



# The Council Crier First Quarter 2023

## VCOC Officers 2022-2024

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## *The Quarterly Newsletter of the Virginia Council of Chapters of the Military Officers Association of America*

Our First Quarter Council Crier for 2022 tells the story of our Virginia Council and our highly engaged Member Chapters, with our Legislative Advocacy and Community Service remaining prime examples of such engagement.

In the March 2023 issue of MOAA Magazine, From the President, MOAA CEO Lt. Gen. Brian T. Kelly says, "Lets all share our stories, lets all be recruiters of the next person who will be proud and excited to be a member of MOAA!"

To Lt. Gen. Kelly's charge, this issue of the Council Crier indeed remains dedicated to telling the story of our Virginia Council.

## **The VCOC Story**

To our Chapter interview series, six of our VCOC Chapter Presidents discuss their careers in the United States Military, following with spotlight on Chapter activities for 2022, also the value of VCOC membership and legislative advocacy. As part of this series, MOAA Program Director, Council and Chapter Affairs CAPT Frank Michael, USN (Ret) discusses his career in the United States Navy, following with highlight on the work of MOAA Chapter and Councils, also the value of Council membership and grass roots legislative advocacy.

## **The Virginia Delegation**

To our Virginia Delegation, Congresswoman Abigail Spanberger (VA 07) and Virginia State Senator Bryce Reeves (R 17th) discuss their career, following with review of

their Veterans Legislation in 2022, also the value of VCOC grass roots legislative advocacy.

## Tonya Star

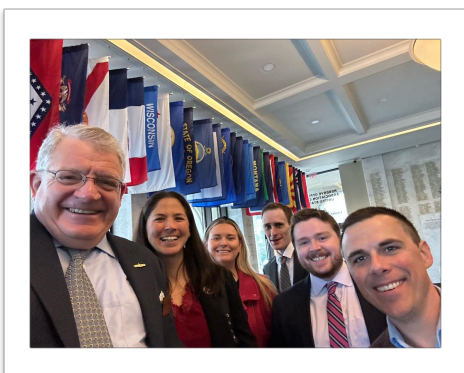
In an interview with Tonya Star, Surviving Spouse of MAJ Richard Star, USA (Ret), Tonya spotlights her life, the quest for passage of the Star Act, also the value of Grass Roots Advocacy in the effort to pass the Star Act.

The aforementioned conversations are a great way to tell the MOAA and VCOC story - our Council thanks each interviewee for their ongoing candor, honesty and support of what we do.

## On Deck

No greater honor than to be on Deck around our great Commonwealth. Recent examples include advocacy with the Virginia General Assembly and Military Coalition Day on Capitol Hill DC.

Pictured Right: At the Virginia General Assembly, Military and Veterans Affairs Caucus, 12th Annual Military Appreciation Night. Virginia Deputy Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs Jason Pak, myself and Richmond Area Chapter President COL Mark Rich, USA (Ret). Jason Served as a Stryker Brigade Combat Team Rifle Support Officer in Operation Enduring Freedom, now overseeing the Virginia Department of Veterans Services, Department of Military Affairs, and primary liaison for the Commonwealth to the Department of Defense. Mark was an Army Special Forces Officer in Vietnam, hear his story in our Chapter President Interview series, highlighted in this issue of the Crier.



Pictured left: Military Coalition (TMC) Hill Day, February 28, 2023, with MOAA Headquarters staffers, lobby, Reserve Organization of America: from left to right, Myself, Jennifer Goodale, Director of Government Relations for Military Family and Survivor Policy; Allison Reilly, Associate Director of Government Relations; Terry Waters, Member Service Center Manager; Ryan Hogan, Member Service Representative; and Tony Lombardo, Director of Audience Engagement. Our mission that day was to to grow the TMCs reputation and advocate for the Major Richard Star Act.

## **Chapter Visits**

The Portsmouth Area Chapter (PACMOAA) held their first dinner meeting for 2023 on 12 January, Roger Brown's Restaurant and Sports Bar, Portsmouth, Virginia. I had the privilege of installing the PACMOAA Officer Slate 2023, also highlighting our VCOG Homepage Front Page to the Chapter membership. Many thanks to PACMOAA Chapter President, Bruce LaLonde USN (Ret) for both his hospitality and leadership. With this installment, our Council looks forward to chapter visits around the Commonwealth throughout 2023.

