The Lantern

Palm Beach-Martin Counties Chapter
Military Officers Association of America
www.moaafl.org/chapters/PBMCC



October 2026

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF MOAA - PBM

Your Board of Directors met on October 1, as we do on the first Thursday of each month. And today's meeting was particularly encouraging for the next year. I can now announce that the MOAA PBM JROTC fund is officially a 501(c)(3), making all contributions to that fund tax-deductible. Please do not confuse our general fund with the JROTC fund. They are two different bank accounts. If you have any questions about that fund, please direct them to your chapter treasurer, Bob James.

Take note that Congress has entered its pre-election recess and will not be in session again until November 9, which means we have plenty of time to pour on the pressure because the National Defense Authorization Act and the Take Care of America's Veterans Act, a sweeping package that includes the Major Richard Star Act, will both compete for floor time. Thus, between now and November 9, we must be diligent in our efforts to convince Congress that these measures must be passed for the sake of our military personnel, full-time, reserve, and retired.

Please take time to log onto https// www.moaa.org and then click on "Advocacy" at the top of the page. From there, you will be able to write to your congressional representative and both senators to express your desire to see those particular issues be addressed immediately. Your younger brethren in arms will thank you.

Another reminder: On October 14, an official announcement will be made telling all of the US just how valuable its armed and uniformed services are to the government. That announcement will contain the actual COLA projection for 2027 paychecks. At this point, I would normally share a few sentences of my opinions, but I'll pass this time and say that perhaps a few sincere prayers might do more good than anything I could say.

Also, I am proud to announce that the annual business meeting of the Chapter will be held again this year at one of our favorite watering holes, Patty Mac's in Palm Beach Gardens, on November 19. We will have dinner together at 6:00 pm, followed by our annual meeting. Mark your calendars and save that date so you don't

forget. Oh, and we'll remind you with an email before then. Plus, we have a special treat for you that evening that you will not want to miss.

Another date to mark on your calendar is December 10. That evening, we will gather for our annual Christmas Dinner. And as before, you can expect a most impressive, even inspiring, concert by the School of the Arts' amazing ensemble, who will entertain us again with their wonderful style as they perform those special songs of the season. Mark your calendars right now.

Finally, at our Annual Meeting, we will be electing a slate of officers to serve next year as our Board of Directors. I will be sitting in a new chair as Immediate Past President (at last). And you will vote on a new slate of officers, to be announced at the meeting. Please make sure to attend this important meeting and dinner.



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"Beverly" 561-252-3263 hsennett@gmail.com

1st Vice President .....open

2nd Vice President....open

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"Sharon" 561-906-6051 Colrbj@cs.com

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Newsletter Editor ....Lt Col Albert (Skip) Barnes USAF
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JROTC .....Col Paul Loschiavo, USMC
"Jill" 561-310-4769 pelicansoaring@gmail.com

Personal Affairs .....CAPT Rich Wennet, USN
561-385-3975 rwennet@gmail.com

Legislative Liaison..... Col Gary Russ, USA
602-469-8646 Gary.desertrat@gmail.com

Membership .....BG Mark Holler, USA
703-859-1410 hollerma70@gmail.com

Programs/Speakers...open

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"Jill" 561-310-4769 pelicansoaring@gmail.com

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"Beverly" 561-252-3263 hsennett@gmail.com

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Legislative Liaison

Provided by: Col Gary Russ, USA, Ret

30 Sep

MOAA continues to be active over the summer advocating Congress to act before they stand down for the elections.

Major Richard Star Act One Signature Away from Key Breakthrough: Discharge Petition No. 22 for H.R. 2102, Major Richard Star Act, has reached the 218 signatures needed to move forward which gives the legislation a path to the House floor through the discharge process as we continue working to secure consideration of the clean version of the Major Richard Star Act.

