



## FALCONS LANDING CHAPTER



# THE FALCON FLYER

## SEPTEMBER 2023



*THE FALCON FLYER is published quarterly by the Falcons Chapter of MOAA and distributed to all members, as well as placed on the Falcons Landing MOAA website, [www.falconsmoaa.org](http://www.falconsmoaa.org) . POC for the newsletter is the Editor, COL (Ret) Bob Manning, [Rmanning@aol.com](mailto:Rmanning@aol.com).*

# SUPPORT OF MOAA NATIONAL

MOAA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit veterans' association dedicated to maintaining a strong national defense and ensuring our nation keeps its commitments to currently serving, retired, and former members of the uniformed services and their families and survivors. MOAA's greatest mission is "to improve the lives of those who serve and their families, which is achieved largely through the tireless advocacy efforts taking place in our nation's capital." Support MOAA's advocacy efforts by going to [www.moaa.org/takeaction](http://www.moaa.org/takeaction).

The Falcons Landing Chapter is one of more than 400-plus local organizations affiliated with National MOAA and is a nonpartisan, nonprofit veterans' association. Our chapter provides programs to support those who are serving; those who have served; and those who have survived, while placing special focus on community support.

We support the national organization through support of legislative priorities and "Advocacy in Action" and are active in our community supporting three JROTC programs, helping recovering and needy veterans, supporting surviving spouses in our continuing care facilities and providing speakers to community service organizations.

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# CHAPTER PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## SEPTEMBER 2023

And so, despite the high temperatures outside, summer is on the wane and fall is quickly approaching. Our sports watching and, in some cases, participation is changing to the baseball playoffs, college and pro football, and of course my favorite -- fall golf and the invocation of the coveted "leaf rule." Most importantly, the autumnal season in Virginia brings an abundance of beautiful color, cooler air, renewed energy in our daily lives, and renewed commitment to our personal and professional goals. And so, it is with our MOAA Chapter – new challenges and new ideas to further accomplish our mission in supporting those who are serving, those who have served, and those who have survived!

At our Gathering in July, during which we were again educated and entertained by COL Dick Polin USA (Ret), our guest baseball guru (see the Gathering article elsewhere in this Newsletter), we paid special tribute to Bill Hilsman who is stepping down as Director of the Chapter's Gathering program. How fitting it was that Bill's final Gathering was on his favorite pastime – baseball. Bill has been conceiving, arranging, orchestrating, and hosting the MOAA-sponsored monthly Gatherings at Falcons Landing since 2015 – over 80 Gatherings by our count. As a special gift for his extraordinary service to our Chapter, Bill was presented a special book, researched and assembled by Bob Manning, containing the flyers, pictures, and summaries of all his Gatherings over these many years.

Our special event in October is fast approaching. At the invitation of CDR Linc Smith USNR (Ret), President of the Virginia Council of Chapters (VCOC), we are hosting VCOC's Biennial Luncheon and Ceremony here at Falcons Landing on October 25<sup>th</sup>. Planning is well underway for this event which will include attendance by other Virginia MOAA Chapter Presidents, state and federal dignitaries and legislators who strongly support MOAA and veterans' issues, and members of our MOAA National leadership staff headquartered locally in Arlington, VA. We will report fully on this special event in our next Newsletter.

Finally, I am happy to report that Chapter members manned a Falcons Landing MOAA Chapter table at the PACT Act Resource Event at the NOVA campus in Sterling on Saturday, August 5<sup>th</sup>. We now have a much better understanding of what the PACT Act is and how we (Falcons Landing MOAA Chapter members) might individually benefit from it. While the PACT Act came about mostly because of military members' exposure to toxic "burn pits" in Iraq, the Act also addresses exposure to Agent Orange in Vietnam. What is new in the PACT Act is that Vietnam veterans no longer must prove exposure to Agent Orange to receive monetary benefits. Eligibility is granted if the veteran has simply served in Vietnam during the period 1962-1975. This is new and opens the door for many Vietnam veterans to request and receive benefits. For those of you who are Vietnam veterans, I strongly encourage you contact the Virginia Department of Veterans Services for help in determining if you should file a claim and for expert assistance in filing a claim.



