

SMART TRAVELER

Published Bi-Monthly for SPECIAL MMILITARY ACTIVE RECREATIONAL TRAVELERS CLUB

2025



The SMART Life "Veterans RVing Together"

SMART is a not-for-profit 501(c)19 Veterans Organization



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A Message from your SMART President

What a great club we have! Since I assumed the presidency of SMART, we have traveled around the country joining in musters wherever we can find them. The members of SMART are warm, fun-loving and inviting. While we have joined in the activities of other organizations, we just haven't found the kind of connection we have found with SMART. The camaraderie we have experienced with SMART members is priceless.

When we first joined SMART in 2014, we were just new retirees who wanted to travel to Alaska in our RV. We didn't want to join any club. We just wanted to go to Alaska. I scoured the internet, looking for a group to travel with. We had never been on a caravan before and knew nothing about them. Fantasy RV, Adventure Caravans, and other companies advertised trips, but they were so expensive. Then I happened upon SMART. Here was a group of fellow veterans to travel with, and at much lesser cost than the other guys. What a great find! We signed up and found ourselves 16th on the waiting list. The year passed and people dropped off the go-list and people entered from the wait-list. Soon, we were on! It proved to be the trip of a lifetime. We made lifelong friends on that caravan and discovered the joy of camping with fellow veterans.

The following year in 2016, we went on the Canadian Maritimes caravan offered by SMART. We had a great adventure and made more lifelong friends. We also went on two caravans with Escapees - one to the Rose Bowl Parade in Pasadena, California, and the other to the Balloon Fiesta in Albuquerque, New Mexico. While we enjoyed those events, we did not make any lasting friendships. There just wasn't that connection we experienced with SMART.

In 2017, SMART's National Muster took place in Rayne, Louisiana. Since we had family in Rayne, we decided to go to it. Again, it was surprising how well we got along with everyone and thoroughly enjoyed the camaraderie. I accepted the nomination for secretary of the Nomads Chapter at that muster. Little did we know the path that participation would take us on.

We connected with friends from the Alaska caravan and together, decided to lead a caravan to Utah in 2019. It was a little scary, having never led a caravan before. However, we had been traveling extensively and just applied what we did for ourselves to a larger group. The caravan went very well, and we found the experience quite enjoyable. Soon, we found ourselves planning and leading more caravans. It was fun! Along with the caravans, we became more involved in the leadership of SMART. Today, I am the National President of the best military travel club around.

SMART is a unique organization. We have attended local musters, regional musters, and national musters. Each time, I watch everyone leave with hands waving out the window and big smiles on their faces, looking forward to the next muster. When we arrive in an area, we pull out our contact list and see who lives in the area that we can visit with. We have more friends now since we started our full-time adventure in 2013 than we ever had living back home.

Added to our shared camping experience is the knowledge that we are helping local communities as well as other veterans. SMART members donate to many charities and veteran organizations. From the five regions and 25 chapters, thousands of dollars in cash along with food, school supplies, and nursing home items are given to charitable organizations every year. We certainly make an impact on the world around us!

If you want to take full advantage of what SMART has to offer, go to the musters. Join a caravan. Interact with your fellow veterans. Enjoy the games, campfires, and potlucks. Then, go tell everyone about it. Let's share our experiences with other veterans. SMART has been around for 42 years. It's time to let the secret out. This is the best military travel club around. Let everybody know about it.

Also, for the club to thrive and grow, SMART needs leadership. I ask the membership to share in that role. It is a wonderful experience to coordinate activities and watch everyone have fun. If you aren't sure of what is required, come to the national muster in September. There will be a class on the roles and responsibilities of chapter presidents and region directors. I welcome you to come and learn about SMART. This club is full of kind, caring, and dedicated people who want to ensure the success of SMART. We will be most successful when everyone contributes their talents in leadership roles. You had an opportunity to be a leader during your military service. Use that experience to join the leaders of SMART. We need you.

Melody C. Thomas
SMART National President



Join us for our

42nd SMART

National Muster



“Two Step to TEXAS”

September 15th—19th, 2025

Come and join in all the
FUN! FOOD! & EXCITEMENT!

