts, which begin in fiscal 2026, will affect pilots, flight crews and maintainers across the active-duty aviation branch, which currently numbers about 30,000 soldiers. “The Army is transforming aviation to meet future operational demands — faster, leaner, and more capable,” Army spokesman Maj. Montrell Russell said in a statement to Military Times. “This initiative ensures Army aviation is integrated across components, modernized in capability, and optimized for global mission requirements.”

Retention panels will begin in October to determine which officers and warrant officers will remain in aviation or transition to other branches. According to South, the panels will include a brigadier general, senior warrant officers and a former



The U.S. Army plans to cut 6,500 aviation jobs from the active duty ranks, starting in the coming months, service officials confirmed. Here, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Fred O’Connell conducts a pre-flight checklist as the pilot of a UH-60 Black Hawk. (Capt. Regina Koesters/U.S. Army)

brigade commander, who will review evaluations and assess warrant officers’ progress toward “pilot in command” status.

Russell told Military Times that the service wants to keep as many qualified troops as possible by helping them shift into new roles. The review process will start with junior warrant officers, lieutenants and captains in Apache and Black Hawk units. Panels may later expand to enlisted aviation personnel.

“While Army aviation remains an essential member of the combined arms team, the

use of airspace for maneuver that was once unique to our aviation formations is now becoming accessible to Soldiers in multiple formations via drone technology,” Russell said, as reported by South. He added that drones reduce training demands and represent a core part of the Army’s modernization strategy.

The move marks one of the most significant transformations for Army aviation in decades as the service looks to align resources with emerging technologies and future battlefield needs.

Military creates rapid-response teams to counter drones at bases

By Howard Altman, The War Zone — Adapted by ChatGPT

The U.S. military will soon deploy quick-reaction teams able to respond within 24 hours to drone incursions at bases across the country, The War Zone reporter Howard Altman wrote.

Gen. Gregory Guillot, head of U.S. Northern Command, announced the initiative Thursday during Falcon Peak 25.2, a counter-drone exercise at Eglin Air Force Base. He said the new units, equipped with mobile “fly-away kits” of sensors, jammers and drone interceptors, represent the first homeland quick-reaction force designed specifically for drone threats. “Now we’ll have equipment that we can respond to [incursions],” Guillot told reporters, according to Altman.

Drone incursions over military installations have surged, doubling from 230 reports between September 2023 and September 2024 to about 420 over the following year, NORTHCOM told The War Zone. Guillot said the new teams will back up base commanders when local defenses are insufficient. “We just provide the capability ... all in one package that could very quickly set up and operate



Anduril's Anvil counter-drone system. (Anduril)

and defeat the incursions,” he said.

The first team will be based at Peterson Space Force Base, Colo., and supported by C-130s from the 302nd Airlift Wing to move equipment rapidly. Plans call for three teams in total, with future units positioned on the East Coast, West Coast and in Alaska, Altman reported.

The kits, built by Anduril, include the Mobile Sentry for autonomous detection, Wisp SkyFence for infrared tracking, Pulsar for radio-frequency sensing and Anvil drones for kinetic interceptions. Altman reported that during a demonstration, an Anvil drone successfully collided with and destroyed a target drone in midair.

Guillot said additional systems could be incorporated later. “I certainly don’t want to be aligned to any one vendor. I think this is a rapidly growing community,” he told The War Zone. While he praised the new capability, Guillot acknowledged delays in FAA approvals for drone defense systems and warned that surprise attacks, such as Ukraine’s “Spider Web” strikes on Russian bombers, would still overwhelm defenses.

Despite the limitations, officials say the quick-reaction teams are a major step forward as drone traffic in U.S. airspace continues to rise, with projections of more than 2 million unmanned flights annually in the near future.