## **Our Virginia Delegation**

Last year, our Virginia Council and Chapter legislative advocacy resulted in some significant victories, state and federal levels.

To the Federal level: during the period 21 January - 4 August of 2022, 117th Congress, nine VCOG Chapter advocacy Teams conducted 15 visits with our Virginia Delegation in advocacy of the MOAA top three legislative priorities. In measurable result, Virginia Delegation Co-Sponsors for The Major Richard Star Act increased to 13. This represented an increase of five cosponsors from 2021. As of this writing, Co-Sponsorship from the Star Act by the Virginia delegation, 118th Congress for the Star is steadily re-establishing. On December 20, 2022, we advocated the Star Act with the office of Senator Tim Kaine (D VA). Many thanks to Senator Kaine for both signing on as a Star Act Co-sponsor on February 9, 2023 and his now many years of support for our Council, as reflected with his letter in this issue of the Crier.

To the State level: for 2022 and 2023, the Advocacy of COL Monti Zimmerman, USA (Ret) and our Legislative Affairs team significantly contributed to passage two pieces of legislation. First, a state income tax deduction for military retirement income for veterans age 55 and older at a phased in rate, up to \$40,000 by 2025. Next, legislation granting local governments authority to provide some property tax relief to the spouses of fallen soldiers, with a Constitutional Amendment now following.

## **Second Quarter Meeting 2023**

Our Council will be holding our Second Quarter meeting from George C. Marshall's Dodona Manor, Leesburg, Virginia, 12 April 2023. Whether attending virtually or in person, we encourage attendance at our second quarter meeting. As our guest speaker, we are again honored to have MOAA Vice President for Government Relations Col. Dan Merry, USAF (Ret) as our speaker. Dan will update our team on MOAA Advocacy in Action 2023, scheduled the last week of April, with question and answer session following.

## A Word of Thanks

This year marks the 48th year of our Virginia Council. I would like to thank each member of our current Board for their most dedicated service to our Council over the past year, as follows: *Second Vice President* John Prevar, USN (Ret), *Third Vice President* COL Monti Zimmerman, USA (Ret), *Secretary* LtCol John Down, USAF (Ret), *Treasurer* Capt. Maria Kelly, USAF (Former), *Legal Counsel* COL Vince Cammarata, USA (Ret), *Surviving Spouse Representative* MAJ Sherry Ferki, USA (Ret), *Chaplain* LtCol Ken Ruppar, USA (Ret) and *Immediate Past President* Col Boyd Nix, USAF (Ret).

To the North Carolina Council of Chapters (NCOC), our MOAA Council neighbor to the South, we offer great thanks to NCOC President CW4 Jay Garbus, USA. His hospitality, friendship, support and most remarkable leadership remains an example to follow, many regards.

Many thanks to MOAA Vice President, Council/Chapter Member Support CAPT Jim Carman, USN (Ret) for again providing us his annual brief on MOAA at our First Quarter Meeting. Our First Quarter 2023 meeting marks the third year in a row that Jim joined our team to set the sea and anchor detail on the bridge for a haze gray and underway deployment. Jim and I are shipmates from 40 years ago, having served together on the USS John F. Kennedy (CV 67), International Peacekeeping Forces Lebanon. Whether in 1983 on the Big John, or today in 2023 with our Association, we are proud and honored to be shipmates. We thank him for his unending support, professionalism and steadfast leadership. With aforementioned, this issue of our Council Crier concludes with a brief story of our deployment in 1983.

This year marks my sixth year of service to our Virginia Council. It has been my privilege to serve as Legislative Affairs Chair for our Hampton Roads Chapter, as Council Secretary, Legislative Affairs Chair, Acting First Vice President/Acting President, Webmaster and Crier Editor. In accordance with our Council By Laws, my term as President concludes this year.