*We have great Tours lined up, with transportation provided so
you want have to drive.*

Sign up for the National & Tours online at:

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Mineola, TEXAS Civic Center RV Park

Or call Headquarters

800—354 – 7681





For SMART it looks like 2025 will be another great year. We have new Caravans advertised, National Muster, Regional Musters and many Chapter Musters for all to enjoy and participate. Check out the SMART Website www.smartrving.org for all the activities. Additionally I would like to challenge everyone to recruit a new member into SMART, this is your opportunity to showcase what we are about and the fun and comradery we share. In closing I wish you all the best of this New Year. Travel safe **David Weis SMART 1st V P**



Happy New Year! Mary and I finished out the travel year with the annual Christmas Muster with the Alamo SMART Chapter in Bandera TX, Cowboy Capital of the World. Enjoying 'cool your own steak' night at the famous 11th Street Cowboy Bar where great fun was had by all. Great country music and dancing. Two nights later, 22 of us went out to dinner and there is where the recruiting began. Yes, wherever you are, always make sure you have your poll and bait to go fishing. We didn't practice what we preach but a customer heard us talking about vets and RV's and they came to us and asked; What is SMART? We're both vets and RV full time. So always be ready with an application in your pocket or purse. A Traveler and pamphlet handy in you vehicle for those times like we had. You never know. They are very interested and will sign up after the first of the year. All this being said, if you haven't already received your 'I Got One' pin, make next year your goal to 'get one'. If each member did so, what a great shot in the arm for SMART that would be. Happy New Year !

Richard D. Palmer SMART IMT Past President

Attention all Chapters, please check out the campground page on our website for specials at any Blue Water Property.

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Active and retired military save **10-20%** at over 55 Blue Water campgrounds.
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Thermal Wine Mugs w/ SMART logo \$12

SMART Decals 9" \$4, 6" \$2, 3" \$1

Navy Blue SMART Mens Cap \$12

Car Tags \$5

NEW " ARE You a VETERAN" Stickers \$2

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SmartRVing.org



2025 SMART Caravan Adventures



Venice of America Caravan

May 23– 29 2025

7 Day In Place Caravan

Arriving 23 and departing 30 May 2025,

Single \$825 Couple \$1250 Guest \$430

Wagon Masters: Kathy and John Steinbauer jfs9840@gmail.com will lead this “In Place” caravan in famous Ft Lauderdale. With over 3000 miles of canals, and rivers, you will learn the history and see the modern wonders of this historic and famous city. The city was founded in 1838 as a Seminole Indian trading post on the banks of the New River which is now the center of tourism. You will see the homes of the rich and famous and their mega yachts when you cruise the new river to the Atlantic Ocean on the Carrie B paddle wheeler. Sightseeing will include Naval Air Station Fort Lauderdale where Squadron 19 was launched and lost over the Bermuda Triangle, now a WW II Museum. On the New River water taxi you will visit the river walk and dine and tour several attractions.



For adventure, you will take an airboat ride at Hollywood Park in the Everglades seeing wildlife and watching the Gator Boys wrestle alligators.

A day trip will go to Key Largo and the Everglades National Park to tour the only remaining cold war Nike 9 missile base.

There will be time to visit the world famous Seminole Hard Rock Casino, Margaritaville Beach Resort, National Dive Museum, and the famous Elbo Room on Ft Lauderdale Beach.

If interested, go deep sea fishing, snorkeling, scuba diving, and many more interesting and fun activities on your own. We will be camping at beautiful CB Smith County Park near Ft Lauderdale.

This caravan will be packed full of included tours and meals with time to venture on your own and will be limited to 16 registrants with cost to be determined.

Early arrival and departure may be available, contact Wagon Master John 210.386.9018 or email, if interested, ASAP since sites are limited. **We have a few openings so join us!**



2025 ALASKAN ADVENTURE

Wagon Masters David & Jackie Weis dweis74@hotmail.com

Assistant Wagon Masters Greg & Angela Vassallo

We're going to visit, the Walter Wright Pioneer Village, Ft Nelson heritage Museum, the Northern Lights Center, Yukon Transportation Museum, Train Ride, Boat Ride, Factory Tour, Musk OX Farm, and much more.



[Go sign up online and get on the go list...www.SmartRVing.org](http://www.SmartRVing.org)

\$10,750 Couple \$7,700 single Guest \$ 3600

Trip of a Lifetime and We have a few openings



Planes, Trains, and Automobiles, and Ships Caravan

June 16th thru July 31st Price

Single \$4,450 Couple \$5,950 Guest \$1,700

Come explore the impact of various transportation modes on American culture.

Wagonmasters Melody & Paul Thomas
thomas4smart@gmail.com

Tail Gunners Johnny & Linda Leggett
johnny_leggett@hotmail.com

Caravan is full get on the standby list!



2025 Louisiana Caravan Laissez Le Bon Temps Rouler!

(Pronounced LAY ZAY LE BONE TUM RULE EH)

Dates March 25th to April 25, 2025

(Let the good times roll!) Louisiana Food and Music Caravan

Wagon Masters: Johnny and Linda Leggett (318) 243-4084
johnny_leggett@hotmail.com

Assistant Wagonmasters: Paul and Melody Thomas (631) 258-6087
thomas4smart@gmail.com

Couple \$4,600 Single \$3,500 Guest \$1,500

Caravan is Full, Get on the Standby List!