USS America hosts joint Army, Marine Corps aviation drills in Pacific

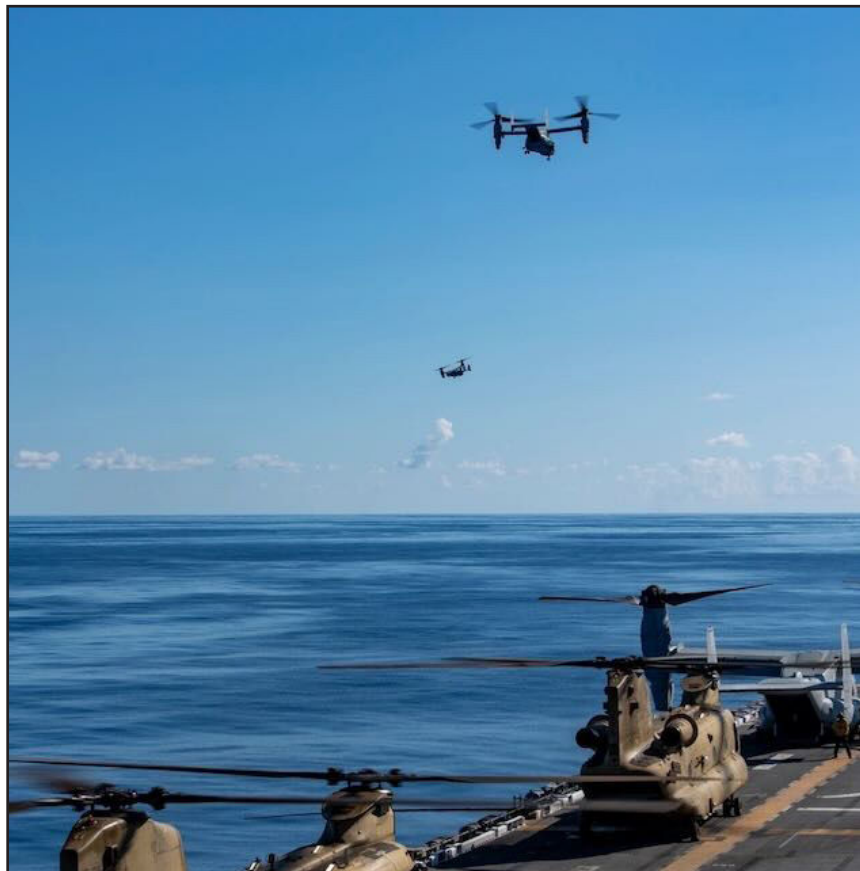
By Lt. Carolina Fernandez, Seapower — Adapted by ChatGPT

The amphibious assault ship USS America (LHA 6) wrapped up joint aviation training this month with Army and Marine Corps units, conducting more than 200 deck landings designed to sharpen interoperability in the Indo-Pacific, Seapower reporter Lt. Carolina Fernandez wrote.

On Sept. 7 and 11 off the coast of Pearl Harbor, Army CH-47F Chinook and AH-64 Apache helicopters joined Marine MV-22B Ospreys in a series of landing drills aboard the ship. The training gave pilots and crews from the Army's 25th Combat Aviation Brigade and the Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 268 critical overwater qualifications.

"This joint training enhances interoperability amongst the Services and increases our capacity to project combat power from sea," Cmdr. Weideman, USS America's air officer, said, according to Fernandez.

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Michael James, a senior instructor pilot with the Army's 3rd Battalion, 25th Aviation Regiment, said the



Two U.S. Marine Corps MV-22B Osprey assigned to Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 268 takeoff from the flight deck of the amphibious assault ship USS America (LHA 6) while conducting flight operations in the Pacific Ocean, Sept. 7. (U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Nicholas Douglass)

exercise sharpened readiness. "It allows us to be proficient in deck landing operations which increases our lethality and operability with our Navy and Marine partners," he said. "Overall, it increases the U.S. Military's combat power."

The training was part of ongoing efforts to prepare Army aviation crews for maritime missions. James told Seapower the goal was to build more competent

crews in overwater operations and to increase familiarity with amphibious assault ship procedures.

USS America, operating in the U.S. 3rd Fleet area of responsibility, plays a central role in Pacific Fleet exercises aimed at strengthening coordination with allies and ensuring readiness across the full spectrum of military operations.

Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron completes 1,000th interdiction

*By Seapower Staff
— Adapted by
ChatGPT*

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — The Coast Guard's Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron has carried out its 1,000th drug interdiction, underscoring the unit's growing role in stopping narcotics shipments bound for the United States, Seapower reported.

Since Oct. 1, 2024, HITRON crews have intercepted \$3.3 billion in illicit drugs, more than triple their historical annual average of \$1 billion. "HITRON embodies the Coast Guard's spirit of innovation and adaptability," Vice Adm. Nathan Moore, commander of Coast Guard Atlantic Area, said in a statement reported by Seapower. He added that the milestone "is a powerful reminder of the strategic value of this specialized unit."

The 1,000th interdiction took place Aug. 25, when a HITRON team deployed on the cutter Midgett spotted a suspected smuggling vessel southwest of



Coast Guard crews from the Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron, Coast Guard Tactical Law Enforcement Team – South, Coast Guard Cutter Midgett (WMSL 757) helicopter tie-down members and unmanned aerial vehicle personnel pose for a group photo aboard Midgett from behind three bullet-damaged outboard engine cowlings while underway in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, Aug. 28, 2025. On Aug. 25, HITRON used airborne use of force to stop the non-compliant vessel, marking the unit's 1,000th drug interdiction since the unit's inception in 1999, which resulted in Midgett crew members seizing approximately 3,606 pounds of suspected cocaine worth an estimated \$46 million and apprehending six suspected narco-traffickers. (U.S. Coast Guard photo)

Acapulco, Mexico. After the vessel ignored commands to stop, the helicopter crew used precision rifle fire to disable its engine. A boarding team later seized more than 3,600 pounds of cocaine valued at \$49 million, according to Seapower.

Founded in 1999 as a classified prototype, HITRON has grown to more than 200 personnel, including an exchange pilot from the U.K. Royal Navy. Over its

history, the Jacksonville-based unit has seized more than \$33 billion in drugs while averaging one interdiction every nine days.

The milestone comes as the Coast Guard expands its presence in the Eastern Pacific under Operation Pacific Viper, aimed at disrupting cartels and transnational criminal groups moving narcotics from South America.

U.S. Navy Birthday

U.S. Navy turns 250 years old on Oct. 13

From Wikipedia

The history of the United States Navy divides into two major periods: the “Old Navy”, a small but respected force of sailing ships that became notable for innovation in the use of ironclads during the American Civil War, and the “New Navy” the result of a modernization effort that began in the 1880s and made it the largest in the world by 1943.

The United States Navy claims October 13, 1775 as the date of its official establishment, when the Second Continental Congress passed a resolution creating the Continental Navy.

With the end of the American Revolutionary War, the Continental Navy was disbanded. Under the Presidency of George Washington, merchant shipping came under threat while in the Mediterranean by Barbary pirates from four North African States. This led to the naval Act of 1794, which created a permanent standing U.S. Navy.

The original six frigates were authorized as part of the Act. Over the next 20 years, the Navy fought the French Republic Navy in the Quasi-War (1798–99), Barbary states in the First and Second Barbary Wars, and the British in the War of 1812. After the War of 1812, the U.S. Navy was at peace until the Mexican–American War in 1846, and served to combat piracy in the Mediterranean and Caribbean seas, as well as fighting the slave trade off the coast of West Africa.

In 1845, the Naval Academy was founded at old Fort Severn at Annapolis, Maryland by the Chesapeake Bay. In 1861, the American Civil War began and the U.S. Navy fought the small Confederate States Navy with both sailing ships and new revolutionary ironclad ships while forming a blockade that shut down the



Confederacy's civilian coastal shipping.

After the Civil War, most of its ships were laid up in reserve, and by 1878, the Navy was just 6,000 men.

In 1882, the U.S. Navy consisted of many outdated ship designs. Over the next decade, Congress approved building multiple modern steel-hulled armored cruisers and battleships, and by around the start of the 20th century had moved from twelfth place in 1870 to fifth place in terms of numbers of ships. Most sailors were foreigners.

