

MOAA



VOICE

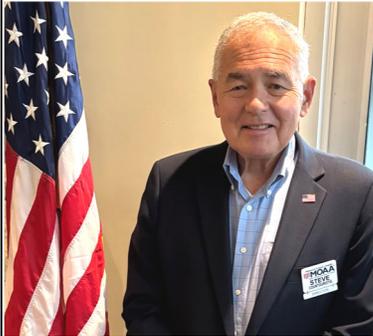
Military Officers Association of America
Redwood Empire Chapter

Post Office Box 2801
Santa Rosa, CA 95405-0801

VOLUME 56, NUMBER 3

“Serving Those Who Serve America”

MARCH 2026



PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Dear Members,
March is marked by events that reshaped strategy and America's role in the world. I would like to highlight two events that occurred during the month of March that may offer lessons for today.

As if taken from today's news headlines regarding the Danish semi-autonomous territory of Greenland, the sale of Danish West Indies to the United States in March 1917 for \$25 million in gold was driven by strategic considerations, including concerns over the security of the Panama Canal, and U.S. regional ambitions. The islands transitioned from Danish to American control on March 31, 1917, when the territory officially became the United States Virgin Islands.

The acquisition of the islands of Saint Thomas, Saint John, and Saint Croix strengthened U.S. military presence in the Caribbean during World War I enabling the U.S. to gain control of ports, harbors, and trade routes in the region. The sale also signaled the emergence of the United States as a Caribbean power.

A second significant event in U.S. history occurred on March 29, 1973, when the last U.S. combat troops departed Vietnam, formally ending America's direct military involvement in the conflict. This moment closed a difficult chapter for the U.S. Armed Forces and the nation. The experiences of America's involvement in Vietnam had a profound influence upon the subsequent development of U.S. military doctrine and force structure.

Hope to see you at the Pub Crawl on March 16th and the monthly luncheon on March 26th. Both events are at the Epicenter in Santa Rosa.

Respectfully,

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

SEE PUB CRAWL PAGE No. 1

MOAA BOARD of DIRECTORS MEETING

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

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

Chapter members are always welcome at these meetings

Thursday, March 26, 2026
Buffet Luncheon at the
EPICENTER in Santa Rosa
11:00am ~ Dine at Noon

Guest Speaker: Marcus Combs he is a Retired Golden Gate National Park Ranger and will be speaking on the Presidio of San Francisco ~ 250 years

PLEASE MAKE RESERVATIONS FOR DINING,

By Tuesday, March 24, 2026. this is needed for head counts for meals and making name tags.

See page **No. 3** for the Luncheon menu.

NOTE: LUNCHEON PRICES ARE \$30.00 EACH.



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, March 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 March 2026

Legislative Chair
Redwood Empire Chapter MOAA (CA30)
707 972-3066 vernonmc@mcn.org

General Comments. CR to be or CR not to be - that is the question which hopefully will be answered by the time this **Voice** gets published. While many items have been funded, there are areas which are being fought at the Administrative/ Legislative level. Another CR, even short, is disruptive to government operations. 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:

Another Victory: SB 694 "Claim Shark" Legislation was signed into law by the Governor on 11 February and protects veterans filing initial disability claims from action by predatory "claims sharks".

This law will probably have a far more reaching effect than the Exemption of Military Retired Income due to the numbers involved.

Key provisions of the law are:

- Prohibits fees for VA claims assistance from non-accredited providers.
- Makes violations a misdemeanor,
- Void predatory contracts
- Align California law with Federal VA standards.

Numbers involved are staggering:

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.

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

Your support was a deciding factor in this effort. Please pass the results with your colleagues.

The guest speaker for January was David Rivera, Golden Gate Bridge Deputy General Manager Bridge Division. Coming from a military background, Rivera has been with the bridge since 1994. Using a PowerPoint presentation, he re-



viewed the history of the bridge. Construction began in 1933 and opened in 1936. Interesting facts about the bridge include things like disagreement on the color of the towers. Originally scheduled to be black and yellow, it was changed to international orange. Things are constantly being done to the 1.7-mile-long bridge to make it safer for cars, pedestrians, and those attempting suicide. The Golden Gate Bridge is the first bridge in the country to collect tolls electronically. For more information about the bridge go to www.goldengate.org. To contact David Rivera, go to drivera@goldengate.org.

Notice of Pharmacy Benefits For retired military personal

Your TRICARE prescription drug plan is considered creditable coverage. this means the TRICARE prescription drug plan is at least as good as any Medicare Part D prescription drug plan.

If you're enrolled in a TRICARE plan, you have TRICARE prescription drug coverage. If you still want to buy a Medicare Part D prescription drug plan, TRICARE pays last after Medicare and other prescription drug coverage.

Visit www.tricare.mil/pharmacy to learn more about your TRICARE prescription drug coverage.

If you lose TRICARE eligibility, Medicare may ask you for proof of creditable coverage. Learn how to request proof of TRICARE coverage at www.tricare.mil/medicare.