To include the entire MOAA National Staff, our Chapter Presidents, the Virginia Delegation and countless others of all generations who contribute to our cause, you remain at the centerpiece of our mission: to preserve and protect earned benefits for our uniformed services, veterans, their families, and surviving spouses through advocacy, leadership, education, and service.

Thank you for your dedicated service to both the Military Officers Association of America and our Virginia Council of Chapters. Together, we will never stop serving.

Linc

CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret)  
President  
Virginia Council of Chapters





**THE GEORGE C. MARSHALL**  
**INTERNATIONAL CENTER**  
*Celebrating 75 Years of the Marshall Plan*



## **Dodona Manor**

# **Home to George and Katherine Marshall**

From the Dodona Manor homepage: General George Catlett Marshall is considered by many to be one of the greatest modern-day Americans. He is recognized as the organizer of the Allied victory in World War II and the architect of the European Recovery Program (the Marshall Plan) that changed the face of the world and earned Marshall the Nobel Peace Prize. From the beginning of his 45-year public career as a graduate of Virginia Military Institute in 1901 to recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1953, Marshall received more than 60 decorations, awards, and honorary degrees, including military, civilian, and substantial foreign recognition.

Amid his extraordinary accomplishments, Marshall was most appreciated and beloved for who he was. He earned an uncontested reputation for being an honest, humble, and resolute leader and did not seek fame. His personal contributions to the efforts and development of the United States and other countries during some of the most significant events in modern history are remarkable, not just for the magnitude of what he accomplished, but because of the incorruptible, selfless integrity with which he served.

The George C. Marshall International Center host educational programs that reflect Marshall's principled approach to leadership. The Marshall Center also operates Dodona Manor as a historic house museum at 312 East Market Street in Leesburg, Virginia. The house is home to the Marshall Center, as it was home to George and Katherine Marshall from 1941 to 1959. Tours and events are conducted at Dodona Manor, which provide a full picture of General Marshall's life.

View the Dodona Manor Homepage at: [Dodona Manor](#) - a strong advocate of bipartisanship, General Marshall is pictured below with Presidents Roosevelt (Left) and Eisenhower (Right)







# George C. Marshall's

## LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

### 1. SELFLESSNESS: Serve the Greater Good

- **Do what is best for the nation**, organization and others, not for yourself.
- **Seek increasing responsibility** within an organization as you gain experience.
- **Accept responsibility** for your actions when you make mistakes.
- **Be a team player**; avoid self-promotion and never claim personal credit for team success.

### 2. INTEGRITY: Do the Right Thing

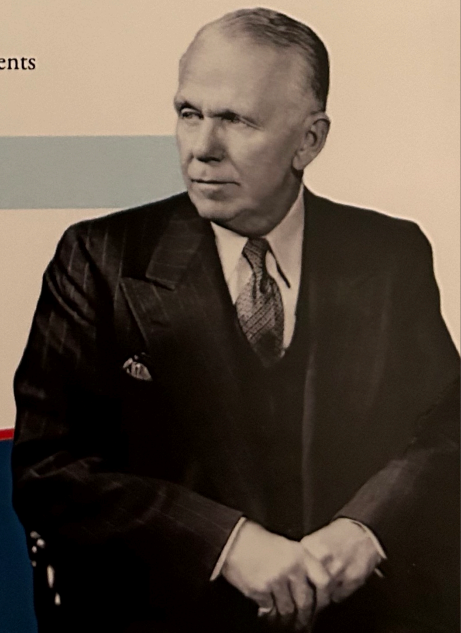
- **Earn respect** by being honest and ethical in your actions and decisions.
- **Stand up for what you believe**; be courageous and determined.
- **Speak out and take action** against that which is wrong.
- **Set the example** by acting maturely, accepting responsibility, and demonstrating wisdom.

### 3. ACTION: Master the Situation

- **Take charge in a crisis**; size up the situation and take quick and appropriate action.
- **Establish credibility** through your deeds and not your words alone.
- **Have the will** to see tasks through to the end.
- **Ensure that others** follow through on their assignments and promises.

