



Indian River Chapter MOAA P.O. Box 644047 Vero Beach FL 32964-4047 ircmoaa.org

The Buccaneer

February 2026

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The year has begun with incredible blessings! Thank you for being part of the accomplishment. I could go on in great detail but that is not possible in this format. Just realize our Chapter is collaborating closely with many who advocate for our veterans alongside us.

Three takeaways for you: Our January membership meeting affirmed the years

of labor we invested in honoring the WWII Generation. Mayor Cotugno is part of the local veteran family. He shares our pride in serving.

Next, we were part of the Purple Heart Cane Ceremony. Lisa Eden sang the National Anthem in spectacular fashion. Thanks to Bethany, we helped with the reference. That day, the accounts of sacrifice across decades was shared. All who attended came away with a stronger pride of the American patriot.

The IRC MOAA Martin Luther King Holiday Eve gathering is the third triumph of spirit. With the help of the Indian River County Historical Society, we paid tribute to the 10 African-American Sanctuary-honored veterans. Four Sanctuary-honored families participated. You could feel the enormous pride -- from Vietnam veteran Leon Barnwell, whose brother was killed in 1944, to Wendell Mosley, whose soldier son was lost in 2023.

February will continue that incredible collaborative spirit. The Veterans Council will commit our MOAA Outreach Grant funds to aiding another veteran in wretched circumstances. The Sebastian Area Veterans Honor Guard will pay respect to the Four Chaplains' WWII supreme sacrifice. And we will lead the second Indian River County Veterans Forum. That is in addition to our February membership meeting, with the West Palm Beach Veterans Administration presentation on the future specialty clinic. Thanks to Doctor Fortunato!

2026 is the year to consider the miracle of America. This July 4th we celebrate the mouse that roared! Yep, I am speaking of the ragtag bunch of colonists that had the revolutionary idea of a government of the people. As a collection of upstarts, we shocked the world. The resolve of a citizens' army over a span of eight years changed the world's history. Read ahead — the collective story of North and South, farmers, sailors, merchants, and ministers who stood together when the odds were dismal. Today, our world remains a volatile mess. We, with our military family (only 1 percent of 314 million people), defend those revolutionary ideals. USA 250 will be a Vero Beach celebration. We are 250 only once.

Tony Young



RECENT HAPPENINGS

Chapter Membership Meeting 16 January

Nearly 50 gathered to start the New Year. We began with Vice Admiral Thompson installing our leadership. We have retained the super 2025 slate for 2026. (Yes, I am biased!)

Two Sebastian River High School JROTC cadets, Davi Moraes and Christina Bissonnette, were recognized as Students of the Month for December and January. We enjoyed learning how highly our veteran family is regarded by Mayor Cotugno. And we welcomed two special guests: Cory Scheppy, a PhD student in China, and Fiona Zimmerman, a young Harvard grad and new USN recruit.



Ceci Moraes, Cadet Davi Moraes, CDR Peter Bissonnette, Cadet Christina Bissonnette, Amy Bissonnette



Two politicians try to keep the raffle honest.

Newly installed 2026 IRC MOAA leadership



Martin Luther King Day Eve Ceremony 18 January

The Sunday prior to MLK Day, our Chapter led the first observance dedicated to the African-American veterans honored on Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary. Forty gathered and listened to the names of the fallen, the ship's bell toll, a prayer, and brief comments, then placed flags on the 10 cenotaphs: Barnwell, Broxton, Doles, Hayward, Jennings, Middleton, Morris, Mosley, Scott, and Templeton. Four families of the honored were present. Thanks to the IRC Historical Society, Veterans Council, Next Gen Vets, American Legion Post 181, and the IRC Main Library & Archive for their support.



Wendell Mosley salutes his son Bakari's cenotaph.

Sylvester McIntosh and John Michael Matthews

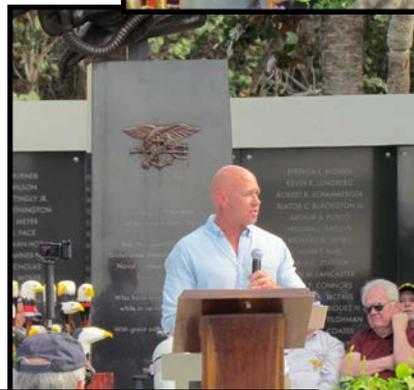


PURPLE HEART CANE CEREMONY

Saturday, 17 January, Navy UDT-SEAL Museum

The Purple Heart Cane Ceremony provided a tangible thank-you to 60 veterans from WWII to the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars. Four Sebastian, four Vero Beach, and a Fellsmere veteran were honored. It was incredibly special to relate the Purple Heart Medal history and witness our community's contribution. President Washington, General MacArthur, and Alex MacWilliam knew the enormous sacrifice of combat. These neighbors receiving canes also understand and are testimony to the profound sacrifices of war. This ceremony acknowledged society's appreciation, a duty that we share.