Vern McNamee, LTC, USA Retired

SEE PUB CRAWL PAGE No. 1

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

Buffet Luncheon, Thursday March 26, 2026
Epicenter, 3215 Coffey Lane, Santa Rosa
Socializing 11:00 to 11:45 am, Meeting starts, Lunch 12:00 noon
Cost (including tax and tip) - **New Price \$30.00**

Salad: Greek Salad,

Lunch: Mini Meatballs Bacon Mac and Cheese, Fried Cauliflower.

Dessert: Cookies. Water, Iced Tea, Lemonade, Hot Tea and Coffee

Enclosed: is my check for my advanced reservation ____ persons @ \$30.00 each. \$ _____

Note: All must make **RESERVATIONS** Please Pre Pay if possible. (Late options only **Pay At Door**).

Donations: Col. Brey Scholarship Fund (Fully Tax Deductible). \$ _____ **TOTAL:** \$ _____

Guest Speaker: Marcus Combs Presidio of San Francisco ~ 250 years, (See page No. 1)

Name: _____, Phone: (____) _____

Guests: _____, _____, _____, _____

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

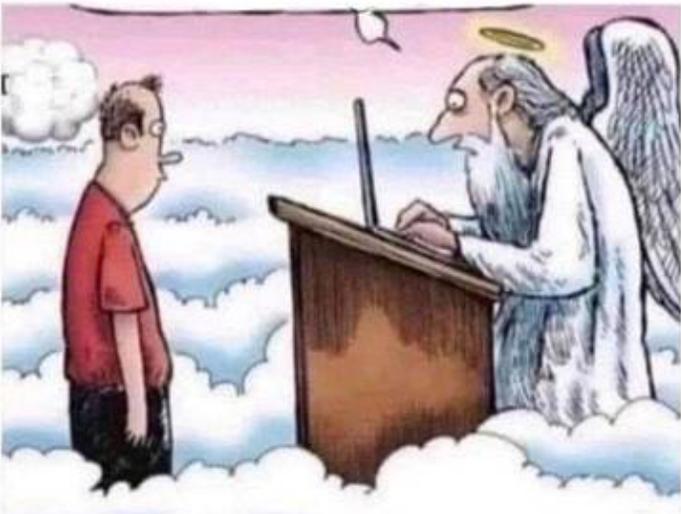
Make check (s) payable to: RECMOAA

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**

**You Almost Made It
Except For The Language
When Working On Your Truck.**



“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.



President Steve Countouriotis, presented the Past President pin to our Past President Donna Poulter. This was accomplished at our MOAA Board meeting on Tuesday, February 3, 2026, at the Santa Rosa Veterans building.

2026 DATES TO REMEMBER

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**
 25th Memorial Day Ceremonies
 28th Luncheon, **Epicenter**

June:
 2nd BOARD MEETING - 11:30 am
 10th Deadline for submission of MOAA-VOICE information
 10th Wives Club Luncheon, Epicenter
 20th 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^e **Pub Crawl at Epicenter, 12:00 noon**
 23rd Luncheon, Epicenter

August:
 4th BOARD MEETING - 11:30 am, select a nominating committee
 9th Sunday, Riverfront Regional Park, Annual BBQ
 10th Deadline for submission of MOAA-VOICE information
 12th Wives Club Luncheon, **Epicenter**
 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

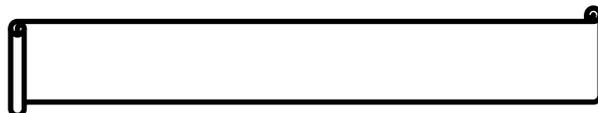
October:
 6th BOARD MEETING - 11:30 am
 14th Wives Club Luncheon, **Epicenter**
 10th Deadline for submission of MOAA-VOICE information
 19th **Pub Crawl at Epicenter, 12:00 noon**
 22rd Luncheon Epicenter, Election of Officers for 2026

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

December: (No Board meeting)
 ** 7th Pearl Harbor Survivors program ??
 10th Deadline for submission of MOAA-VOICE information
 14th Monday, Holiday Social, **Cattlemens**
 15th **Pub Crawl at Epicenter, 12:00 noon??**
 25th Christmas

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

SEE PUB CRAWL PAGE No. 1



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 Viglienze 707-542-1458
 Parliamentarian: Donna Poulter 707-576-0513

The next meeting of the Wives Club will be a buffet lunch at the Epicenter on Wednesday, March 11th. The lunch cost is \$26.00. Lunch is served promptly at noon. The buffet menu will be grilled flank steak, smashed potatoes, green beans with mushrooms, sweet berry 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.

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

**Just bought a log cabin
from Ikea**



**Remember: when
something goes wrong
in the circus, they send
in the clowns to
distract the audience.
Well, something has
gone very wrong with
this circus, and the
clowns are
everywhere.**

Redwood Empire Chapter Officers and Directors for 2026

President: LTC Steve Countouriotis, USA 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

MOAA VOICE

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