MOAA Letter: Sent to the chairmen and ranking members of the House and Senate Armed Services committees (sent Sept. 23) which outlines recommended improvements to the military health system for the FY 2027 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) including TRICARE Changes, Housing Fixes, and More. The 10 MOAA Priorities as the NDAA Takes Shape are listed below:

The list includes proposals that will:

1) Establish a digital system so TRICARE beneficiaries can report access to care concerns in a way that will ensure their issues are resolved and systemic problems can be addressed. The NDAA provision builds on the MOAA-backed Military Care, Access, Reporting, and Evaluation (Military CARE) Act and is a top priority for several military and veterans service organizations.
2) Expand on continued congressional oversight of services offered by military treatment facilities (MTFs), to include reversing planned cuts to 41 hospitals and clinics.
3) Require a study on the future of the military health care system – a necessary step to ensure the program remains viable for all beneficiaries.
4) Address the administration's plans to split Defense Health Program funding into two appropriations: One for combat and operational medicine, another for private sector care. MOAA raised concerns in the letter that the move "could lead to challenges with adequately funding purchased care and diminished access for beneficiaries."
5) Create a no-premium dental plan for junior enlisted members of the Selected Reserve, a program designed to increase readiness of the overall force.

Other Key Proposals

6) Expand in-home childcare options for military families, to include improved access to au pairs.
7) Prevent Pentagon officials from funding any changes under the Supply Chain Transformation Initiative – moves which could affect the commissary benefit – until six months after a report required in the FY 2026 NDAA is filed to Congress.
8) Prohibit landlords in privatized military housing from asking tenants to sign nondisclosure agreements, which may limit the options for military

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8) Prohibit landlords in privatized military housing from asking tenants to sign nondisclosure agreements, which may limit the options for military families facing housing problems.
9) Improve landlord accountability for mold and other housing hazards by

establishing testing requirements and remediation timelines – measures included in the MOAA-backed MOLD Act.

10) Protect the retirement pay of commissioned-officer retirees from the U.S. Public Health Service and NOAA during funding lapses by processing those payments via the Military Retirement Fund, a protection offered to Coast Guard retirees via the FY 2021 NDAA.

Dozens of Advocacy Groups Back Bipartisan Fix to Survivor Benefit Deadlines

The bipartisan bill was introduced in the House on June 25 by Reps. Mike Thompson (D-Calif.), Jack Bergman (R-Mich.), Greg Steube (R-Fla.), and Juan Vargas (D-Calif.). It had 55 cosponsors as of Sept. 1.

If enacted, it would alleviate some of the pressure faced by surviving spouses weighing long-term financial decisions while working on more immediate needs such as funeral arrangements, potential relocation, and childcare concerns.



TIP OF THE HAT

You know that we all plan to go West, but seldom know when. Another MOAA brother just bit the dust. Ray and Agnes welcomed us to socials, and supported our JROTC project with 50/50 drawings. Then all the years together, like so many couples, comes to a sudden end, and now Agnes is alone with nothing but memories.

Family is important, and having lost a daughter recently, I recognized death first hand, but now I saw a loyal and caring son fly in from Minnesota three times to be with his father. For hours each day, Ray Jr. sat with his dad and Agnes to offer assistance and comfort to his dad. Ray could hardly speak but Ray Jr. was a great interpreter for us visitors.

From all the Chapter MOAA members, thank you Ray for all you have done for your dad. God bless and keep you strong going forward.

Bob and Sharon James, good friends

Shipboard Life

Col Paul Loschiavo USMCR (Ret)

The US Navy Aircraft Carrier USS Lincoln has been in the news recently. The Lincoln recently completed an extraordinarily long deployment that included about 200 days in a combat zone during the war with Iran and 208 consecutive days at sea.

Being on the line for nine months straight is obviously challenging. Undoubtedly, there was little time off.

Though I did not do nine months straight, I did do about a year and a half at sea which included two six-month deployments. This pretty much qualifies me as an expert in shipboard life.

I served aboard the USS Guam, the USS Guadalcanal, and the USS Saipan. The Guam and Guadalcanal were LPHs (Landing Platform Helicopter) and the Saipan was an LHA (Landing Helicopter Assault).

LPHs were designed in the sixties at a time when saving money and minimum cost was paramount. My first time aboard the *Guad*, the ship's commanding officer called all of the Marine officers to the Wardroom to welcome us aboard. He commented that the Guadalcanal was "an old ship" that had been quite active for its lifetime and therefore, much used. Built under "McNamara's austere budgets" the *Guad* had a single engine and a single propeller — not exactly "built to take a lot of punishment and keep going."

As a company grade officer, I lived in a "six man stateroom" though there were just three of us in there. It was maybe 8 by 10, with two triple bunks and three combination desk-closet-dressers. With six guys in there, it would have been very tight. But it wasn't as tight as troop berthing. The sergeants (E-5) and below were crammed into berthing quarters that had six bunks stacked about eighteen inches apart with each Marine getting an 18x18x18 inch locker for personal gear. Only one or two could stand up at a time.

Showers for everyone were "Navy showers." Turn the water on. Get wet. Turn it off. Get soapy. Turn the water on. Rinse off. Turn the water off.

As an officer, I ate in the wardroom, in which the food was not bad. A grilled cheese sandwich on fine china was a special event. Interestingly enough, we paid for our meals.

Enlisted Marines ate in the Mess Deck which used metal trays for food service. There was nowhere near enough room for every Marine aboard to sit at the same time, so Marines went through the line, were served their meals, went to a table to eat the food in a short period of time, and moved out. More Marines were right behind looking for a place to sit. There was no such thing as enjoying a relaxing cup of coffee after dinner.

For the first ten days of the cruise then once in a while thereafter, we had fresh fruits and vegetables. After that, it was canned produce. Same with milk. The little boxes of UHT milk had just been invented. They tasted good in coffee. You got used to them.

On board Navy ships, they served Koolaid, which was universally known as "bug juice." I could never figure out how they got diesel fuel in the drinking water.

I was deployed in the early eighties which, of course, was pre-internet. Our only contact with home was by mail and a very occasional phone call.

We never knew when mail was going out or when we'd receive it. I made it a habit to send a letter just about every day. Jill tried to do the same. That way, whenever mail was delivered, we'd each get something. We numbered our envelopes so that when the other received one or a pile, they could read them in order.

The plan was good. The execution, not so. The first letter I received from Jill was ten weeks after we departed and it started "I finally got the transmission repaired." Ouch. Jill and I assumed a three month turn around for questions and answers.

One of my cruises was to Beirut and we never stopped anywhere for liberty in the six month deployment. The other took us around the Mediterranean Sea with exercises and port calls all around southern Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East. Many European cities had "Telefonicas"" that had multiple phone booths for long distance calls. The lines were always long,

and the calls were expensive.

In Beirut, the Marine Chaplain (really a Navy Chaplain assigned to the Marines ashore) had a telephone that could call the US. He laughed as he wondered who was getting the bill? He figured we'd be gone before anyone noticed. So, while in Beirut, I got to call home once in a while.

Of course, while I was in Beirut, my second son David was born. I was coming in to land on the LPH. I asked for clearance to land. The Air Boss responded "Winds three-three-zero at fifteen, cleared to land, spot three, congratulations, it's a boy." My helicopter shook and bounced. I got it under control and did a normal landing.

I happened to be aboard the Saipan on Christmas Day. There was an unexpected squall that caused the ship to literally pull the bollards out of the dock, and the ship unexpectedly ended up anchored in the harbor. Without a way to get ashore to call home, the ship's Operations Officer, who happened to be the senior Navy officer aboard, opened the ship's MARS station and announced that every sailor and Marine would get a MARS call home, even if it was illegal in a port.

A MARS call was an HF (short wave) radio call to a volunteer operator in the US who would connect the radio to a phone line.

With fifteen hundred guys on board, the calls were short and consisted of:

"Merry Christmas, Jill, over."

"Merry Christmas, Paul, over."

"I love you, over."

"I live you, too, over."

"Bye", over."

It was fantastic, nonetheless.

Today, deployed sailors and Marines have something we didn't: internet access. Modern carriers use satellite systems that allow crews, when operations permit, to text, email and even make internet calls home.

Is it easier or harder today than it was forty years ago? I don't know. But people are different. As a sixth grader in Brooklyn, I'd ride the subway with just a friend. In college 120 miles from home, I'd call my parents Sunday nights to check in. Nowadays, every kid is connected continuously. My eight year old grandson has an Apple Watch so his parents can connect with him 24/7, despite the fact that he's never *anywhere* unsupervised.

I'm sure it's a culture shock now for most of the young sailors and Marines being disconnected from their families and friends.

Food service has undoubtedly improved, particularly because underway replenishment can bring fresh produce and other perishables aboard. But a ship that's been at sea for months is still a ship at sea, and fresh food depends on the ability to resupply.

Conditions have improved. I don't think anyone on a modern carrier is sleeping in the six-high troop racks I remember. But thousands of people still live in remarkably little personal space.

None of that means concerns about the Lincoln's deployment should be dismissed. Eight suicide attempts within the strike group are serious and deserve scrutiny. But there is also a danger in reporting the ordinary hardships of prolonged life at sea as though they are something new. Going to sea—especially going to sea in wartime—has never been easy.

The bottom line is that I wonder if coverage of living conditions at sea might be tainted in this hyper-political environment in which we live.

Interestingly, recruiting has remained strong despite reports of difficult deployments. The Navy reached its FY2026 recruiting objective early, as did the Air Force and Space Force."

Ummm… did I mention that I went skiing in the Alps while deployed aboard the Saipan? Shush. Don't tell anyone. I told Jill that we worked the entire time.



Funeral Information for Ray Elderd

Agnes and Ray's son, Raymond, have invited you to attend the following events for Ray:

Viewing: Wednesday, October 7, 3 to 7pm, at the Aycock Riverside Funeral Home, 1112 Military Trail in Jupiter.

Memorial Service: Thursday, October 8, 11:15am, also at Aycock Riverside Funeral Home, 1112 Military Trail in Jupiter.

Burial Service: Thursday, October 8, 1:15pm, at the National Cemetery of Southern Florida in Wellington (6501 FL-7 in Wellington).

Ray Elderd was a very long-time member of the chapter. He always gave of himself to make chapter events better and foster the ideals of MOAA. He will be sorely missed. If you can attend any of the events, please do so. I'm sure that Agnes and Raymond will greatly appreciate it.

Herb Sennett
President
MOAA PBM



In Loving Memory of

LTC Ray Elderd

USA Ret.

Please Join Us

Following the burial service, gather with family and friends to share memories, enjoy delicious Italian food, and celebrate Ray's life.

Fiorella's Restaurant

7008 Charleston Shores Blvd.
Lake Worth, FL 33467

October 8th

2:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Cash bar only

Good food. Shared memories. A life remembered.

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Upcoming Events:

Oct: Board of Directors meeting, Oct 1st, 11am via zoom
Officers Call, Oct 28th, 6pm, place TBD

Nov: Board of Directors meeting, Nov 5th, 11am
Chapter Annual Meeting, Nov 19th, 6pm at Patty Mac's

Dec: Board of Directors meeting Dec 3rd, 11am via zoom
Toys for Tots Dinner/Holiday Dinner, Dec 10th, 6pm

Mission Statement:

The Palm Beach - Martin Counties Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA PBM) is an independent organization of current, former, and retired officers of the eight uniformed services incorporated under the laws of the State of Florida. We are affiliated with and follow the ideals of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA National) and the Florida Council of Chapters of MOAA (FCOC of MOAA).

The overall purpose of MOAA is **Advocacy** on behalf of all military people in front of Congress.

On a local level, the members of this chapter share share *camaraderie with a purpose* in the brotherhood of arms. We routinely support multiple high school JROTC Programs and Toys-for-Tots, as well as gathering for social events on a monthly basis.

For more information about the chapter or to join the chapter, send an email to moaapalmbeach@gmail.com and simply ask for a membership application.

Palm Beach-Martin Counties Chapter
Military Officers Association of America
P.O.Box 8171
Jupiter, Florida 33468-8171

Editorial Policy: All content provided by MOAA National, the Florida Council and this Chapter is nonpartisan.