### 4. CANDOR: Speak Your Mind

- **Speak honestly and responsibly.**
- **Be courteous and polite to others.**
- **Control your anger** and exercise personal courage, even when under attack.



THE GEORGE C. MARSHALL  
INTERNATIONAL CENTER  
Visit us online at [www.georgecmarshall.org](http://www.georgecmarshall.org)





## **Statement**

**Col. Boyd Nix, USAF (Ret)**  
**Virginia Council of Chapters**  
**Immediate Past President**

**17 February 2023**

My 2020-2021 term as VCOA President was harder than it should have been due to my having had a stroke in my first month in office which corresponded with the beginning of COVID. Fortunately, during my extended recovery Linc Smith was my 1st VP and he did an outstanding job at both filling in for me as acting President and performing his demanding VP duties.

Also, during my time in office MOAA told the Councils and Chapters that they were focused on helping us with what had become a chronic recruiting problem throughout the country. Part of the solution was a new recruiting module which would make it much easier for our Chapter Membership Chairmen be more successful in recruiting of new members. MOAA has some very good members on their staff who worked hard to make this happen but were not as successful as they hoped.

A little later we began receiving many complaints from our chapters about the difficulties they were still having recruiting. MOAA's solution to our recruiting problems was not acceptable. Frequently the lists of new retirees moving into our area would have the wrong mailing addresses and very few included emails which would greatly help our Membership Chairs in recruiting new members.

Our relationship with MOAA National continues to be strained and not only with recruiting. For example, during our 2022 National meeting in Raleigh, NC MOAA introduced new eligibility criteria for Councils and Chapters to qualify for the Awards Program. Now a separate nomination page is required by Council Presidents must be included in the package before it will be considered.

It now appears that MOAA's primary focus has shifted from their Councils and Chapters to their own membership numbers which normally are at the 350 to 400 thousand level. One possible impact is recently MOAA lost 3 or 4 Councils and 26 Chapters nationwide. This doesn't help us support the MOAA Mission or the benefits needed for our active duty ,reserves, retired and their families.

Statistics show that Military Associations across the Country are losing members and are unable to find suitable replacements for their Board Officers and dedicated chapter members. Understandably, many are exhausted or have major medical problems which prevent them from actively serving. This is why we need new blood!

I have been very strait forward with you about my personal opinions identifying several of our Council and Chapter problems. Part of the difficulty is leadership and a need for new direction but a lot of it lies with National MOAA itself. A few chapters have virtually become social clubs and no longer participate in Legislative affairs or support our JLC Committee Issues or the MOAA Mission. I understand the need to have virtual chapters. But I am also inspired by those regular Councils and Chapters that work hard to support the initiatives that are so important to our Active Duty, Reserves, Veterans and their families.

# New MOAA President and CEO Discusses Organizational, Advocacy Goals



MOAA Staff  
January 11, 2023

MOAA's new president and chief executive officer discussed the association's goals and pending advocacy challenges in a recent podcast interview, stressing the importance of continued support from membership and the need to coordinate efforts with other military and veterans groups.

"We have such great grassroots members in MOAA – we're lucky – who are active," Lt. Gen. Brian T. Kelly, USAF (Ret), told Bill Hodges, the host of Veterans Corner Radio, in an interview that went online Jan. 8. "They're not just passive members. They're calling their congressmen, they're writing, they're putting together information and making sure the right people hear the right things.

"When you're able to do those kind of things, things like the PACT Act get to happen," Kelly added. "Protecting COLA ... for retirement pay gets to happen. All those things that MOAA has been successful with over the years happen because of the ability to bring folks together."

Kelly, a 33-year Air Force veteran, took over MOAA's top post Jan. 4. He spoke with Hodges, an enlisted veteran and honorary member of MOAA's Sun City (Fla.)

Chapter, about what drew him to the position at MOAA, his goals for increasing MOAA membership, and how he hopes to navigate a challenging federal budget landscape in the coming years.

“We’re going to have to be steadfast, we’re going to have to be consistent, and we’re going to be united [with fellow advocacy groups] in trying to make sure that ... our congressional members, our representatives, understand what military members and veterans have done, and why it’s so important to maintain those benefits,” Kelly said. “It’s hard to imagine that if you have an all-volunteer force, which we do, how that would go in the future if you don’t take care of those who served before.”