*Never Stop Serving  
Phil Walsh, President*



***THE FALCONS LANDING CHAPTER  
OF MOAA WILL ACTIVELY  
SUPPORT***

**THOSE WHO  
ARE SERVING**

**THOSE WHO  
HAVE SERVED**

**THOSE WHO  
HAVE  
SURVIVED**

**MISSION  
STATEMENT**



**FALCONS LANDING CHAPTER**  
**MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA**  
20540 FALCONS LANDING CIRCLE, #P1  
POTOMAC FALLS, VIRGINIA 20165



**FACT SHEET 2023**

[The Military Officers Association of America \(MOAA\)](#) is the nation's largest and most influential association of military officers. It is an independent, nonprofit, politically nonpartisan organization.

[The Falcons Landing Chapter \(FLC\)](#) is one of more than 400-plus local organizations affiliated with National MOAA and is a member of the Virginia Council of Chapters. The Chapter is located at Falcons Landing, a Military Life Community which is operated by the Air Force Retired Officers Community (AFROC). It is the only MOAA Chapter in Loudoun County. The Chapter is also a member of the [Virginia Council of Chapters, MOAA](#)

The mission of the Chapter is to provide programs to support: *those who are serving; those who have served; and those who have survived*, while placing special focus on community support.

Chapter membership is open to those who hold, or have ever held, a warrant or commission in any component of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Space Force, Public Health Service, NOAA, and their surviving spouses.

As of September 30, 2023, there are 133 Premium Members and 81 Auxiliary Chapter Members for a total of 214 Chapter Members.

The most significant, ongoing program for the Chapter is the multifaceted local support to veterans and their families. The Chapter established the *Loudoun Veterans and Family Support (LVFS)* program in partnership with Community Lutheran Church of Sterling, providing financial and general support to Loudoun County Veterans needing assistance.

The Chapter strongly supports the [Loudoun County Community Veterans Engagement Board \(LCCVEB\)](#), whose purpose is promoting a healthy and enriched lifestyle for Loudoun County veterans and their family members through community outreach and advocacy on Loudoun County veterans' issues.

The Chapter sponsors the *Gathering*, a program of distinguished guest speakers for monthly presentations on current and past world and government affairs.

The Chapter has established a *Speakers' Bureau*. This initiative is in keeping with the chapter's goal of continuing to inform the American public about their military establishment. There are currently 16 topics and speakers available for presentation to the local community.

Four times a year the Chapter supports the *AdoptaPlatoon Soldier Support Effort®* dedicated to serving deployed United States Service Men and Women by providing ongoing care packages to improve quality of life and raising morale for those serving overseas in the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corp, Coast Guard and Special Forces.

The Chapter supports three *Junior ROTC* units in our area of responsibility: the Air Force JROTC unit at Chantilly High School in Fairfax, the Navy JROTC unit at Loudoun County High School in Leesburg, and the Army JROTC unit at South Lakes High School in Reston. The Chapter President and Director of JROTC Programs present scholarships to selected cadets at each school. In addition, the Lieutenant General John Pustay Scholarship is awarded to a selected cadet at Chantilly High School.

*Memorial and Veterans Day Programs* are presented each year at Falcons Landing.

**NEVER STOP SERVING**

# MOAA MEMBERSHIP

## MAX JOHNSON



### REGULAR CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY

Per the chapter's bylaws -- the membership of the chapter shall be composed of men and women who are serving or have served on active duty or in one of the reserve components as a commissioned or warrant officer in one of the seven US Uniformed Services (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Space Force, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and Public Health Service) or in one of the National Guard or Reserve Components thereof.

REGULAR CHAPTER MEMBERS (ON/OFF CAMPUS) – 133

CHAPTER AUXILIARY MEMBERS -- 81

Surviving Spouses – 62

Spouses of current chapter members – 9

Others -- 10

**TOTAL MOAA COMMUNITY AT FALCONS LANDING -- 214!**

We invite and encourage you to join the Falcons Landing Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), the preeminent organization protecting the rights and benefits of service members past, current, and future. The local chapters perform similar services at the community and county level, and they educate and inform members on important issues facing veterans and their families. We are proud that our Chapter has been awarded MOAA's highest-level 5-Star Chapter rating – and we ask you to join us in perpetuating that honor. As a member you will receive our newsletter electronically via email. If you don't have email access, we will send a print copy to your mailing address.

When you join our Chapter, the only one in Loudoun County, you'll add your voice to those of the members of the Virginia Council of Chapters (VCOC), a statewide network of Virginia chapters.