Please go to our website to get a full description of each caravan

www.SmartRVing.org

Recruiting and Retention Corner by Brian Bolger

I hope all of you enjoyed Happy Holidays with all of your family and friends! At the moment I am recovering from a visit from Arthur-Itis (Arthritis) from replacing all 5 of our coach batteries, winterizing, and a variety of ankle-biter maintenance issues I put off for too long.



Whether you are in warmer places enjoying the RV lifestyle with other mobile friends or dreaming of your 2025 travel itinerary to all those wonderful places, take a couple of minutes and think about all the new friends you met this year during your travels. It only takes a minute or two to send a text or email to let them know you were thinking of them, and enjoyed their company during your (Caravan/Muster/Rally/Luncheon/Coffee during refueling, etc).

Was your Chapter lucky enough to gain members? Please make sure to drop them a quick note to congratulate them on joining and looking forward to seeing them at the next muster/caravan/luncheon. Recruiting new members is a challenge, but only one side of the coin: retention is the other side of that coin. Finally, I challenge Chapter officers to look at the new membership list. If a new SMART member joins, please reach out and invite them to join your organization as well. Many new members do not understand the chapter structure and do not understand enough about the organization to ask in-depth questions.

If we all jumped into the Way Back Machine with Mr. Peabody (remember THAT cartoon?) we would find ourselves back at our 1st day in our 1st duty station: new and different EVERYTHING. First Battle buddies/shipmates often turned out to be lifelong friends. Lots of similarities for those who are either on the verge of retiring, have recently retired, or have been retired for a while AND have transitioned into the RV lifestyle.

The institutional knowledge this organization has for everything from travel hacks to cooking, to maintenance tips calls out to be shared with newcomers. Imagine a novice 's trip to an RV show with someone who has been through several rigs of all types: what a benefit of knowledge that translates into a variety of benefits! If you have pictures or video that you would like posted to the SMART Instagram page, please feel free to send it to me.

I am the administrator for that page and am looking for material! We are at [Instagram.com/smartrvclub/](https://www.instagram.com/smartrvclub/) Looking forward to seeing you in 2025!!

Brian (B2) Bolger R&R Coordinator



Join the I-GOT-ONE campaign! Anyone who recruits one new person to SMART membership will receive this special pin.

These are awarded during the ceremonies at **SMART National Musters**. Let's see a long line of awardees in Mineola, Texas!

CHAPTER AND REGION NEWS



AT-LARGE REGION Jackie Weis Region Director
NOMADS,
SMART FMCA , STAR, WIMS



“Not all who wander are lost.”

This is an often-used phrase for RV travelers who just seem to move aimlessly across this great country. The **SMART NOMADS** fit into this group. As a chapter without a geographic base, we travel from location to location, seeing the sites and enjoying the adventure. Many of our members live full time in their RVs and enjoy moving often. Some of us use a ‘home’ base to complete annual doctor visits, etc., others, have a home base but are on the road the majority of the year. We make new friends as we meet people in our travels and also, meet up with others from our NOMADS Chapter as we travel. We meet up once a year before, during and after the SMART NATIONALS. Additionally, we meet our fellow NOMADS as we travel, when we are close and schedule a smaller get together. In 2025 we are trying a new concept and plan to meet a few days just before the REGIONAL Musters. Our first activity scheduled will be held in Carthage, MO the Friday through Sunday before the CENTRAL REGIONAL. Check out our muster information that is posted on the SMARTRVING.org website. This is to give those in a region who cannot attend the NATIONAL gathering, to get together with fellow NOMADS. Additionally, NOMADS have started a Facebook group called SMART NOMADS and everyone can join. Sign up and stay in touch with other NOMADS’ activities as we travel across and around this great country. If you are a veteran, traveling in an RV come along and join our group. Each new member provides a unique knowledge and experience that adds to the enjoyment of the travel. **Joe Padberg Chapter President**



EAST REGION: Lonnie Alley Region Director,
Assistant RD: Bill Hastings
Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, Massachusetts,
Rhode Island, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware,
DC, Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina, South
Carolina, Georgia, Florida



As the newly appointed Regional Director following several years of LeRoy Armacost’s leadership, I am honored to serve. I look forward to the next two years of growth and great comradery. The region hosted the 2024 National Muster in Charleston South Carolina with great success. We featured games, learning seminars, catered meals and most of all, a chance to renew old friendships and form new ones.

With the assistance of the chapters in the region, I look forward to growth by recruiting new members and continuing participation of current members. If you are not a current chapter member, I encourage you to join a chapter near you. You will find chapters are welcoming and musters enjoyable. Chapter membership is a great way to make and keep great friendships. Membership is also the best way to maintain friendships made during SMART Caravans. If you haven’t tried a caravan yet, you are really missing out on a great experience. Have a GREAT YEAR and welcome to the club. Travel Safe and enjoy wherever you go.

Lonnie Alley, Regional Director



The Florida Sunshine Chapter has recently experienced a much welcome increase in membership. Our members come from many locales in Florida and Georgia. Earlier this year the chapter merged with the Drifters Chapter of southeast Georgia, and in December the members of the Florida Roadrunners joined us as well. Hopefully this will allow us to have larger attendance at our musters. Our Christmas muster was held at Okefenokee Pastimes Campground in Folkston, GA and it was a resounding success. There were 20 members present which was wonderful! It was hosted by the Kerners with lots of food, fellowship, a Christmas gift exchange which was hilarious, and games. We played Michigan Rummy, Poker, 31 Cards, Card Bingo, and Hand & Foot, and we laughed and talked A LOT! It was great having such a large turn-out, but we'd love to have even more. Check us out ! **Sarah Colt**



Tri-State Travelers Chapter

*Hello We are now at the quarter-century mark. How time does fly. Especially when you are camping with a SMART chapter. Our chapter is the **Tri-State Travelers**. It includes NC, SC and GA, but occasionally camping in VA and FL. SMART covers the entire country with many chapters and individual caravans to specific locations across the land. We are mostly retired military members who enjoy a comradery every time we get together. We hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and New Year.*

Our chapter is looking forward to seeing new campgrounds this year, with venues to explore and new members to get to know.

Our first muster will be in March. We're expecting old and new friends to enjoy the mountain air and welcome spring. Our final muster of 2024 was at Myrtle Beach, SC in November where we had many members having a good time with mini golf, evening games, raffles, a white elephant exchange and lots of great food. All of our musters are listed on the website under Tri-State Travelers.

Please check us out and meet some fabulous people! During all of our musters we have a potluck dinner with a variety of delicious dishes to choose from. We also plan a dinner out one night to a local restaurant. We have evening games and, weather permitting, outdoor games during the day.

If you are in the southeast area of the country, our musters are in March, May, July, September and November. The National Muster is usually in September and it's a great time to catch up with friends we see only once a year. Explore the website for detailed information. Any member or prospective member is welcome to join us. Can't wait to meet new campers.

Gail Alley, Newsletter Editor, Secretary and Treasurer



What makes the **Goldcoasters** a successful chapter? Planning, and thinking outside the box! Our December Muster was held at CB Smith County Park. We played Bean Bag Baseball and Card bingo outdoors. We enjoyed relaxing social hours and meals out in the cooler Florida weather.



We toured the Naval Air Station where George H.W. Bush was stationed! They had a unique device called a hedgehog; a multi-barrel anti-submarine mortar launching weapon of British origin. The launched explosive ordinances only exploded if they hit a sub. Otherwise the ordinance could be recovered and redeployed!

We took the Carrie B paddle-wheeler tour of the intercoastal waterway featuring homes of the rich and famous. Originally the lots sold for \$6000 but today's lot retails for the low starting price of \$350,000 – 10 million dollars! Rose Kennedy, Johnny Weismiller, Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz,



Sonny and Cher, Gloria Vanderbilt, as well as founders of Wells Fargo, Radio Shack, Wendy's and Seagram's lived here. Miami Vice was filmed in a home here. Many original homes are being torn down to build large modern homes. As we traveled the waterway, the USS Annapolis Nuclear powered attack submarine surfaced in the harbor! What a surprise! Or did Kathy Steinbauer plan for that? Needless to say, police boats turned all watercraft away from the sub.

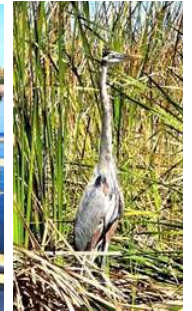
We toured one of the oldest homes in the area - Stranahan House. It was the 1901 home of Fort Lauderdale pioneers Frank and Ivy Stranahan. It served as a trading post and later was converted into a residence for the Stranahan's making it the oldest surviving structure in Broward County. Frank traded with the Seminole Indians and was known as a fair businessman. Ivy taught the tribal children.

We toured the Flamingo Botanical Gardens established in 1927. They are home to 15 "Champion" trees - the largest trees of their species in Florida. Specialized areas included over 3,000 rare, exotic orchids, native plants and trees. The Gardens are a wildlife sanctuary - home to permanently injured Florida natives such as alligators, bobcats, eagles, otters, panthers, peacock, and of course, flamingos!

Coral Castle built by 26-year-old Edward Leedskalnin, an immigrant from Latvia whose fiancée rejected him just before their wedding! He spent 28+ years building this structure with coral he mined on site with primitive tools and pulleys. The stones weight keeps them together, connected with precision allowing no light to pass through joints. Lastly. We enjoyed an airboat ride through the Everglades learning about the waterways and animals calling this home. We ended the day with an alligator show. All gators have been relocated from ponds where they are a nuisance to pet owners.



Our muster ended with a cookout at the Steinbauers home Our next muster is right around the corner in January at Manatee Hammock County Park, Titusville FL, can't wait!



One final note: John and Kathy Steinbauer are going to be the wagon masters for the Venice of America Caravan in May. Sign up and enjoy some of our fun locations and many more! You won't be disappointed!

Tony Mason, President, South Florida Goldcoasters



**CENTRAL REGION: Nita Taylor Region Director,
Assistant: Terry Johnson**

**Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana,
Ohio, Missouri, Kentucky, Arkansas, Tennessee, Louisiana,
Mississippi, Alabama, NW Florida Panhandle**



2025 Central Region Muster

Come celebrate Mother's Day with us!

Where: Coachlight RV Park, Carthage, MO.

Make your reservations with the campground at 417-358-7444.

Early arrivals will arrive on May 9, 2025 and we will celebrate Mother's Day on Sunday May 11th with a potluck dinner. The meat will be provided by the Region, and we are challenging the guys to fix the sides!

Come join the fun!

Opening ceremonies will be on Monday, May 12th with closing on Friday, May 16th. Departure will be Saturday, May 17th .

We are looking for volunteers to help us with the organization details, please contact Nita Taylor, Central Region Director, if you can donate your special talents.

Email is philnita.taylor@gmail.com,

or cell number 501-250-6585.

Registration details are on the SMART website and watch for updates for all the happenings!!

SmartRVing.org





Hello from Cajun land!

“Let it Snow, Let it Snow, Let it Snow, Somewhere Else.” Love that song. It doesn’t snow here often. Maybe it will snow enough to stick to the ground every few years. This is not the place to come if you want a white Christmas. It is the place to come if you want to get outdoors and enjoy yourselves.

The Cajuns have planned several musters in 2025. We will have our 25th Annual Anniversary Y’all Come muster the week after Easter. We are expecting 35-40 rigs. There will be food and activities every day including tours, games, flag retirement ceremonies and more. This one is filling up fast, so do not procrastinate. If you want to come, you should make reservations NOW!

The Y’all Come will be followed by an informal Louisiana Saturday Night muster where you can kick off your shoes and throw them on the floor. We will have a potluck meal with Louisiana music. We will attend Cruisin’ the Coast, which is a huge car event on Hwy 90 along the Mississippi Gulf coast. About 10,000 cool old cars ride up and down the highway for about a week.

So, if you are sitting in Yankee land with snow up to your hubcaps, you may want to think about Louisiana with cheap campgrounds and no snow.

Louisiana has lots to see and do. You can visit a full-scale oil rig museum or an accordion factory. You can drive on the longest bridge in the US and visit the oldest man-made structure in the Americas only in Louisiana. You can dance to zydeco bands at breakfast and eat gumbo, jambalaya, crawfish, boudin, and other Cajun specialties for other meals.

The bank commercial asks, “What’s in your Wallet?” I’m asking, “What’s on your bucket list?” See you down the road! **Johnny Leggett**



2024 was a banner year for the **Rocky Tops Chapter of Tennessee**. After much planning we finally were re-established in May with our first muster held near Nashville. Attended by 8 RVs fun was had by all, music provided by the RV Park along with a wonderful campfire on our last evening. Officers were installed and the muster was deemed a success. We had a great group of Rocky Tops members at the National in Ladson SC, where we received an Outstanding Chapter Award. We also had 3 RVs at the Central Regional muster. Our final muster was held at the beginning of October, in conjunction with the Ohio Chapter, and was attended by several members. We even recruited a couple who happened to be staying at the RV Park. We donated to 2 different charitable organizations and picked up a total of 8 members year wide. We are looking forward to having another successful year in 2025 with 2 musters scheduled, a Central Regional to help set up and a National Muster for 2026 to help arrange. Our members devoted their time and efforts to having a great year and we look forward to their continued participation for another wonderful year. **Reese Burke Chapter President**



SMART COOKBOOKS ON SALE

A collection of SMART members recipes for Camping. Appetizers, Beverages Deserts, Hors d’ oeuvres, Potlucks, and more....

On Sale \$5.00

Call or email HQ today and get yours for your next muster!

800-354-7681 or email



2024 was a very busy year! **The MS Magnolias** had four musters starting in February at Sun Roamer's RV Resort (Picayune, MS), then in April at the Hollywood Casino Campground (Bay St Louis, MS), then a joint muster in May with the White Sands Panhandlers at Anchors Away RV Resort (Foley, AL). We finished in the fall celebrating our 20th Anniversary of the chartering of the MS Magnolias at Parker's Landing (Biloxi, MS) and finally our year-end annual Christmas muster in December at Sun Roamers RV Resort (Picayune, MS).

In 2025, we have four musters scheduled to date starting February 17-22 at the Hollywood Casino Campground (Bay St Louis) followed by the Central Regional muster May 9-17 (Carthage, MO) then the SMART National Muster Sept 15-20 (Mineola, TX) culminating once again at Sun Roamers Nov 30- Dec 5 (Picayune, MS) with our annual Christmas muster. Currently, our Muster Master is working diligently to schedule at least two more musters for this year, which will result in another busy, fun-filled year!

The first thing our members learn to enjoy is the camaraderie of the group. We all enjoy time spent together on tours, crafts, playing games, playing cards, cooking fabulous meals or eating out together. We are all truly friends with a common cause first and foremost. In addition to the festivities, we collect money for the Fisher House in Biloxi, MS via the 50/25/25 ticket raffle, individual donations and the silent auction. On April 3, 2024, we presented a check to Fisher House Biloxi for \$1,200 collected in 2023. At this present time, we have \$703 allocated for Fisher House and plan on that number increasing at our annual Christmas muster, which is currently underway at this writing. We gladly welcome anyone to join us and share our camaraderie and see what we're really about. Hope to see you soon! **Bob**

Comeaux, Chapter President of the MS Magnolias



The **Ohio Valley Chapter** of SMART was founded in September 1988 at Fort Campbell, KY. Thirteen initial members ranging from Tennessee to Michigan gathered to further SMART and camping among military veterans. Now at 37 years young, the chapter still has members from Tennessee to Michigan and enjoys sharing the benefits of camping with other vets from all services in the Ohio River Valley.

2025 is looking to be an exciting year. Our first muster will be in Georgetown, Kentucky at the Whispering Hills RV Resort in April 2025. Besides looking at the main products of Kentucky (horse racing, bourbon and history) we will be planning our chapter support of the 2026 National to be held in Elkhart, Indiana. In May, we plan to attend the Central Region muster in Carthage, Missouri. In September, the 2025 National will be held in Mineola, Texas. We always plan a mini caravan to bring in chapter rigs and friends and arrive at the National as a group. Then in October, the Rocky Top chapter is hosting a muster in Crossville, Tennessee and we work with the Rocky Tops to conduct this muster. More travels may be planned in preparation of the 2026 National after the planning discussed at the Regional. All the details for these musters are available on the Chapter Webpage so look us up. Most of our musters are within 150 miles of the Ohio River and last for 4 days. We do venture outside that range to do joint musters with adjacent chapters like the Rocky Tops. But anyone in SMART or who is interested in SMART is welcome to come to our musters at any time. We love members from other parts of the country to join us and share stories and ideas. So keep your eyes on the Central Region and Ohio Valley Websites for more details and come spend some time with us.

Ed Pate Chapter President



**MIDWEST REGION: Joe Noonan Region Director,
Montana, North Dakota, Wyoming, South Dakota, Nebraska,
Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas**



Good day Special Military Active Recreational Travelers. I am Joe Noonan, the Muster Chair for our 2025 National Muster, the Midwest Regional Director, and the President for the ALAMOS in San Antonio.

We genuinely enjoy being a member of SMART and you can too. Meeting new people and traveling the country is a wonderful way to see the United States. There are so many things to see, and I do not know if my wife and I will ever see everything on our bucket list in this country.

We have the Musters planned for next year to include National and all members, spouses and families are invited. We also conducted our Chapter meeting to discuss issues relevant to all our members. One issue of significant importance was recruiting. All of us are responsible for recruiting members to increase our veteran and spouse numbers. Our meeting was adjourned, and we had another meeting regarding the National Muster in Mineola, TX, next year.

The 2025 National Muster in Mineola is in the planning stages. We have exciting tours planned based on members' input, seminars, games, meetings to discuss issues of importance to everyone, delicious food we have already sampled cooked by the chef at the Mineola Civic Center, and free time to enjoy the local area. We have many volunteers to ensure the Muster is the best one we have ever had. We can always use additional volunteers, so please assist us in any way you can. For further information please contact Richard Palmer, the Muster Master for the 2025 National Muster at richpal1@swbell.net or me at joe.noonan@sbcglobal.net. Thank you and we are looking for a great Muster when you Two Step to Texas.

Joe Noonan MW Region Director



The Alamo Chapter had a blast at our recent Christmas Muster held in Bandera, Tx. December 4-9, 2024. Known as the "Cowboy Capital of the World", this is one of our favorite RV parks in Texas, and we've held many a muster here over the years! Festivities began with Grill-your-own-Steak night at the Cowboy Bar, then stayed to listen and dance to the live country music. Throughout the week, we enjoyed so much wonderful food, fun games, and great camaraderie.

At every muster, all members pitch in to help the hosts, making for light work and more fun time. Our activity schedule was packed. We had lots of laughs in our new game obsession; a fierce competition of Ladder Ball...Gentlemen VS. Ladies. I won't say who won, but it wasn't the guys. The Alamo ladies had a great time at our "Ladies Luncheon with Santa." At the Christmas party, we feasted on a lovely catered meal, played trivia games for prizes, sang Christmas Carols, then had our Gift Exchange. You know, the one where you "steal from your friends" all in good





fun; everyone left happy with the holiday presents they received.

We love that everywhere we go, people ask about our group because they see we have something special going on. The Hasley's invited neighbors in the RV park to join us for meals and activities, and at the local restaurant, we had D.



Weis, H. DiGiovanni, R. McHenry, and R. Palmer all putting their recruiting skills to work on a couple who saw our large group and wanted to know more about us.

We hope that your Holiday season was full of joy, and we wish our fabulous SMART friends all the best in this New Year.

Mary Palmer, Alamo Smart Secretary/Newsletter editor



The members of the **SMART Texans** gathered together in Mineola, TX, October 24-26 for their Annual Muster and Biannual Election. A pizza dinner was provided on Thursday night for members followed by an evening of socializing. On Friday evening, muster attendees were treated to meal prepared by Fusion in the Woods, who will be the caterer for the 2025 National Muster. A dinner of savory meatloaf, candied carrots, mashed potatoes, rolls and dessert was served. The food was amazing! After dinner the Texans Annual Meeting was held with the following new officers being elected: Jan Schnoor, President; Rickey Hasley, Vice President; Art Schnoor, Treasurer/Secretary. Saturday evening the group car pooled to Paredes Family Restaurant where attendees enjoyed the restaurants expansive buffet or ordered from the menu.



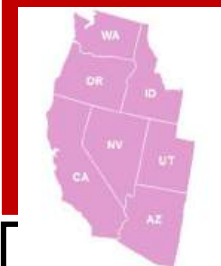
Two weeks after the muster in Mineola, TX, 12 members of the Texans traveled to Branson, Mo to join in on the Branson Caravan for 10 days. The caravan members participated in the Veterans Day Parade with decorated vehicles and members from SMART walked the parade route handing out our informational SMART handbooks and



SMART membership applications. The entire SMART group in the parade were greeted throughout the parade by cheering, clapping and saluting the participants.

While in Branson, the caravan attendees attended many great shows, ate a lot of great food, had a great time touring the many other sights of Branson and just enjoying each others company.

Jan Schnoor, Chapter President



WESTERN REGION : Mike Foley, Region Director,

Assistant: Greg Vassallo

**Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho,
California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona,**



Happy New Year Everyone!

Golden Gate has a **Western Regional Muster** coming up in March. Please check the SMART website and RSVP soon if you plan to attend. Mike Foley Director Western Region



We are the **Arizona Tumbleweeds Chapter of S*M*A*R*T**. Our Chapter was awarded the Outstanding Chapter for 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024. Most of our chapter members are based in and around Central Arizona and always do combined musters with the Southern Arizona chapter, called the Arizona Roadrunners, which are based in the Tucson area. That way we get to see most of Arizona during our muster season, which is mid-October to mid-April. As many of us are sunbirds who escape the Arizona summers, as opposed to snowbirds who escape northern winters for sunny and warmer Arizona. Most of our musters are three to four days in length. Generally, we share heavy hors d'oeuvres our first night and have a potluck dinner or go to a local restaurant one night. Potluck breakfast is on the morning of our chapter meeting. Members will research the state to find something of interest in the local area for us to explore. Right now, we only have two musters set up for 2025. January at The River Sands RV Resort in Quartzite, AZ starting the 17th and departing on the 20th. February at the Casino del Sol in Tucson starting the 23rd and departing on the 26th.

If anyone is planning on being in those areas on those dates, stop by and join us. We only have

3 chapters in the Western Region, one in California and two in Arizona. Please click on the S*M*A*R*T website, smartrving.org and look for the Arizona Tumbleweeds Chapter Muster calendar. We'd love to see you at our next camping adventure. Wishing you safe travels on the road.