## **From MOAA’s Chairman: Join Me as MOAA Continues to Grow**

Gen. Gary North, USAF (Ret)  
December 27, 2022



As a MOAA Life Member and having served on the MOAA Board of Directors for the last four years, it is an honor and privilege to now continue serving as your Chairman of the Board of Directors, and continue the work of our previous board chair, Gen. Walter “Skip” Sharp, USA (Ret). We also honor the exceptional leadership of Lt. Gen. Dana “DT” Atkins, USAF (Ret), as our President and CEO. Dana retires from his position after seven years, and MOAA is stronger because of his leadership. As Dana departs, we welcome Lt. Gen. Brian “BK” Kelly, USAF (Ret), as our incoming president and CEO. I know each of you join me in wishing them and their families all the success in their respective futures.



Like many MOAA members, I joined the military after college, and I come from a military family. My dad was a Navy sailor in World War II, and his brothers served in World War II in the Army. My older brother is retired from the Army. I served for 36 years in the U.S. Air Force, and we have a son currently serving in the Air Force.

As your MOAA board chair, I look forward to leading your Board of Directors in the next two years as we together continue to strengthen MOAA's position. Like all organizations, we must continually evolve. We need to reach our younger members serving in the military, and we need to be an organization that they can relate to, and want to be a part of.

As we maintain the strong following with our current members and chapters, we need to reinvigorate the representation of the association to our active force as well as to our retired force. We need to help younger generations of officers understand the value of our advocacy and support for them, and their families, while they're serving, and then the impact of lifelong service as a MOAA member.

Every MOAA member should be a recruiter. Telling our story is important, both at the grassroots level and the national level, and I need your help as a powerful advocate for MOAA and our members and families.

MOAA has proven we have the capacity to adapt. We launched the Crisis Relief Fund to assist unserved veterans. We added virtual chapters to connect members across the country who share common interests. We built a new Legislative Action Center to fully leverage technology to connect our members with their elected officials. These are three recent examples of how MOAA evolved to meet changing circumstances, and we're planning many more.

As a large organization, MOAA must think of new ways to reach out to our more than 350,000 members and to recruit new members. Our collective challenge in the coming years is to see each day as an opportunity for growth in our organization and in our services to our members and families. I look forward to the journey with each of you.