After winning two major battles during the 1898 Spanish–American War, the American Navy continued to build more ships, and by the end of World War I had more men and women in uniform than the British Royal Navy.

The Washington Naval Conference of 1921 recognized the Navy as equal in capital ship size to the Royal Navy, and during the 1920s and 1930s, the Navy built several aircraft carriers and battleships. The Navy was drawn into World War II after the Japanese Attack on Pearl Harbor of December 7, 1941, and over the next four years fought many historic battles including the Battle of the Coral Sea, the Battle of Midway, multiple naval battles during the Guadalcanal Campaign, and the largest naval battle in history, the Battle of Leyte Gulf.

Much of the Navy's activity

concerned the support of landings, not only with the “island-hopping” campaign in the Pacific, but also with the European landings. When the Japanese surrendered, a large flotilla entered Tokyo Bay to witness the formal ceremony conducted on the battleship Missouri, on which officials from the Japanese government signed the Japanese instrument of Surrender. By the end of the war, the Navy had over 1,600 warships.

After World War II ended, the U.S. Navy entered the 45 year long Cold War and participated in the Korean and Vietnam proxy wars.

Nuclear power and ballistic and guided missile technology led to new ship propulsion and weapon systems, which were used in the Nimitz-class aircraft carriers and Ohio-class submarines.

By 1978, the number of ships had dwindled to less than 400, many of which were from World War II, which prompted Ronald Reagan to institute a program for a modern, 600-ship Navy. Following the 1990–91 collapse of the Soviet Union the Soviet Navy was divided among the former Soviet Republics and was left without funding, which made the United States the world's undisputed naval superpower, with the ability to engage and project power in two simultaneous limited wars along separate fronts. This ability was demonstrated during the First and Second Persian Gulf Wars.

In March 2007, the U.S. Navy reached its smallest fleet size, with 274 ships, since World War I.

Former U.S. Navy admirals who head the U.S. Naval Institute have raised concerns about what they see as the ability to respond to ‘aggressive moves by Iran and China.’

The United States Navy was overtaken by the Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy in terms of raw number of ships in 2020.

Calendar Special Dates

Navy Day celebrated on October 27

Navy Day on October 27 may be “unofficial” at headquarters, but it remains relevant to loyal Navy supporters who enthusiastically celebrate the day year after year. Navy Day appears on the calendar exactly two weeks after the United States Navy celebrates its officially observed birthday on October 13. With two days hailing the men and women of the U.S. Navy, the month of October is a big deal for members of the armed forces who serve in the naval warfare branch of the U.S. military.

Navy Day was first celebrated in 1922 by the Navy League of the United States, a civilian nonprofit organization, as a day to pay tribute to the men and women we call sailors. At the time, October 27 was considered by many to be the birthday of the United States Navy, based on a document presented to the Continental Congress on this date in 1775 that supported the purchase of a fleet of merchant ships to form an American colonial navy. October 27 also happens to be the birthday of one of the Navy’s most ardent supporters, President Theodore Roosevelt, who



once served as Assistant Secretary of the Navy and had supported a Navy Day.

Navy Day was traditionally celebrated with pomp and circumstance between 1922 and 1949. The U.S. Navy participated each year by dispatching ships to various U.S. ports where public celebrations were held. The 1945 celebration was particularly grand and memorable when sitting President Harry S. Truman arrived to review the fleet in New York Harbor.

Navy Day was last officially observed

in 1949 when the first Secretary of Defense, Louis A. Johnson, announced that Armed Forces Day would officially replace Navy Day commencing the following year. Johnson designated the third Saturday in May as Armed Forces Day, a joint celebration recognizing all six traditional branches of the U.S. military: Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, Navy, and now the newly created Space Force. As a civilian organization, the Navy League was not affected by Johnson’s directive. They continued to organize events celebrating the original Navy Day on October 27, well attended by both civilians and Navy personnel.

Naval historians conducting research in 1970 determined the authentic birth date of the United States Navy was October 13, 1775. Consequently, the Navy’s birthday was officially changed that year from October 27 to October 13. Despite the official change, Navy Day continues to be widely celebrated on October 27, after being deeply entrenched into Navy tradition for more than a quarter-century.