Rich Caruso, Chapter President of Arizona Tumbleweeds



The **Arizona Roadrunners** and Arizona Tumbleweeds Chapters hold joint musters because the chapters support and assist each other. Our joint musters are designed so that participants can do fun activities on their own when no official activity is scheduled. Even when one might think a locale may not have much to offer, a little research often finds fun things to do.

In January the chapters had a joint muster at a new park, the River Sands RV Resort in Ehrenburg, Arizona. The park graciously let us use a nice space in their clubhouse for our potlucks, happy hours, and meetings so we could get out of the cold. We had a fun lunch at a Mexican restaurant across the Colorado River in Blythe, CA. Some of us visited the fascinating Blythe Intaglios nearby or went birdwatching along the river. We will be here again January 17-20, 2025.

For the first time the chapters had a muster at the Casino del Sol in Tucson in February. This gave people a chance to visit the myriad of local attractions, as well as indulging in any gambling fun. We will be here again February 23-26, 2025.

The **Western Regional** was held March 25-28 in Casa Grande, AZ at the lovely Encore Fiesta Grande RV Resort. We had 17 rigs, some of whom had just come out of a Rocky Point, Mexico campout. Amongst other activities, we had a rousing game of corn hole baseball and a wonderful performance by artists "Forever Everly" covering the Everly Brothers' music.

After the summer hiatus the AZ Roadrunners and Tumbleweeds rejoined near historic and quirky Bisbee staying at the quiet Double Adobe RV Park in McNeal, October 13-17. The gals went shopping in the interesting antique and gift shops that line the main street. Diane Duffy-Pepperell taught the ladies a fun class making shell and wood wind chimes. The guys enjoyed a delicious breakfast at the iconic Bisbee Breakfast Club. The highlight of this muster was seeing a comet every night overhead.

The chapters had a fun joint muster Nov 13-16 in Picacho, AZ at the beautiful Picacho KOA. We had lots of relaxing time around the campfires, had a delicious "Friendsgiving" meal, had a nice Mexican dinner at a local restaurant. Some folks visited the Dwarf Car Museum in nearby Maricopa, some went to view local petroglyphs, and some went to the Rooster Cogburn Ostrich Ranch to feed and pet donkeys, goats, stingrays, tortoises, rabbits, ducks, chickens (and, of course, the ostriches).

Both chapters had their own holiday luncheons in December. It seemed like the hot topic at the AZ Roadrunners was the frequency and repair costs of RV mechanical problems!

We always welcome visiting SMART members from other parts of the country, so if you're going to be in Arizona outside of the summertime, check out our future musters on the SMART website. Feel free to contact the presidents of each chapter beforehand. We'd love to have you join us!

Contributed by Jeannie Greven, #14660



S M A R T

Application for Membership



Applicant Information

LAST name:	First:	Initial:	Spouse/Companion:
Mailing address:	City:	State:	Zip:
Home phone: () —	Cell phone: () —	Email address:	

SMART is a 501(c)(19) Not- for-profit Veterans Organization and required to have the following information on each member

Branch of service:	Year entered service:	Year service ended:
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Name Badge Info

Instructions: On the first line, enter your preferred first & last name. The second line is optional and may contain what you want others to know about you, e.g., city, state or branch of service or chapter names you belong too.

Note: A member badge comes with the New Member Packet, and your co-member's badge may be purchased for \$8.50.

Member first & last:	Spouse/Companion first & last:
Member second line:	Spouse/Companion second line:

Membership Fees

Member	Who referred you?	His/her name:	His/her SMART #:
Veteran: Active, retired, or honorably discharged from US Military Service, or as a commissioned officer of NOAA or USPHS; or military service of Canada, NATO/SEATO member nation.			
Circle all that apply to the member: Active Retired Reserve/Guard Honorably Discharged Veteran Recipient of Medal of Honor Canadian Veteran NOAA USPHS NATO/SEATO			
Annual dues: \$65 (plus one time \$15 new member packet)			\$80.00

Spouse/Companion

With privileges of membership for spouse \$30: (Spouse/Companion)

If Spouse is also a Veteran, please fill in information about Spouse below:
(Must include required 501(c)(19) not-for-profit information below)

Branch of Service: Year entered service: Year service ended:

Your Spouse or Companion will want to join with you to have National voting rights, the ability to hold the position up to Regional director, and became eligible to win door prize drawings.	Spouse/Comp \$30	30.00
	His/her badge \$8.50	8.50
	Total Enclosed	118.50

"I certify with honor that the information I have provided is true and correct."

Applicant signature:	Date:
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----- Cut here: Retain for your records -----



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