

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Dear Members,

July is a month marked by turning points in American military history - moments when the nation's future shifted in profound ways. Among the most significant are the Battle of Gettysburg and the fall of Vicksburg. Each representing a decisive step toward preserving freedom and shaping the world we know today.

The Battle of Gettysburg, fought from July 1 to July 3, 1863, stands as one of the most pivotal engagements of the Civil War. Over three intense days, Union and Confederate armies clashed in what became one of the war's bloodiest battles. The Union victory halted General Robert E. Lee's advance into the North and marked a crucial turning point in the conflict. Gettysburg not only shifted military momentum but also set the stage for President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, which reframed the war's purpose around liberty and equality.

At nearly the same moment, another decisive event unfolded in the West. **On July 4, 1863**, after a grueling siege, the Confederate stronghold of **Vicksburg surrendered** to General Ulysses S. Grant. This victory gave the Union full control of the Mississippi River, effectively splitting the Confederacy in two and tightening the Union's strategic grip on the war's outcome. The twin victories of Gettysburg and Vicksburg marked the beginning of the Confederacy's decline.

These July milestones remind us that history is often shaped by sacrifice, courage, and the enduring quest for freedom. Enjoy your Independence Day and thank you all for your service to our great nation.

I look forward to seeing you at the Pub Crawl on Monday, July 20th and at the MOAA Chapter luncheon on Thursday, July 23rd, Both events are at the Epicenter in Santa Rosa.

Respectfully,

LTC Steve Countouriotis, USAR (Ret) President

NO BOARD MEETING IN JULY

MOAA BOARD of DIRECTORS MEETING

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

Tuesday, August 4, 2026, 11:30am.

Chapter members are always welcome at these meetings

Thursday, JULY 23, 2026

**Buffet Luncheon at the
EPICENTER in Santa Rosa
11:00am ~ Dine at Noon**

Guest Speaker: Eric Walter

Eric comes from Harwich, England, an ancient seaport. As a navy base in WW2, it got more than its share of bombing by the German air force.

At age 16 during the Korean War, Eric joined the Royal Air Force as an apprentice engine fitter. He entered the RAF College Cranwell as a cadet graduating in 1957. Bases w-1965 and the ever present menace of Communist China and Chairman Mao.

There he served included operational bomber units, US Strategic Air Force Headquarters, Omaha, Nebraska during the Cold War. Today, he is talking about his personal experiences while serving as an Aide to RAF General commanding Hong Kong, 1962

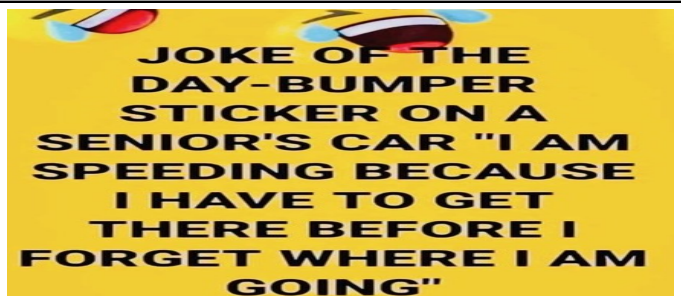
He retired in the rank of Flight Lieutenant (Captain).

Eric is a proud American citizen and lives in Petaluma with his wife Anni.

PLEASE MAKE RESERVATIONS FOR DINING,

By Tuesday, July 21, 2026. this is needed for head counts for meals and making name tags.

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



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, July 20, 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 JULY 2026

General Comments. Our Legislators are still crunching numbers while both houses still need to reconcile the final budget which leaves us in a “wait and see” mode. 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 on 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.R. 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 H.R. 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.

Pregnancy Qualification for TRICARE will be proposed by both chambers. Details remain to be worked out.

Child Care. To provide assistance to qualifying families for financial assistance.

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”. Details were published in earlier *MOAA VOICE*.

California Veteran Advocates, We have bills that need your immediate support.

- **SB-623**, funds the VA home loan program (bill must be included in appropriations by 25 June to prevent funding gap)
- **SB-1407**, follow-on to last year's tax exemption to raise the amount from \$20k to \$40k.
- **AB-2022**, bill would create a major property tax exemption for 100% disabled veteran homeowners in California.
- **SB-1224** directs CalVet to convene a Veteran Emerging Therapies Research Advisory Council to enable federal funding.

Vern McNamee, LTC, USA Retired

Legislative Chair

Redwood Empire Chapter MOAA (CA30)

707 972-3066 ~ vernonmc@mcn.org

Why Men Are Just Happier People!

What do you expect from such simple creatures? Your last name stays put. The garage is all yours. Wedding plans take care of themselves. Chocolate is just another snack. You can never be pregnant. You can wear a white T-shirt to a water park. You can wear NO shirt to a water park.

Car mechanics tell you the truth. The world is your urinal. You never have to drive to another gas station restroom because this one is just too icky. You don't have to stop and think of which way to turn a nut on a bolt. Wrinkles add character. Wedding dress - \$5,000. Tux rental - \$100. People never stare at your chest when you're talking to them, New shoes don't cut, blister, or mangle your feet. One mood all the time. Phone conversations are over in 30 seconds flat. You know stuff about tanks and guns.

A five-day vacation requires only one suitcase. You can open all your own jars. You get extra credit for the slightest act of thoughtfulness. If someone forgets to invite you, he or she can still be your friend. Your underwear is \$8.95 for a three-pack. Two pairs of shoes are more than enough. You almost never have strap problems in public. You are unable to see wrinkles in your clothes. Everything on your face stays its original color. The same hairstyle lasts for years, maybe decades. You only have to shave your face and neck.

You can play with toys all your life. One wallet and one pair of shoes - one color for all seasons. You can wear shorts no matter how your legs look. You can 'do' your nails with a pocket knife. You have freedom of choice concerning growing a mustache... You can do Christmas shopping for 25 relatives on December 24 in 25 minutes.

No wonder men are happier!



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

Buffet Luncheon, Thursday July 23, 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: Berry Salad.

Lunch: Tempura Shrimp, Wild Rice Blend and Sautéed Asparagus

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 can **Pay At Door**).

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

Guest Speaker: Eric Walter ~ British Hong Kong Army (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 have a raffle to help with our funds.
If you are able, please bring a raffle prize

Please
Bring a Raffle Prize
If you are able

The guest speaker at the May luncheon was Joshua Kiser, CalVet Information Officer. Using PowerPoint, he focused on the Veterans' Home in Yountville. Founded in 1884, it currently has 550 residents and 850 staff. The Yountville home is the oldest one of its kind in the country. Three levels of care are offered: Independent, Residential Care (Assisted Living), and Skilled Nursing (Memory Care). The cost for living there is based on monthly income. For Independent Living it's 47 ½%, for Residential care it's 55%, and for Skilled Nursing it's 70%. The requirements for admission are to be a California resident; to be at least fifty-five years old, disabled, or homeless; to have served in the armed forces; to have not received a dishonorable discharge; and to be able to live with others. Many services are offered at the facility including physical therapy, dentistry, podiatry, dieticians, and pharmacy. Scheduled tours of the facility are currently not available. To reach the Admissions Office, call 707-944-4601. For more information go to <https://www.calvet.ca.gov/VetHomes/Pages/Yountville.aspx>. There is also a Facebook page: Veterans Home of California Yountville.



"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.

SEE PUB CRAWL PAGE No. 1

2026 DATES TO REMEMBER

- 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
 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**
 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
- 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

IF ANYONE GETS A
 MESSAGE FROM ME ABOUT
 CANNED MEAT, DON'T
 OPEN IT. IT'S SPAM.



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, July 8th. The lunch cost is \$26.00. Lunch is served promptly at noon. The buffet menu will be Victory House wings, thin spaghetti with pesto, veggie blend, 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.

Come join us for good food, good conversation, and the always popular Bingo.

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

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

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HUMOR



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