



### PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Dear Members,  
The month of May offers us an opportunity to reflect on moments in U.S. military history that helped shape the identity of our nation. Two such events stand out for their impact.

The first is the **Battle of Manila Bay**, fought on **May 1, 1898**, during the Spanish-American War. In a decisive victory, Commodore George Dewey led the U.S. Navy in destroying the Spanish Pacific fleet. This triumph marked the emergence of the United States as a global naval power and signaled a turning point in the war. The success at Manila Bay demonstrated the strength of American seamanship and industrial capability at the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The second milestone occurred on **May 8, 1945**, when **Victory in Europe (V-E) Day** was celebrated signaling the fall of the Third Reich and the end of World War II in Europe. The relief and gratitude felt across the country underscored the immeasurable cost in lives lost.

These events tie closely to **Memorial Day**, first known as Decoration Day. Established on **May 30, 1868**, it began as a time to decorate the graves of Civil War soldiers with flowers. Over the years, the day has evolved into a federal holiday that is celebrated on the last Monday in May and honors all military personnel who died in service to the nation. Memorial Day is a reminder of courage, sacrifice, and the enduring responsibility to remember.

I hope to see you at the Pub Crawl on May 18th and the MOAA Chapter Luncheon on May 28th. Both events are at the Epicenter in Santa Rosa.

Respectfully,

LTC Steve Countouriotis, USAF (Ret) President

### MOAA BOARD of DIRECTORS MEETING

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

Tuesday, May 5, 2026, 11:30am.

Chapter members are always welcome at these meetings

**Thursday, May 28, 2026**  
**Buffet Luncheon at the**  
**EPICENTER in Santa Rosa**  
**11:00am ~ Dine at Noon**

### Guest Speaker: **Joshua Kiser**

CalVet-Veterans' Home, Yountville, CA. Using a Power Point program about the Veterans' Home, he will describe the lives of veterans living in that facility. Also how veterans can be admitted and spend the rest of their lives there

### PLEASE MAKE RESERVATIONS FOR DINING,

By Tuesday, May 26, 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, May 18, 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 May 2026

**General Comments:** It's no secret - food and gasoline prices have been increasing at an impressive rate. However, does this mean that there will be a spike in COLA? Based on the numbers used to calculate COLC, CPI-W indicates no spike. Probably, the best we can hope for at this time is about like last year's - if only 2%, we will get no raise. Stay tuned.

Meanwhile, we need to stay pointed towards our priorities listed below once more urging our Congressmen to pass on the following:

**Pay Our Troops Act H.R. 7137 and S 3168;** 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. NOAA, Coast Guard and Public Health are not currently in the Senate version of the NDAA.

**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.

**The GUARD VA Benefit Act;** would protect veterans nationally from unaccredited for profit "claims sharks". As was mentioned previously, California passed SB 694 which gives protection to California veterans, however, federal laws in some instances are voiding it. Therefore, ask your Congressmen to support this measure.

### 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".

Key provisions of the law are:

- Prohibits fees for VA claims assistance from non-accredited providers.
- Makes violations a misdemeanor,
- Void predatory contract ,
- 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.

However, there are movements at the federal level to void state laws to this end. Look at the political interest groups involved.

**Vern McNamee, LTC, USA Retired**

Legislative Chair

Redwood Empire Chapter MOAA (CA30)

707 972-3066 vernonmc@mcn.org

**SEE PUB CRAWL PAGE No. 1**

## COLONEL WILLIAM BREY SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

This is the 44<sup>th</sup> year our Chapter has awarded scholarships in honor of Colonel William Brey, an impressive record. Also impressive are this year's winners. We're proud to announce that they are Ava Gonzales, granddaughter of CPT Lew Wall; Jackson McLean, grandson of Wally McCall; and Annelyse McMickin, granddaughter of COL Bruce Stahley. Each was awarded a scholarship in the amount of \$2,500. We wish them happiness and success in their future endeavors.

My heartfelt thanks go to the members of the Committee, whose hard work and thoughtful consideration make the awarding of the scholarships possible. Those members are Steve Countouriotis, Dayle Johnson, Lew Wall, Tim Morgan and Mary Gwen Neisingh, who hosted the meeting and whose delicious lunch was very much enjoyed. Thank you also to Pete Rizzo for the considerable amount of time he spends redacting the applications, a job he has done for many years.

Susan Linch  
Scholarship Committee Chair

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

**Buffet Luncheon, Thursday May 28, 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:** Chopped Salad,

**Lunch:** Salmon Spaghetti with Creamy Alfredo Sauce. Veggie Blend.

**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:** Joshua Kiser CalVet-Veterans' Home, Yountville, CA. (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**

Marcus Combs, retired Golden Gate Park Ranger at the Presidio of San Francisco, was the guest speaker at the March luncheon. Using PowerPoint pictures, he led us through the history of the Presidio, which is celebrating its 250 anniversary this coming September. In 1962 the Presidio was designated a National Historic Landmark. It is a part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. In 1994 it was transferred from a military installation to the National Park Service. For more information about the Presidio go to <https://presidio.gov>.



**“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.

## 2026 DATES TO REMEMBER

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

June:  
 2<sup>nd</sup> BOARD MEETING - 11:30 am  
 10<sup>th</sup> Deadline for submission of MOAA-VOICE information  
 10<sup>th</sup> **NO** Wives Club Luncheon, Epicenter  
 20<sup>th</sup> Saturday, Picnic Spring Lake, Lower Jackrabbit Area  
 Honor Scholarship Recipients?  
 15<sup>th</sup> **Pub Crawl** at Epicenter, **12:00** noon  
 (No Board meeting)

July:  
 8<sup>th</sup> Wives Club Luncheon, **Epicenter**  
 20<sup>s</sup> **Pub Crawl** at Epicenter, **12:00** noon  
 23<sup>rd</sup> Luncheon, Epicenter

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

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

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

November:  
 3<sup>rd</sup> BOARD MEETING - 11:30 am

10<sup>th</sup> Deadline for submission of MOAA-VOICE information  
 11<sup>th</sup> North Bay Veterans Day parade (Wednesday)  
 11<sup>th</sup> Wives Club Luncheon, **Epicenter**  
 16<sup>th</sup> **Pub Crawl** at Epicenter, **12:00** noon  
 13<sup>th</sup> Friday, Lobster Feed, Santa Rosa Veterans building  
 26<sup>th</sup> Thanksgiving Day  
 December: (No Board meeting)  
 \*\* 7<sup>th</sup> Pearl Harbor Survivors program ??  
 10<sup>th</sup> Deadline for submission of MOAA-VOICE information  
 14<sup>th</sup> Monday, Holiday Social, **Cattlemens**  
 15<sup>th</sup> **Pub Crawl** at Epicenter, **12:00** noon??  
 25<sup>th</sup> Christmas

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

A former Sergeant in the Marine Corps took a new job as a high school teacher.

Just before the school year started, he injured his back. He was required to wear a plaster cast around the upper part of his body. Fortunately, the cast fit under his shirt and wasn't noticeable.

On the first day of class, he found himself assigned to the toughest students in the school. The smart punks, having already heard the new teacher was a former Marine, were leery of him and he knew they would be testing his discipline in the classroom.

Walking confidently into the rowdy classroom, the new teacher opened the window wide and sat down at his desk. When a strong breeze made his tie flap, he picked up a stapler and stapled the tie to his chest.

Dead silence .....

The rest of year went very smoothly.

### 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

The next meeting of the Wives Club will be a buffet lunch at the Epicenter on Wednesday, May 13<sup>th</sup>. The lunch cost is \$26.00. Lunch is served promptly at noon. The buffet menu will be mini meatballs, roasted red potatoes, glazed carrots, Caesar 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 May will be a game supplied by Florence Wall. Come and enjoy it, following socializing and eating!

**Tina Lewis**, Publicity 707-758-9739, [tinalewis31@comcast.net](mailto:tinalewis31@comcast.net)

### HUMOR



### 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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