Veteran Barbecue Day is October 16

National Veterans BBQ Day falls on October 16 every year. It is a holiday meant for celebrating our local veterans in a pleasant, friendly way by cooking them some BBQ or taking them out for a BBQ meal.

Social media is usually abuzz on this day as people share recipes and veterans recount some of their adventures online.

Steakhouses also participate in the holiday by treating veterans and those still in service with complimentary meals.

National Veterans BBQ Day is sometimes mistaken for National Veterans’ Day, although the two holidays are apart in date and modes of celebration.

The need to honor and respect

veterans cannot be overemphasized. They have played valuable roles in the services of their countries. In 1919, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed November 11 as Armistice Day to honor fallen heroes.

In 1945, World War II veteran Raymond Weeks from Birmingham, Alabama, suggested that Armistice Day should be extended to celebrate all veterans, not just those who died in World War I. In 1954, ‘Armistice’ was replaced with ‘Veterans,’ based on a bill passed by the U.S. Congress. In that same year, the National Veterans Award was formed, with Congressman Rees of Kansas receiving the first National Veterans Award.

National Veterans BBQ Day was created in April 2021 by Smoke &

Bacon Media L.L.C. The private company was born from a veteran’s vision of patriotism and togetherness. It has a social platform open to veterans and civilians worldwide, a radio station, and some charities under its operation.

Although National Veterans BBQ Day differs from Veterans Day, they share the same spirit of honoring and celebrating our veterans. On National Veterans BBQ Day, people celebrate their local military veterans by either cooking them some BBQ or by inviting them out for a BBQ meal at a steakhouse. Some veteran communities also host BBQ parties, and some steakhouses treat veterans and troops to a meal on the house.

Calendar Special Dates

National Day of the Deployed is Oct. 26

Day of the Deployed is a day to honor our deployed troops and their families for their bravery and the sacrifices they are making for our country. Supporters of the military are urged to get personally involved in activities that send care packages, offer messages of encouragement, and other morale-boosting activities to those currently deployed overseas and the military families of the deployed.

In 2006, then-governor of North Dakota John Hoeven was approached by a constituent, Shelle Michaels Aberle, to have a day that honored the deployed. The inspiration was her cousin, LTC David Hosna, who at the time was deployed to Iraq. Former Governor John Hoeven initiated a move for a State of North Dakota proclamation that Oct. 26th, David Hosna's birthday, would be recognized as Day Of The Deployed. Following that state recognition, the first-ever Day Of The Deployed event was held in Grand Forks, North Dakota, (the home of Grand Forks Air Force Base) honoring local units deployed to Afghanistan.

Only four years went by before most states had some form of recognition of the holiday. While Day Of The Deployed is not treated like a state holiday with facility closures and time off from work, it is celebrated much in the same fashion as POW/MIA Day, with ceremonies by private and public institutions to honor those in uniform. Today, all 50 states recognize Oct. 26 in some fashion.

Over the years, John Hoeven moved on from being a governor to a career as a North Dakota State Senator, and in 2011 he led an effort to establish official recognition for the holiday. On Oct. 18, 2011, his resolution passed unanimously for the first Day Of The



Deployed. The Senate resolution is passed anew each year.

In a press release issued by the Senator's office that first announced the measure, Hoeven said, "Our U.S. service men and women currently deployed, along with their loved ones, make untold sacrifices as they serve our nation...A national Day of the Deployed pays tribute to their commitment to our country and their work to protect our freedoms."

Ways to Bring Awareness to Deployed Troops:

- Send care packages.
- Make a donation to a military support organization.
- Look to local chapters of veteran-supporting groups such as the Veterans Of Foreign Wars, USO, Disabled American Veterans, etc. for ways to aid and assist.
- Connect with Soldiers' Angels which has many programs for supporting deployed troops.
- Donate money to send a care package.
- Display a yellow ribbon. Yellow ribbons are a remembrance of the men and women who serve far from home.
- On social media, use the hashtag #DayOfTheDeployed on Oct.