Florida Congressman and Purple Heart recipient Brian Mast, right, spoke at the event.



Medal of Honor recipient David Bellavia presented the 60 canes.



Lloyd Lasenby and Tony Young addressed the assembly.

COMING UP

Indian River Veterans Forum

Next Generation Veterans and Knights of Columbus #3297 are joining with IRC MOAA in sponsoring the next Veterans Forum dinner, to be held at St. John of the Cross Parish Hall (7550 26th St.) Feb. 23, from 5 to 8 PM. The focus will be preparations for the 250th Birthday Celebration of America. We will collaborate with all the organizations on how to best represent the veterans of Indian River County in this glorious celebration.

The feedback from the November forum, co-sponsored by the Elks, was very positive. We are thrilled to take the lead in organizing this collaborative get-together with the other veteran organizations in the county to see how we can all help each other identify and better serve our veteran population.

Bethany

FYI

- Sadly, **Vietnam Veterans 1038** of Vero Beach has closed shop. The last meeting was held at the Vero Beach Veterans on January 5. It is a harsh reality; the Vietnam Veterans are the casualties of the legacy of Agent Orange and numerous exotic diseases and combat injuries. The proceeds from VVA 1038 were dispersed to aid local veterans and advocates. We salute the Vietnam Veterans who have never stopped serving. Thank you.
- The 2026 **WWII Veterans** “Fat Tuesday” (Lent prelude) will be on “Meatloaf Monday,” February 3, at 1145 AM at the American Legion Post 39 in Vero Beach. Our local WWII Veterans will be guests of honor. The Indian River Gold Star Mothers take the lead, and IRC MOAA will assist with the event, as it has become a mutual occasion of shared patriotic spirit!
- The American Security Council Foundation has prepared and made readily available superb lessons on our Founding Fathers and Revolutionary Leaders in celebration of USA 250. Check out the “American History Live” feature at **ascf.us**. Also, the website of 1440 Daily Digest, **join1440.com**, has a Civics Thursday feature. It shares topics we should all know, such as the Constitution and federalism. It is amazing and free.
- The annual **Four Chaplains** observance is planned for 11 AM Tuesday, February 3, 2026, at Riverview Park in Sebastian. The memorial of the veterans lost on the USAT Dorchester is part of Sebastian’s legacy; Ernie Heaton, one of the lost ship’s survivors, was a resident. The proposed relocation of the memorial was canceled in May when reviewed with the park’s renovation. The veterans’ monuments are considered to be essential places of reflection and peace by the lagoon. Join the Sebastian American Legion, VFW, and Area Veterans Honor Guard — all are welcome. The ceremony reminds everyone of the selfless sacrifice of the chaplains.
- Join in the 21 February **Knights of Columbus Charity Golf Tournament**. We are sponsoring three Red Tees! Help contribute to the sponsorship. The Knights are partnering with IRC MOAA and Next Gen to offer our second Indian River Veterans Forum on 23 February. The St. John of the Cross Knights of Columbus are stewards of local veterans.
- The **Air Show** dates are May 15,16, and 17. Please put them on your calendar! We will need approximately 40 volunteers for the three days. Please contact John Palazzolo or Dale Content to sign up. You will be the proud owner of a volunteer T-shirt when it is over.



The Buccaneer



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

REMINDER: HAVE YOU PAID YOUR 2026 CHAPTER DUES?

Dues for 2026 are \$35 for members and \$15 for surviving spouses and associate members

Please take a moment and make sure your 2026 chapter dues have been paid. Some members have paid for two or three years in 2025 and are not due to pay quite yet. Please contact me if you don't recall. You have the option to pay dues online with a credit card or to pay by check. To pay online, use our website: ircmoaa.org.

Simply go to the bottom of the home page to the "Pay ONLINE" section and click on "Pay NOW." From there you can simply enter your preferred credit card and pay your dues. There is no service charge. You may wish to make a voluntary donation to the chapter with the **Make Donation** option. You will also get email confirmation. There are sometimes glitches in this new system, so please save your email confirmation. If you have any issues, please feel free to call me and we will get it straightened out.