If you have interest in or questions about joining MOAA's select group of professionals at the national and/or chapter levels, please contact Max Johnson, (703) 508-3788 or fill out the Contact Form in the Contact Tab of the Falcons Landing Chapter website at [falconsmoaa.org](http://falconsmoaa.org). You can also find the membership application for MOAA National/Chapter at [www.falconsmoaa.org/membership](http://www.falconsmoaa.org/membership).

## **NEW MEMBERS**

**MAJOR GERRY MCHUGH, USA**

**CAPT DOUG WARD, USMC**

**COL JIM GULICK, USA**



## **IN MEMORIUM**

**JOYCE HESSON**

**OCTOBER 25, 1931 – SEPTEMBER 15, 2023**

**JOEL LEVANSON**

**MAY 25, 1940 – AUGUST 14, 2023**

**BILL DELANEY**

**DECEMBER 16, 1930 – AUGUST 14, 2023**





# FALCONS LANDING MOAA CHAPTER AUXILIARY



The Chapter Auxiliary is established to assist the Chapter in executing its purpose. As stated in the Chapter Bylaws, the purpose of the MOAA Chapter is to promote the purposes and objectives of MOAA and, specifically, to actively support:

- Those who are Serving
- Those who have Served
- Those who have Survived

Further, while the Auxiliary is a separate, self-governed organization that shares the same purposes and objectives of the Chapter, it is established specifically to directly support the Chapter's programs and initiatives.

***The MOAA Chapter Auxiliary is the Go-To Volunteer Organization at Falcons Landing***



# FALCONS LANDING MOAA CHAPTER AUXILIARY



## MEMBERSHIP IN THE AUXILIARY

THREE CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP ARE SPECIFIED IN THE BYLAWS:

- SURVIVING SPOUSES OF REGULAR CHAPTER MEMBERS – AUTOMATIC MEMBERSHIP ON THE PASSING OF A REGULAR CHAPTER MEMBER
- SPOUSES OF REGULAR CHAPTER MEMBERS – UPON REQUEST/APPLICATION FROM A SPOUSE OF A LIVING REGULAR CHAPTER MEMBER
- OTHER INTERESTED RESIDENTS OF FALCONS LANDING – UPON REQUEST/APPLICATION FROM A NON-MOAA AFFILIATED RESIDENT OF FALCONS LANDING WHO IS INTERESTED IN ASSISTING WITH THE AUXILIARY'S PROGRAM OF VOLUNTEER WORK.

## MORE ABOUT THE AUXILIARY

- AUXILIARY MEMBERS PAY NO CHAPTER DUES
- AUXILIARY RECRUITMENT LETTERS SENT OUT TWICE YEARLY
- VOLUNTEER OUTREACH AVAILABLE IN INDEPENDENT LIVING, THE JOHNSON CENTER, AND WEST FALLS CENTER TO INCLUDE: VISITATION, COFFEE/MEAL VISITS, EXERCISE, BINGO, MAIL DELIVERY, NEWSPAPER DELIVERY, ASSISTANCE IN 2L INTERACTIVE PROGRAMS, HAPPY HOURS, MUSIC, WEEKEND COVERAGE OF RECEPTION DESK IN TJC
- TYPICAL ON-SITE VOLUNTEER EFFORT – APPROXIMATELY 200 HOURS/MONTH



## VCOC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

IMPROVE LEGISLATIVE EFFECTIVENESS,  
NATIONAL AND STATE <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

IMPROVE RECRUITING - MEMBERS AND  
LEADERS. WHAT IS IN IT FOR THE MEMBER?

ACTIVE PUBLIC AFFAIRS - SEEKING TO HOW  
WE COMMUNICATE INTERNALLY AND  
EXTERNALLY WITH ALL MEMBERS,  
IRRESPECTIVE OF GENERATION. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

IMPROVE VITALITY AND EXCELLENCE OF  
CHAPTERS

THE VIRGINIA COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS (VCOC) OF THE  
MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA (MOAA)  
CONSISTS OF 16 MOAA CHAPTERS.

THE VIRGINIA COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS MEETS QUARTERLY  
IN 2023: JANUARY, APRIL, JULY AND OCTOBER.

CHECK OUT THE *CRIER NEWSLETTER* AT  
[VCOCMOAA.ORG](http://VCOCMOAA.ORG)

## LEGISLATIVE REPORT INFORMATION AND PRIORITIES

Periodically, MOAA will lobby Congress to take legislative action to preserve our retiree benefits. The probability of favorable legislative action is in direct proportion to the number of voters who register support. MOAA sometimes includes postcards and letters in its magazine (Military Officer) for us to sign and mail to our representatives (identified for us). The MOAA Newsletter may also include an online access to act. It is imperative that we do so. To access the MOAA Newsletter go to the MOAA website at [www.moaa.org](http://www.moaa.org) and select the News and Info tab, followed by selecting Newsletters.

The MOAA Newsletter “is an award-winning member-only e-newsletter subscription to provide information on topics most important to you. Whether you’re looking for updates on current legislative issues, want to know more about your military benefits, or just interested in the latest MOAA events, you can tailor your newsletter to align with your specific needs and interests.” It is included with your MOAA membership. If you are not registered with MOAA National for this, call the front desk (800) 234-6622, and you'll be guided on how to receive the newsletter on a desired schedule. Have your MOAA National membership number available. If you don't have email or have questions on obtaining this information, contact COL (Ret) Max Johnson at [mwjohnson64@verizon.net](mailto:mwjohnson64@verizon.net) or 703-508-3788.

Our Chapter periodically publishes Legislative Updates for all members and works with MOAA to recommend to members that they support MOAA legislative initiatives by contacting their legislators. MOAA staff and Chapter members meet with members of Congress annually. You may review important MOAA legislative issues and activities on the MOAA website by visiting the Take Action section at [www.moaa.org/takeaction](http://www.moaa.org/takeaction) .

National MOAA and the Falcons Landing Chapter, MOAA, are politically nonpartisan but seek to remain informed on political matters of concern to veterans at both the state and local levels.

# **MOAA'S ADVOCACY PRIORITIES FOR RETIREES IN THE 118TH CONGRESS**

- Ensuring pay at or above Employment Cost Index, allowances, and programs necessary to recruit and retain a quality force.**
- Concurrent Receipt of military retirement pay and VA disability pay.**
- Maintaining the hold on medical billet reductions until required reports clarify how any cuts will fully support both readiness and beneficiary access to care.**
- Reversing the degradation of the pharmacy benefit, specifically ensure access and achieve limits to copay increases.**
- Requiring DoD to establish a transparent and well-publicized problem reporting system for TRICARE beneficiaries experiencing access challenges within the direct care system of military hospitals and clinics, including an annual report to Congress on the number and types of beneficiary access problem reports by MTF and steps taken by DHA to address systemic access problems.**

# **MOAA'S ADVOCACY PRIORITIES FOR RETIREES IN THE 118TH CONGRESS CONTINUED**

- Monitoring recent major legislation enacted such as the PACT Act in the areas of health care, compensation, and follow-on support for surviving spouses and families and seek statutory or policy changes as required.**
- Compelling Congress and VA to accelerate caregiving and whole health care services, and modernization of VHA workforce and facility infrastructure to improve veterans access to high quality care.**
- Improving congressional support for uniformed services families: enhancing programs to support spouse employment, ensuring implementation of an effective basic needs allowance, and providing accessible, affordable childcare options.**
- Repealing the recoupment of last month's paycheck after retiree's passing, and continue to improve SGLI/VGLI updates to match inflation.**
- Improving DIC baseline to align with other government entitlements' baseline of 55%.**

# HELP SUPPORT OUR CHAPTER PROGRAMS

Our activities, especially the veterans' assistance and scholarship programs, require funds well beyond our annual dues. Last year, we solicited donations, and your response was generous. Again, we are asking for your support, promising to apply your donation as you designate. Please annotate your check on the memo line: "veterans assistance," "scholarships," "Adopt-A-Platoon," or "general" (meaning expenses consistent with our mission). *Checks should be made out to the "Falcons Landing Chapter of MOAA"* and placed in the mail slot of our Treasurer, Tom Owens, 46916. Those outside Falcons Landing may mail to Tom at the address in our letterhead. Your contributions may be tax deductible on your federal return. We will send all donors a thank-you letter to that effect.

A continuing practice of our Chapter is the award of scholarships to deserving junior ROTC seniors at Chantilly HS (Air Force), Loudoun County HS (Navy) and South Lakes HS (Army).



LOUDOUN VETERANS AND  
FAMILY SUPPORT



JROTC

## PROGRAMS



# CHAPTER NEWS IN BRIEF

- **BARBARA O'BRIEN WAS CONFIRMED AS THE PRESIDENT OF THE CHAPTER AUXILLARY WITH WARD O'BRIEN APPOINTED AS THE ASSISTANT.**
- **BOARD POSITIONS THAT REMAIN TO BE FILLED: SECRETARY AND 2024 LEADERSHIP SLATE.**
- **BOARD APPROVED AN INCREASE IN CHAPTER DUES EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2024 AS FOLLOWS: 1 YEAR-\$20; 2 YEARS-\$35; 3 YEARS-\$50.**
- **BOARD APPROVED TO DONATE \$100 PER EVENT TO THE JROTC UNIT PROVIDING COLOR GUARD SUPPORT FOR MOAA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES AT FALCONS LANDING.**
- **MOAA ANNOUNCED THAT FALCONS LANDING CHAPTER RECEIVED THE 5 STAR 2022 LEVELS OF EXCELLENCE AWARD FOR BOTH NEWSLETTER AND WEBSITE CATEGORIES.**
- **BOARD APPROVED THE SUBMISSION OF THE APPLICATION FOR THE FALCONS LANDING CHAPTER TO BECOME A VIETNAM WAR COMMERAIVE PARTNER ORGANIZATION.**



# CHAPTER NEWS IN BRIEF

## CONTINUED

- ***AWARDS SUBMISSION DEADLINE CHANGES:*** SUBMISSIONS FOR ALL AWARDS (LEVELS OF EXCELLENCE, COMMUNICATIONS, THE STROBRIDGE LEGISLATIVE AWARD, AND SURVIVING SPOUSE LIAISON EXCELLENCE AWARD) WILL LIKELY BE DUE BY JAN. 31, 2024, AND ON THE SAME DATE IN FUTURE YEARS. THIS CHANGE IS NECESSARY TO PROVIDE TIMELY AND MEANINGFUL REGIONAL AND LOCAL RECOGNITION OF ORGANIZATIONAL AND PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENTS. CRITERIA FOR 2023 LEVELS OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS WILL BE THE SAME AS FOR THE 2022 PROGRAM. COUNCIL PRESIDENT ASSESSMENTS WILL NOT BE REQUIRED, AND NEITHER THEY NOR VISIT REPORTS WILL BE CONSIDERED. CRITERIA FOR COMMUNICATIONS AWARDS WILL ALSO BE UNCHANGED FROM 2022 CRITERIA.
- A NEW SURVIVOR CHECKLIST HAS BEEN PUBLISHED BY MOAA. CLICK ON THE FOLLOWING HYPERLINK TO VIEW THE CHECKLIST IN PDF FORMAT.  
[https://www.moaa.org/uploadedfiles/content/publications\\_and\\_media/moaa\\_publications/publication\\_downloads/expandedsurvivorchecklist\\_2023.pdf](https://www.moaa.org/uploadedfiles/content/publications_and_media/moaa_publications/publication_downloads/expandedsurvivorchecklist_2023.pdf)
- MOAA PREDICTS THE UPCOMING COLA WILL BE 3.2%, DOWN 5.5 PERCENTAGE POINTS FROM LAST YEAR'S 8.7% INCREASE. IT'S THE SMALLEST FIGURE IN THREE YEARS, BUT IT'S JUST THE FIFTH TIME IN 20 YEARS THE ADJUSTMENT HAS REACHED 3% OR HIGHER.

# MORE BURIAL AND FUNERAL COSTS CAN NOW BE COVERED BY VETERANS BENEFITS

*This article by Rebecca Kheel appeared in the October Issue of the MOAA Newsletter and originally appeared on [Military.com](https://www.military.com)*

The [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) is expanding benefits to help pay for veterans' end-of-life expenses, the department announced Friday.

The expanded benefits include reimbursements for transporting remains to state and tribal veterans cemeteries, in addition to previously eligible national cemeteries; allowances for VA plots or interments for tribal organizations; and higher payments for non-service-connected burial benefits, according to a news release Friday.

"Last fiscal year, VA delivered more than 84,000 burial benefits to families of veterans," Joshua Jacobs, the VA's under secretary for benefits, said in the news release. "Expanding burial benefits means we are able to ensure veterans are honored in their final resting place, and assist their family, caregivers, and survivors during the difficult time of their loved one's passing."

The expanded benefits comes after the department earlier this year [made a push to encourage more veterans](#) to use the burial benefits.

Fewer than half of veterans who qualified for a burial allowance or headstone last year used the benefit, while just 20% of eligible veterans were buried in a cemetery managed or supported by the VA, a benefit that comes at no cost to the veteran's family, department officials said in January.<sup>17</sup>

# **MORE BURIAL AND FUNERAL COSTS CAN NOW BE COVERED BY VETERANS BENEFITS (continued)**

**The VA manages 155 cemeteries nationwide and funds an additional 121 state, territorial and tribal veterans cemeteries.**

**The department will pay a veteran's surviving [spouse](#), child, parent or executor for expenses related to burying the veteran if they have not been reimbursed by any other organizations. The veteran must have been discharged under something other than dishonorable conditions.**

**If a veteran's remains are unclaimed, the department also provides benefits to the funeral home or third party who handled burial arrangements.**

**Depending on when the death happened, service-related deaths can get up to \$2,000 in expenses covered, while non-service-related deaths have been able to get up to \$893 for a burial allowance and \$893 for a plot. The average cost of a funeral was nearly \$8,000 in 2021, according to the National Funeral Directors Association**

**The expenses that the VA will cover can include a veteran's gravesite, burial, funeral and transportation of remains to the final resting place, and benefits are available for all legal burial types, including cremation, burial at sea and donation of remains to a medical school.**

**There is no time limit to apply for benefits for a service-connected burial, plot or interment allowance, or transportation costs, but claims for non-service-connected benefits must be filed within two years of the veteran's burial or cremation.**

# **THE GATHERING: VETERANS SERVICES**

*by Jim Mullen*

**The guest speaker for the September 21 Gathering was Daniel Kim, Veterans Service Representative (VSR), at the Veterans Services Ashburn Benefits office (703-995-9978). In Virginia a local service office in each county can provide veterans and spouses benefits support. That support includes tax free compensation, medical treatment and other Virginia and county benefits.**

**Daniel Kim commented that he tries to return a call to someone seeking assistance within 24 hours, but asks that if you call him and he is not immediately available that you leave a call back number to help him make contact. Daniel says that he receives about 100 calls per day from people seeking some level of assistance.**

**His submittal case for a veteran is based on a diagnostic that meets VA requirements. First, get a medical diagnosis of the current medical condition related to the potential claim, get medical treatments records from time in service if available, add statements from people in service who observed your condition and work with the Loudoun VSR on the ability to develop NEXUS, the tie between the service record and the current medical issue. The NEXUS statement, to be developed strongly, should come from a doctor and needs to relate the current medical condition to the elements that define the claim.**

**When working with the VSR the plan would be to develop the claim and the reasons for the claim, then file an intent to file a claim with the Veterans Administration (VA ). One year is allowed to complete the filing of the claim. Then collect evidence to support the claim (this is the NEXUS).**

## **THE GATHERING: VETERANS SERVICES CONTINUED**

**Sometimes the VA does not approve a claim even if the steps were followed. Still, there may be opportunities to appeal. Perhaps because there was additional information not included in the claim or that the evaluation by VA did not include all of the information supplied in the claim.**

**Mr. Kim went on to discuss some of the recent changes in veterans' programs in the PACT Act and in the Agent Orange Support. The PACT Act is specifically related to "presumptive" medical conditions that developed related to duty and presence in the Middle East.**

**If any veteran wishes to submit claims related to Agent Orange or to the PACT Act, then the best approach would be to contact the Loudoun Veterans Office and Daniel Kim or his office partner to obtain more details about the timing covered by the conditions and more specifics about the filing procedures.**

**Mr. Kim also discussed several other factors for consideration including making the family doctor aware of any patient conditions that may relate to VA coverage and that would be important to include in a death certificate if that became necessary. Daniels added one additional discussion related to Dependent Indemnity Compensation (DIC). Again, it is beneficial if the statement on a death certificate mentions VA - related conditions. Note that a dependent could file for DIC by identifying the related VA supported condition. In meeting with the VA team member to discuss DIC, the dependent needs to include the deceased's DD214, a copy of the death certificate, and a copy of the marriage certificate.**

# THE GATHERING: LIVING AND WORKING IN BEIJING

*by Ben Romero*

On August 10, we all welcomed our guest speaker, Nathalia Hardy, the daughter of proud parents Jim and Helen Hardy. Natalia has a unique work experience, beginning her career as a lawyer for 13 years. She transitioned to education and taught English in Loudoun County Schools. From there, she decided that International Education would be interesting and became the Senior Librarian at the Qatar Academy. Currently she holds the prestigious position of Head Librarian at the Tsinghua University International School (THIS), Beijing, China. She began her presentation by stressing that she is an employee of the Chinese government and would not speak to anything dealing with politics, since that was not her area of expertise.

She gave us a wonderful overview of the East Asian area of Beijing, China and the life of a student, as well as her personal experience of living in China as an expat. Her first adventure into it began with long multi-airport flights into China— 32 hours, only to be turned around to return to Qatar and begin again, because of a service dog. She had to make the long trip twice during Covid but finally was allowed entry into China. Her dog, Doodle, is the only animal she is allowed to bring into the country as her companion linguist—the dog understands both languages. We all got to watch her command Doodle in both languages. She said it's very useful when walking him.

She started with a quick overview of Beijing—5,500 square miles, 21 million residents, over 3,000 years of history and China's #2 earning tourist destination with Shanghai as #1.

# THE GATHERING: LIVING AND WORKING IN BEIJING CONTINUED

Our next adventure was a great virtual tour of her studio apartment located in an area designated to house Westerners, expats, university employees and English-speaking Chinese. We got a slide tour of her one-bedroom apartment, a reminder that we must be flexible and this was considered an elite facility (Western compound, 1 hour from this, located near the metro and self-contained with gardens). Her refrigerator in the living room and her IKEA reference gave us all a chuckle, yet we all knew that one must be dedicated adapting to the environment. She loves her job and said it's easy to get around, with bikes everywhere!!

Natalia spoke of Tsinghua University (China's equivalent to Harvard, rates 23rd worldwide, built in 1911, revenue of 4.23 billion, covers 78,000 Sq miles and has 50,000 students). Her area of the University, the International School, has 4,000 students (2,500 high school/1,500 middle school). They take only the top students who go to focus on careers in foreign countries. The students come from families that are stationed abroad and speak English. They are unable to attend public schools because the parents must relinquish their western passports, or the children do not have sufficient Chinese language skills to attend public school. The curriculum is similar to public school but taught in English and Chinese History is taught by a Chinese instructor. Class size max is 26 students with two instructors per class.

As librarian she has had an opportunity to restructure the library to enhance reading opportunities. Her Egg Chairs are a hit and she noted that the Chinese children love to read. She collaborates with the teachers to



# THE GATHERING: LIVING AND WORKING IN BEIJING CONTINUED

ensure there are enough materials and she maintains an array of books for 3-4 reading levels, to promote the student's endeavors and advancement. She established an early morning and after school/evening open library system; it had been open during school hours only. One of her proudest accomplishments is the establishment of a Seismology Team that promotes realworld networking, briefing, communicating and speaking skills to support the students and the University.

With that, she ended her presentation and I will end this article with a hearty “thank you” to Natalia, our speaker; Jim and Helen Hardy for sponsoring this Gathering, Community Life, Housekeeping and Dining for their support and a final quote of Natalia's: "Differences of habit and language are nothing at all if our aims are identical and our hearts are open.”



# THE GATHERING: THE NEGRO LEAGUE

~ by Dave Hopkins, photo by Chris Malone

At the July Gathering we welcomed back Dick Polin, who always brings with him an incredible recollection of the great teams, great players, and great moments of what has long been known as the national pastime—baseball. This time he presented a comparison of major league ball with the Negro Leagues that existed for some 29 years until 1947 when Jackie Robinson began integration of the major leagues.

Dick asked whether the best of Negro League players would have succeeded in the majors had they had the opportunity. And he answered the question with a resounding “yes,” and as a walking encyclopedia of the game, he backed up that answer with analytics. Not simply by comparing batting averages and earned run averages—he used some 25 different metrics to reach his conclusions. In comparison, many stats were similar, but with the majors having more doubles and home runs, the Negro Leagues more runs and steals. He was able to rate all-time best hitters in this order—Babe Ruth, Josh Gibson, Oscar Charleston, Ted Williams, Buck Leonard, Rogers Hornsby, Lou Gehrig. Gibson, Charleston, and Leonard of course were denied the privilege of donning a major league uniform because of the color of their skin.

Jackie Robinson was good, though perhaps not the best Negro League player of his day, but

# THE GATHERING: THE NEGRO LEAGUE CONTINUED

by proving able to put up with the slanders and taunts that went with being the “first” he was the right choice. Others followed, many well-known, such as Satchel Paige and Monte Irvin, but integration was not immediate or universal. It was 1963 when the last major league team put a Black in its lineup, and it was 2010 when major league baseball accepted Negro League records as part of its own. Thanks for coming again, Dick. Your presentation hit a home run with all of us.



Pictured above l to r: Dave Hopkins, Bob Manning, Bill Hilsman, Phil Walsh, Ellen Van Buren, and Bill Hilsman's daughters: AF Brig. Gen. (ret.) Allison Hickey, Karen Paul, Chelsea Owen (granddaughter), and speaker Dick Polin.



# The Gathering Presents...



## VJ DAY

With Guest Speaker

**John K. Schwarz**

John K. Schwarz is the youngest son of USS Houston CA-30 shipmate/survivor Otto C. Schwarz, and of the parents, Otto and Trudy, who founded the USS Houston CA-30 Survivors Association and Next Generations shortly after the conclusion of WWII. He has been around this ship's story for his lifetime and had many occasions throughout his life, to be around many of Otto's fellow Shipmates/survivors



**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12  
7:30 P.M. BALLROOM/CH.970**

**MARK YOUR  
CALENDAR FOR THE  
NEXT GATHERING  
ON OCTOBER 12,  
7:30 P.M. IN THE  
BALLROOM**

# IMPORTANT CHAPTER EVENTS AND SCHEDULE

THE GATHERING IS OPEN TO ALL CHAPTER MEMBERS AND FALCONS LANDING RESIDENTS, NORMALLY ONE EVENT PER MONTH IN THE FALCONS LANDING BALLROOM.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS (BOD) MEETS ON THE 3<sup>RD</sup> THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 1000 HOURS IN THE WELLNESS CENTER CONFERENCE ROOM OR VIA ZOOM. MEMBERS ARE WELCOME.

CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (PRESIDENT, 1ST VP; 2ND VP, SECRETARY, TREASURER) MEETS AS REQUIRED.

COMMITTEES MEET AT DISCRETION OF COMMITTEE CHAIRS.

## 2023 MEETING DATES

January 4	Annual Meeting, 1530	July	No Board Meeting
January 26	Board Meeting, 1000	August 17	Board Meeting, 1000
February 16	Board Meeting, 1000	September 21	Quarterly Chapter Meeting, 1430
March 16	Quarterly Chapter Meeting, 1430	October 19	Board Meeting, 1000
April 20	Board Meeting, 1000	October 25	Biennial VCOC Meeting @ FL
May 18	Board Meeting, 1000	November 10	Veterans Day Program, 1030
May 30	Memorial Day Program, 1030	November 16	Annual Meeting and Election, 1900
June 16	Quarterly Chapter Meeting, 1430	December	No Board Meeting

# 2023 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

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\*Preparing to step down





## Falcons Landing Chapter Military Officers Association of America

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MOAA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit veterans' association dedicated to maintaining a strong national defense and ensuring our nation keeps its commitments to currently serving, retired, and former members of the uniformed services and their families and survivors. MOAA's greatest mission is "to improve the lives of those who serve and their families, which is achieved largely through the tireless advocacy efforts taking place in our nation's capital". Support MOAA's advocacy efforts by going to <http://takeaction.moaa.org>.

The Falcons Landing Chapter is one of more than 400-plus local organizations affiliated with National MOAA and is a nonpartisan, nonprofit veterans' association. Our chapter provides programs to support: those who are serving; those who have served; and those who have survived, while placing special focus on community support.

We support the national organization through support of legislative priorities and "Storming the Hill" and are active in our community supporting two JROTC programs, helping recovering and needy veterans, and providing speakers to community service organizations.

[Click to view A Special Message from the President of MOAA](#)

Falcons Landing Chapter of the MOAA - 20540 Falcons Landing Cir #P1 - Potomac Falls, VA 20165

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All Falcons Landing Chapter members and veterans interested in joining the Chapter are encouraged to browse through the award-winning website. The website is updated monthly with current information. *To access the website, simply type the following URL into your web browser, [falconsmoaa.org](http://falconsmoaa.org). If you want to access the Documents section, a password is required which you may obtain from our Director of Membership, COL Max Johnson, 703-508-3788, [mwjohnson64@verizon.net](mailto:mwjohnson64@verizon.net)*