26th to raise awareness and encourage others so support deployed service members and their families.

- Connect personally by reaching out to a deployed troop you know.

Ways to Honor Military Families of the Deployed:

- Prepare a dinner for the family on or near Oct. 26, or anytime really.
- Assist with minor inconveniences and household tasks.
- Lend your time and skill. Handy? Fix a leaky faucet or broken fence.

- Invite the family to a party, BBQ, or dinner.

- Deliver groceries, baked goodies or a care package for the spouse or kids. If you wish to remain anonymous leave it at their doorstep.

- Babysit! A military spouse has the role of two parents. Give them some time or the opportunity to run errands.

- Better yet take the kids out for some fun while the military spouse relaxes.

- Recognize their sacrifice either personally, through social media, email or anyway you can think of.

On the Day of the Deployed, the important aspect is to honor our deployed troops and their families. No matter what type of gesture you choose, all that matters is that your gesture is heartfelt. Large or small, inexpensive or expensive, every act of kindness makes a difference in the lives of these deployed troops and their families and shows your support for them.

Check local offices of the Department of Veterans Affairs for information on community or state recognition of Day of the Deployed.

Consider donating to restore The Arches

Cape Coral MOAA Vice President Tom Wagner has suggested that members of the chapter consider donating for the restoration of The Arches on Fort Myers Beach.

Earl Morgan, a longtime chapter member, shared a flyer on the project with Vice President Wagner. "While we are all veterans, we are also community members and support causes as individuals outside of MOAA," Wagner said.

For 55 years, The Arches stood as the entrance to Fort Myers Beach and became the identity of the town itself. While they should not have been destroyed, 20 years later, rebuilding them was in the original Town of FMB 1999 Comprehensive Plan. Today, over four decades later, The Arches remain a symbol of importance to the FMB community, as evidenced by the full wall mural of The Arches behind the Fort Myers Beach Council chambers, and a first place listing in the Estero Island Historic Society FMB Historic Island Tour Brochure "Footprints in Time."

Even with a strong connection, funding the restoration did not get support due to concerns about the cost and where to locate them, and as Fort Myers Beach grew, officials addressed higher priority requirements to meet infrastructure needs and provide services. Those needs continue, but with an acceptable scaled down proposal, and our proposed public private partnership, the project has gained acceptance, but needs financial assistance to help with the plans to keep the project moving forward.

In 1979, the Jaycees, citizens and politicians worked hard to save the original Tom Phillips 1924 Arches from Florida Department of Transportation's planned destruction and proposed a plan to save and relocate them to a park. The bridge contractor agreed and FDOT was told to stand down until they could be moved. Everything was in place to save The Arches, but one key thing did not happen, nobody told the wrecking ball sub-contractor. Everyone was in disbelief, but The Arches were

gone for lack of communication. Even the contractor recognized the importance, as he paid to remove and stored the remains at his home for 40 years.

In the book *Coconuts and Coquinas*, they wrote, "The demolition of The Arches symbolized an end of an era for Fort Myers Beach." Today, with the help of the town, county, and state governments, the hope is to restore a link to and remember that era by building the Commemorative Arch.

To make a donation, people can purchase one of two different sized engraved brick. You can order a 4" x 8" brick with up three lines of engraving and up to 18 characters per line for \$100, or order a 8" x 8" brick with up to 6 lines of engraving and up to 18 characters per line for \$225.

Checks should be made out to, and sent to: Restore Fort Myers Beach Arches, Inc., 11796 S. Cold Creek Place, Vail, AZ 85641.

If you prefer to donate online, go to this website: <https://www.facebook.com/restorethearches>.





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

FCoC
www.moaafl.org

MOAA National
www.moaa.org

Legislative Action Center
www.moaa.org/takeaction

Membership

Cape Coral
Military Officers Association of America
(CCMOAA)

PO Box 100508, Cape Coral, FL 33910-0508

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION • DIRECTORY UPDATE

☐ 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: