



Military Officers Association of America
Redwood Empire Chapter

Post Office Box 2801
Santa Rosa, CA 95405-0801

VOLUME 56, NUMBER 2

"Serving Those Who Serve America"

FEBRUARY 2026



PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Dear Members,

Like many military officers, I enjoy studying history. Therefore, I would like to share with you in the MOAA Voice, information regarding U.S. military actions that occurred during that calendar month that helped shape U.S., and in most cases, world history. The month of February is the anniversary of two significant events in U.S. military history. On February 15, 1898, the battleship **USS Maine exploded in Havana Harbor, Cuba**, killing over 260 American sailors. Though the exact cause remains debated - whether an internal accident or an external mine - the tragedy ignited public outrage in the United States. Newspapers fueled the cry, "*Remember the Maine!*", and within months, the U.S. declared war on Spain. The **Spanish-American War** led to Cuba's liberation from Spain and marked America's emergence as a global power, with territorial gains in Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines. The Maine's destruction thus became a pivotal moment in reshaping U.S. foreign policy.

Nearly a century later, on **February 28, 1991, Operation Desert Storm concluded**, ending the Persian Gulf War. This coalition campaign, expelled Iraqi forces from Kuwait after Saddam Hussein's invasion. The war showcased advanced military technology and swift victory, but its aftermath was complex. Iraq faced crippling sanctions, internal uprisings by Shia and Kurds groups, and long-term instability. For the U.S., Desert Storm reinforced its military dominance, yet it also helped set the stage for future conflicts in the Middle East.

I hope to see you at the 'Surf and Turf' Lobster dinner on February 20th at the Santa Rosa Veteran's building. Have a great month!

Very respectfully,

LTC Steve Countouriotis, USA (Ret) President
707-763-5309 ~ scount@yahoo.com

SEE PUB CRAWL PAGE No. 2

MOAA BOARD of DIRECTORS MEETING

will be at the Santa Rosa Veterans building
in the Conference room.

Tuesday, February 3, 2026, 11:30am.

Chapter members are always welcome at these meetings

SURF & TURF ANNUAL FEED LOBSTER and CROSS-RIB BEEF, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2026

Please see page No. 5 for the reservation form and information on the menu for the evening.

It's November! That means the annual MOAA Lobster Feed, Friday, February 20th, at the Veterans Building. Social hour begins at 5:00pm. Dinner will be served at 6:00pm, or as soon as the lobsters stop wiggling. Accompanying the crustaceans will be cross-rib. And of course there will be a **raffle** after dinner.

But here's the really important thing! Because the lobsters come fresh off the plane from the east coast, we absolutely must have an accurate count by Monday, November 17th! The coupon for this popular event can be found on **page No. 5** of this issue of the **MOAA VOICE**. Cut it out right now and get your money in the mail to secure a place at the table. And speaking of money, the **\$60.00** cost is amazingly reasonable considering what you're getting for your money.

You don't want to miss this fun event! If you get into trouble with a reservation, call Tim Morgan on his Cell: (707)695-9293 But if you call him after November 17th, you might end up eating a **\$60.00** hot dog.

NOTE: A BAR WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE.

Wine will be available at **NO COST**. Guest can bring their own Alcohol, glasses and ice will be available.

See you at the Big Feed!



PLEASE MAKE RESERVATIONS FOR DINING,

By Monday, February 16, 2026.
this is needed for head counts for meals and
making name tags.

WE NEED
YOU!



**COMING SOON!!!!
THE COL BREY
SCHOLARSHIP AND
MERIT AWARDS
HAVE BEEN REVISED TO
REFLECT GRADES, MERIT,
AND HUMANITY!!!
OPEN TO:**

High school seniors or High school graduates

- to pursue a college degree
- to enroll in a professional training program such as fire prevention, electrician, police protection, auto mechanics, culinary school, or comparable training programs.
- college undergraduates
- previous applicants of the Brey Scholarship
- The Brey Scholarship is limited to a maximum of **two** awarded scholarships per applicant.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

The application period for COL William G. Brey Scholarships will open on January 1, 2026, and will close on March 15, 2026. Closing date is firm. Those eligible to apply for scholarship assistance are children, wards, and grandchildren, natural or adopted, of living or deceased officer, warrant officer, or auxiliary members of the Chapter. Scholarship eligibility is limited to those pursuing undergraduate academic and professional certificate programs. Applications will not be accepted for support of graduate studies.

Our experience is that it can take some time for prospective applicants to gather all the required supporting documentation, then prepare and submit the completed application before the cutoff date. We therefore recommend that Chapter members advise eligible family members of scholarship availability and contact information early enough to give them sufficient reaction time.

Application forms are available. They may be obtained by writing to:

Secretary, Redwood Empire Chapter, MOAA
Post Office Box 2801
Santa Rosa, CA 95405-0801

or, by directly contacting Scholarship Committee Chairman:

Susan Linch

4825 Glencannon Street,
Santa Rosa, CA 95405-7911

Phone: (707)538-3342

or e-mail: srmomx5@comcast.net

Susan will provide them immediately to all interested parties by fastest means available.

“Sunshine Lady”

Call Myrna Hurst, 707-468-0146,
if you know of anyone in the chapter who
might enjoy a get well or sympathy card.

Pub Crawl”

Chapter members, Friends and Guests:
“Pub Crawl”, is back on our event calendar.

We will meet at 12:00 noon the Poppy Bank Epicenter, February 16, 2026. Always on the **THIRD** Monday of each month. Our pub crawls are a great place to relax and share our past experiences. We all have stories to tell!!

Legislative Update February 2026

General Comments.

Since this is an election year for mid-term elections, everyone needs to be aware of the issues and how they can affect our lives. A good factor in analyzing a proposal is to look at who is proposing it and, as well, to see if there is any opposition and where the money to finance the proposal is coming from.

However, the big elephant in the room is if another Continuing Resolution may be forced to keep the government operating. These facts bring us back to our priorities indicated below under **Federal** below.

Federal:

Pay Our Troops Act which ensures our troops including NOAA, Coast Guard, Uniformed Public Health will get paid. These folks need to be paid n time - not a month or so late.

Major Richard Star Act - H. - 2102/ S.1032.

Authorizes combat-injured.

Veterans to receive their earned DoD retirement pay for years of service and their VA disability compensation for lifelong injury. This has been a long term priority with overwhelming support, but has never passed. To reduce earned retirement pay because of a combat disability is an injustice; the compensation for these injured veterans is not the place to achieve savings. Senator Alex Padilla has cosponsored S.1032, however, your help with Representative Huffman regarding HR.2192 is urged.

Basic Allowance for Housing Act (BAH).

H.R. 1965 This measure will reduce the impact of military personnel being transferred to a "high cost" area where they must be debt ridden to severe in that area - by order, not by choice.

Military Spouse Hiring Act H.R 2033

To reduce the impact of spouses losing employment opportunities due to their military situation. Employers are reluctant to hire them because of the fact that they will move in a few years. The act gives employers financial benefit of hiring them through tax cuts. Again, while Senator Padilla is onboard as a cosponsor of S.1021, Rep representative Huffman is not of the House bill.

State:

Major Victory. As we file our taxes for 2025, don't forget our recent fought and won exemption of a portion of our retired pay including the **U.S. Armed Forces, Public Health Service, and NOAA**, as well as surviving spouses receiving annuities under the Department of Defense's SBP. However, with our State Legislators keep looking for ways to pay

down the budget deficit we are facing the creative ways whereby they can "invent" money.

SB 694. Protection of Vets from being charged fees from illegal offers.

California veterans filing their initial VA disability claims are being exploited, and we need your help to stop it.

Unaccredited "claim sharks" are charging veterans up to \$30,000 for help that federal law requires to be FREE. These predatory companies prepare claim documents but refuse to sign them, leaving veterans holding ALL the legal and financial responsibility for errors.

The numbers are staggering:

- \$100 million stolen annually from California veterans
- 14,000+ veterans exploited in the last five years
- Zero accountability when things go wrong

SB 694 (Archuleta & Schiavo) closes the enforcement loophole and protects veterans filing their **initial** claims by ensuring only accredited representatives can legally assist them.

Grassroots Advocacy:

What we need is an "all hands" - call to State Senator Mike McGuiretel:1916 651-4002 asking for his support of this measure.

Vern McNamee, LTC, USA Retired

Legislative Chair

Redwood Empire Chapter MOAA (CA30)

707 972-3066 vernonmc@mcn.org



Susan Linch,

2026 Wives Club Officers, Left to Right:

Donna Poulter,

Tina Lewis

Norma Viglienze

(A Sonoma County Main Chapter event; all members are more than welcome to attend)

SURF & TURF LOBSTER and CROSS-RIB BEEF, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20th

Veterans Memorial Building (Dining Room) - 1351 Maple Avenue, Santa Rosa

Menu: *Maine Lobster 1 1/4 lb or larger and Cross-Rib Beef
Baked Potatoes, Caesar Salad, Garlic bread.
Red and White wine will be available. Dessert*

\$60.00 each

5:00 pm: Socialize, (Bar not available) About 6:00 pm: Lobster served - (if ready)
Guest can bring their own Alcohol, glasses and ice will be available.

Enclosed is my check for _____ persons @ \$60.00 each. \$_____

Enclosed is \$_____ for the Col. Brey Scholarship Fund

Name: _____, Phone: (_____) _____

Guests: _____, _____, _____, _____

_____, _____, _____, _____

Please list the names of all guest, so that we can make **NAME TAGS** for them too, thank you.

Make check (s) payable to: **RECMOAA**

Mail to: MOAA, Redwood Empire Chapter, P.O. Box 2801, Santa Rosa, CA 95405

RAFFLE: We will be having a Raffle to help with our funds.
If you are able bring a Raffle Prize

**Please
Bring a Raffle Prize
If you are able**



2026 DATES TO REMEMBER

January
 1st Dues for 2026 are payable at this time
 6th BOARD MEETING - 11:30 am
 10th Deadline for submission of MOAA-VOICE information.
 14th Wives Club Luncheon, **Epicenter**
 19th Pub Crawl at Epicenter, **12:00** noon
 22nd Luncheon, **Epicenter** – Installation of Officers

February:
 1st Proposed target date to publish the 2026 Roster
 3rd BOARD MEETING - 11:30 am
 11th Wives Club Luncheon, **Epicenter**
 10th Deadline for submission of MOAA-VOICE information
 16th Pub Crawl at Epicenter, **12:00** noon
 20th Friday, Lobster Feed, Santa Rosa Veterans building

March:
 4th BOARD MEETING - 11:30 am
 10th Deadline for submission of MOAA-VOICE information
 11th Wives Club Luncheon, **Epicenter**
 15th Deadline for submission Scholarship Applications
 16th Pub Crawl at Epicenter, **12:00** noon
 26th Luncheon, **Epicenter**

April:
 7th BOARD MEETING - 11:30 am – Scholarship winners
 8th Wives Club Luncheon, **Epicenter**
 10th Deadline for submission of MOAA-VOICE information
 20st **Pub Crawl** at Epicenter, **12:00** noon
 23rd Luncheon, **Epicenter**

May:
 5th BOARD MEETING - 11:30 am – Scholarship winners
 10th Deadline for submission of MOAA-VOICE information
 13th Wives Club Luncheon, Epicenter
 18th **Pub Crawl** at Epicenter, **12:00** noon
 21st Luncheon, **Epicenter**
 25th Memorial Day Ceremonies

June:
 2nd BOARD MEETING - 11:30 am
 10th Deadline for submission of MOAA-VOICE information
 10th Wives Club Luncheon, Epicenter

** 13th Saturday, Picnic Spring Lake, Lower Jackrabbit Area
 Honor Scholarship Recipients?
 15th **Pub Crawl** at Epicenter, **12:00** noon
 July:
 (No Board meeting)
 8th Wives Club Luncheon, **Epicenter**
 20^s **Pub Crawl** at Epicenter, **12:00** noon
 23rd Luncheon, Epicenter

August:
 4th BOARD MEETING - 11:30 am, select a nominating committee
 10th Deadline for submission of MOAA-VOICE information
 12th Wives Club Luncheon, **Epicenter**
 ** 15th Saturday, Riverfront Regional Park, Annual BBQ
 17th **Pub Crawl** at Epicenter, **12:00** noon

September:
 1st BOARD MEETING - 11:30 am – Approval of 2025 officers
 10th Deadline for submission of MOAA-VOICE information
 9th Wives Club Luncheon, Epicenter
 21th **Pub Crawl** at Epicenter, **12:00** noon
 24th Luncheon, Epicenter

October:
 6th BOARD MEETING - 11:30 am
 14th Wives Club Luncheon, **Epicenter**
 10th Deadline for submission of MOAA-VOICE information
 19th **Pub Crawl** at Epicenter, **12:00** noon
 22nd Luncheon Epicenter, Election of Officers for 2026

November:
 3rd BOARD MEETING - 11:30 am
 10th Deadline for submission of MOAA-VOICE information
 ** 11th North Bay Veterans Day parade (Wednesday)
 11th Wives Club Luncheon, **Epicenter**
 16th **Pub Crawl** at Epicenter, **12:00** noon
 13th Friday, Lobster Feed, Santa Rosa Veterans building
 26th Thanksgiving Day

** = Not Confirmed at this time ~ **CNX** = Cancelled ~ **UNK** = Unknown
 06/32/06

MOAA WIVES CLUB

(Sonoma County Main - All members welcome)

2026 Officers

President: Susan Linch 707-538-3342
 Vice President: Donna Poulter 707-576-0513
 Secretary: Tina Lewis 707-758-9739
 Treasurer: Norma Viglienzone 707-542-1458
 Parliamentarian: Donna Poulter 707-576-0513

ABOUT TIME TO PAY YOUR DUES! ONLY \$25.00

Mail check to Norma Viglienzone at
 1651 Cunningham Way, Santa Rosa, CA 95403

You can either pay your dues in person at a luncheon or mail a check to Norma Viglienzone. Make the check payable to MOAA Wives Club.

The next meeting of the Wives Club will be a buffet lunch at the Epicenter on Wednesday, February 11th. The lunch cost is \$26.00. Lunch is served promptly at noon. The buffet menu will be carnitas tacos, esquite, sauteed asparagus, chopped salad, and cookies.

If the Telephone Committee does not contact you, you may make a reservation up to the day before the meeting; however, cancellations must be made by Monday preceding the meeting. For either situation, call Susan Linch at 707-538-3342.

The activity for the February luncheon will be the ever-popular Bingo.

Tina Lewis, Publicity 707-758-9739, tinalewis31@comcast.net

Redwood Empire Chapter Officers and Directors for 2026

President: LTC Steve Countouriotis, USAR 707-763-5309
1st Vice President COL Bruce A. Stahley, USAR 415-328-9278
2nd Vice President COL Bruce A. Stahley, USAR 415-328-9278
Secretary: Cpt Robert R. Safreno, USAF 707-479-9374
Treasurer: LCDR Tim Morgan, USNR 707-695-9293
Imed. Past President: Donna Poulter 707-576-0513

CAL-MOAA Director, Area I

Cpt Tom Walther, USAF 530-673-5499

Directors-at-large - Term 2026

Martina Lewis 707-758-9739
 Susan Linch 707-538-3342
 Mary-Gwen Neisingh 707-481-7614
 Florence Wall 707-837-7389

Directors-at-large - Term 2026-27

Dayle Johnson 408-466-6764
 Sandy Paxton 707-696-0107
 Maj Ken Johnson, USAF 408-466-6764
 CPT Lewis Wall, USA 707-837-7389

Sunshine Committee: Mrs. Myrna M. Hurst 707-468-0146

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Publication Title: MOAA VOICE is a newsletter of the Redwood Empire Chapter, Military Officers Association of America (MOAA). **Statement of Frequency:** Published monthly. **Authorized organization's name and address:** MOAA Redwood Empire Chapter, PO Box 2801, Santa Rosa, CA 95405-0801. **Cost of publication: FREE**



**UP COMING
Future
EVENTS**



**SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR ANNUAL
SURF & TURF ~ LOBSTER MEAL**

**It is scheduled for
Friday, November 13, 2026**

**In the
Santa Rosa Veterans building
More information later**

**Guests can bring their own Alcohol
NO BAR will be available
Glasses and ice will be available.**

**SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR ANNUAL
** HOLIDAY SOCIAL ****

**It is scheduled for
Monday, December 14, 2026**

**At the
Cattlemens in Rohnert Park
More information later**