Bob Albrecht: 772-257-6678 or 919-616-3873

If you prefer to submit your dues by check, make it payable to IRC-MOAA.

Mail to: **Roger Grubic, Treasurer IRC-MOAA**
2460 3rd PL SW
Vero Beach, FL 32962

Help Us Grow

Do you know someone who is a retired or former military officer or widowed spouse of an officer but not a member of our Chapter or MOAA? If so, **ask them to join** and contact **Bob Albrecht** at **919-616-3873** or **772-257-6678**.

Why Join MOAA?

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is the country's leading organization preserving and protecting service-earned benefits for uniformed service members and their families. Our members not only lend their voices to a greater cause, but they also gain access to extensive benefits tailored to the needs and lifestyles of military officers.

Bob Albrecht, Membership Chairman



LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

Go to MOAA.quorum.us to access the areas you wish to focus on for our veterans and write a note to our House and Senate reps.

The caregivers who provide daily care and support to aging and disabled veterans often sacrifice their own careers, financial stability, and personal well-being to fulfill their vital role. Many veteran caregivers rely on stipends classified as "unearned income," meaning they lose opportunities to save for retirement or contribute to Social Security. Caregivers also face major hurdles re-entering the workforce after years of full-time care giving, further jeopardizing their financial futures.

The Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement Act would help close these gaps by providing professional development, employment assistance, and retirement planning specifically tailored for veteran caregivers. This legislation is critical to ensuring caregivers receive the recognition, support, and financial security they have earned through their service to veterans.

Honored in February

Maj James T. Egan Jr. USMC

3 Feb 1978 (declared; MIA 21 Jan 1966)
Vietnam

PFC Franklin Clovis USA

8 Feb 1968
Vietnam

PFC James P. Loudermilk Jr. USMC

19 Feb 1945
Iwo Jima

CPT William M. Clark USA

23 Feb 1972
Vietnam

This month, we also honor the Four Chaplains who went down with the USAT Dorchester in the North Atlantic on 3 February 1943.

All First Lieutenants, the chaplains helped evacuate the torpedoed ship, offered comfort, and gave their own life jackets to others. They were last seen with their arms linked, praying aloud.



REV. FOX



RABBI GOODE

Rev. George L. Fox
Rabbi Alexander D. Goode
Rev. Clarke V. Poling
Fr. John P. Washington



REV. POLING



FR. WASHINGTON

TREASURER'S REPORT

January 23, 2026

Reminder again that dues are \$35 for members and \$15 for associates and surviving spouses.

Special bank balance is \$4501.05 with no transactions. A portion of this is being held for the Cultural Council (\$2677.58); thus our chapter balance \$1823.47. One CD was renewed in December for \$10,192.48 and the other CD was renewed in January for \$25,734.21. Note we are holding these for the Cultural Council to be used for any improvements/renovations to the WWII Memorial.

Business Bank balance is \$ 9651.28, checking account balance \$9576.28

Revenue in January:

| | |
|-----------|-----------|
| Luncheon | \$1225.00 |
| Dues | \$ 835.00 |
| Donations | \$ 45.00 |

Disbursements in January:

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|
| GoDaddy Fees | Unknown |
| 2088 Luncheon | \$1399.78 |
| 2089 FL Council of Chapters | \$ 75.00 |

Roger Grubic, Treasurer

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Schedule of Upcoming Events

LEGEND: Board Meetings, Member Luncheons, Chapter Events, Events of Interest
Historical Events

- 2 FEB: IRC MOAA BOD Meeting
- 3 FEB: 1100 Four Chaplains Day Ceremony, Riverview Park, Sebastian
- 4 FEB: USO 85th Birthday
- 16 FEB: Presidents Day
- 16 FEB: 1145 WWII Mardi Gras ("Fat Tuesday") Lunch, American Legion Post 39
- 20 FEB: 1130 IRC MOAA Members Luncheon, VB Yacht Club
- 21 FEB: 0700-1400 K of C Golf Tournament, Pointe West, 7500 14th Ln.
- 23 FEB: 1700-2000 Veterans Forum, St. John of the Cross Parish Hall, 7550 26th St.
- 2 MAR: IRC MOAA BOD Meeting
- 20 MAR: 1130 IRC MOAA Members Luncheon, VB Yacht Club



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS
- Vero Beach -

9th Annual

GOLF

TOURNAMENT

SATURDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2026

POINTE WEST COUNTRY CLUB

REGISTRATION

You can also register online at www.knightsforcolumbusgolflinks.com

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PAYMENT

\$5,000 Tournament Sponsor

\$1,500 Sponsor: Bag/Meal/Cannon/Photo/Gummy/Jello

\$1,200 Platinum Sponsor \$175 Individual

\$700 Gold Sponsor or Team \$100 Red Tee Sponsor

\$300 Hole Sponsor \$25 Lunch Only

Donation \$ _____

Visa Mastercard American Express Discover

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SPONSOR NAME _____

CREDIT CARD NUMBER _____

EXP DATE _____ SECURITY CODE _____

SIGNATURE _____




The Indian River Chapter of MOAA and
Next Generation Veterans of Indian River County

Cordially invite you to the next
Indian River County Veterans Forum
Including Dinner, Beer, Wine, and Soft Drinks

Monday, February 23, 2026, 5:00 – 8:00 PM
Doors open at 5:00 PM

Location: St. John of the Cross Parish Hall
7550 26th St. in Vero Beach

The focus of this Forum will be:
Preparation for the 250th Birthday Celebration of America! Bring ideas of
how your organization can participate in this magnificent celebration!

Dinner will be served at 6:00 PM

Pork Loin, Chef's Special Potatoes, Green Beans, Salad, and Dessert
Beer, Wine and Soft Drinks

Please RSVP by February 14 to:

Marc Richard by text 772-532-7599 or [click here](#) to email.

A very special thank you to the Knights of Columbus Assembly 3297 for co-sponsoring this event with us!



The Buccaneer



2026 OFFICERS & BOARD OFFICERS

| | | |
|--|--------------------|--------------|
| President | COL Tony Young | 772-321-2692 |
| 1st Vice President/Programs chair | CPT Marc Richard | 772-532-7599 |
| 2nd Vice President/Legislative Affairs | LCDR Dale Content | 772-713-4025 |
| Secretary | Kim Palazzolo | 954-806-1754 |
| Treasurer | CPT Roger Grubic | 386-589-3157 |
| Membership Chair | LTC Bob Albrecht | 772-257-6678 |
| Chaplain | 1LT John Palazzolo | 954-675-7075 |
| Immediate Past President | MAJ Terry Treat | 703-304-4935 |

2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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| LTC Bob Albrecht | 772-257-6678 |
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| Capt. Maryann Grodin | 240-678-9494 |
| Carolyn Riordan | 239-272-1502 |
| LtCOL Jay Torres | 540-850-5113 |
| LtCOL Jim Rannazzisi | 703-303-2672 |

Indian River County Chapter, in keeping with national and state MOAA bylaws and requirements, is politically nonpartisan. However, our Legislative Affairs Chairperson makes a deliberate effort, per the responsibility of the role, to inform membership of candidates' positions. The Legislative Action Center can be found at moaa.quorum.us.

If you are interested in becoming a member of our chapter, please join us at our monthly luncheon and general business meeting on the third Friday of every month. For more information contact our Membership Chair, Bob Albrecht (ralbrecht1702@comcast.net; 772-257-6678)



MONTHLY CHAPTER LUNCHEON REGISTRATION

IRC-MOAA Luncheon, 3rd Friday of Month
 3601 Rio Vista Blvd.
 Vero Beach Yacht Club, 11:30 AM



West Palm Beach VA Medical Center

At our February 20 luncheon, we will receive an update from Corey Price of the VA. The current status of the new center in Vero Beach will be featured. This is sure to be an informative session, so you will not want to miss it.

Send reservations and payment by 5 PM Wednesday before

MENU CHOICES AT \$25 PER PERSON (please check):

- **Japanese Pork Cutlet** Asian slaw, rice, tonkatsu sauce _____
- **Asian Glazed Chicken Wings** Asian slaw, rice, spicy mayo _____
- **Miso Salmon Chop Chop Salad** napa, iceberg, carrots, bell peppers, cashews, citrus, sesame vinaigrette _____

*IN ADDITION, PLEASE CONSIDER A DONATION TO OUR CHAPTER
 please indicate if you would like it to go to a particular purpose*

_____ amt. \$ _____

Name(s) _____

Select your meal(s). Mail the check payable to IRC-MOAA. Roger Grubic collects the checks.
 Roger Grubic, Treasurer IRC-MOAA 2460 3rd PL SW Vero Beach, FL 32962