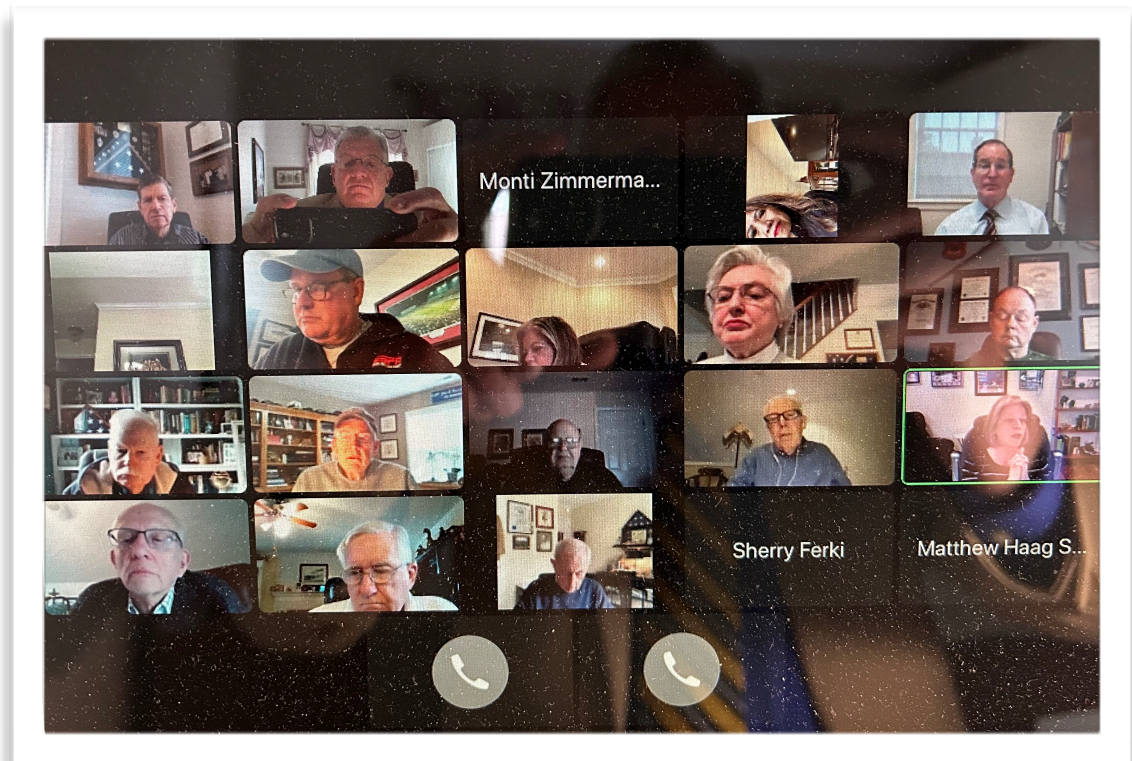


# MOAA Vice President Council/Chapter and Member Support Briefs Virginia Council of Chapters

For the third consecutive year, MOAA Vice President Council/Chapter and Member Support CAPT Jim Carman, USN (Ret) provided a comprehensive MOAA Brief at the First Quarter, meeting with question and answer session following.

View CAPT Carman's brief to VCOC here: [Virginia Council Update: 2023](#)

Pictured below: screenshot of the VCOC First Quarter meeting, held on January 19, 2023, 10:00am - 12:00pm, via Zoom Virtual Meeting Platform.



# Legislative Affairs

Tim Kaine  
Virginia



United States Senate

Washington D.C. 20510

January 19, 2023

Commander Lincoln Stephen Smith, USNR, Ret.

Dear Commander Smith:

I am pleased to congratulate the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), Virginia Council of Chapters (VCOC) on its continued work in behalf of our Commonwealth's Veterans.

I commend the time, support, and dedication that MOAA VCOC has given in advocating to ensure the rights and benefits of our Veterans are prioritized. Virginia is truly fortunate to have community leaders such as yourselves working to make the lives of Virginia's Veterans and their families better.

Best wishes for continued success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TK/K', written in a cursive style.

Tim Kaine

# The Military Coalition Holds Hill Day to Advocate for the Richard Star Act



On February 28, 2023, the Military Coalition (TMC) met at the Reserve Organization of America in DC to grow cosponsors for the Major Richard Star Act (H.R. 1282, S.R. 344). Some Fourteen teams conducted targeted advocacy with over 100 members of the 118th Congress. The goal is to reach 290 cosponsors and gain first bill on the House Consensus Calendar status, have the Star Act included in FY2024 NDAA or passed as standalone legislation, also grow the TMC's reputation.

Office visits were conducted at the Rayburn, Longworth, Cannon House office building, with a press conference following with Senators Jon Tester (D MT) and Mike Crapo (R ID) and Representatives Gus Bilirakis (R-FL 12th) and Raul Ruiz (D-CA 25th).

At this time, 50,300 Combat-injured veterans forced into early retirement by their injury are not receiving their vested longevity pay, with reduction of retirement pay. The



Major Richard Star Act (H.R. 1282/S. 344) will correct this injustice by allowing concurrent receipt of vested longevity pay and VA disability.

VCOC President CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret) served as a team leader with CAPT Daniel Mathena, USMC (Ret) and Ben Tice, USN. In the Longworth House Office Building, CDR Smith's team visited the offices of Representatives Greg Casar (D-TX-35), Don Beyer (D-VA-8), Kim Schrier (D-WA-8), John Larson (D-CT-1) and Jen Kiggans (R-VA-2).

Pictured below: VCOC President CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret) with CAPT Daniel Mathena, USMC (Ret) and Ben Tice, USN.



View the MOAA story of 1 March 2023 by Tony Lombardo at:

[Military Coalition and Lawmakers Rally as Star Act Support Expands in Congress](#)

The Military Coalition is comprised of 35 organizations representing more than 5.5 million members of the uniformed services - active, reserve, retired, survivors, veterans and their families.

To the TMC Day on Capitol Hill 2023, view TMC Fact sheet on the Major Richard Star Act below.



**Congress:** Support H.R. 1282/S. 344, The Major Richard Star Act, to ensure combat-injured veterans receive the vested retirement pay they earned and are no longer punished financially because of their injuries or illnesses.

## Support Combat-Injured Veterans by Passing the Major Richard Star Act

**Background:** Combat-injured veterans forced into early retirement by their injury are not receiving their vested longevity pay. Reducing retirement pay because of a disability is an injustice. The Major Richard Star Act (H.R. 1282/S. 344) will correct this injustice.

### UNDERSTANDING THE STAR ACT

This Act would support more than 50,300 combat-injured veterans by allowing concurrent receipt of vested longevity pay and VA disability. These individuals, often seriously disabled, are subject to an offset where their retirement pay is reduced for every dollar of VA disability received. In some cases, their retirement pay is completely eliminated.

**These two different payments, from two different sources, are for two different purposes.** DoD is responsible for retired pay covering vested years of service (in the past), while the VA is responsible for disability compensation covering a lifelong injury (in the future).

Congress acknowledged this as an injustice and partially fixed it through the FY 2004 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The part that wasn't corrected includes those who were injured in combat and forced to retire before completing 20 years of service, resulting in an offset where their retirement pay is reduced for every dollar of disability provided by the VA.

Reducing retirement pay due to a combat injury is clearly an injustice for combat-injured veterans, many of whom require full-time care. Spouses/family frequently give up their jobs to help their loved one. This increases financial concerns and stress.

Passing the Star Act will bring much-needed support to the 50,300 combat-injured veterans who often have compounding challenges from their injury.

### MAJ. RICHARD STAR, USAR (RET)

Major Star was an Army combat engineer who led route clearance and route construction missions in Afghanistan and Iraq. He was an energetic advocate for his fellow combat-injured veterans and passed away last year.

Combat engineers cleared the roads of dangerous IEDs and saved countless military and civilian lives. In the year after our withdrawal from Afghanistan, now is the time to clear the road for our combat-injured veterans to receive concurrent receipt.

### COST CONCERNS

The Star Act will authorize retirement pay for our combat-injured veterans calculated by years of service and grade achieved. DoD has a well-established structure for retired pay and would no longer pay Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) to those who receive concurrent receipt. The Star Act is sensitive to cost and does not authorize back pay.

Funding for the Star Act should not come at the expense of our uniformed community. Residual funds for Afghan Security Forces could have supported our combat-injured, some of whom were wounded from green-on-blue attacks from the same Afghan Security Forces we funded.

### TMC'S POSITION

Our combat-injured veterans earned their vested retirement pay for dedicated years of service and earned their disability compensation through extraordinary personal sacrifice. To reduce retirement pay because of a combat injury is an injustice.

TMC remains committed to working with Congress to find solutions consistent with previous efforts to enable these retirees to receive the compensation they earned through both their service and their sacrifice.

### The Military Coalition represents nearly 5.5 million members:

AAAA  
AFA  
AFSA  
AMVETS  
AMSUS  
AUSA  
AUSN  
BVA  
CWOA  
COA  
FRA  
GSW  
IAVA  
JWW  
K9s For Warriors  
MCL  
MCRA  
MCA  
MOAA  
MOPH  
NMFA  
NERA  
NCOA  
ROA  
SWAN  
TAPS  
TREA  
TIF  
USAWOA  
CPOA  
VFW  
VetsFirst,  
United Spinal Association  
VVA  
WWP



# MOAA Announces Dates, Topics for Spring Advocacy in Action Campaign

MOAA Vice President Government Relations Col. Dan Merry, USAF (Ret)

February 16, 2022



MOAA's annual Advocacy in Action (AiA) event is taking shape, and while there's more than a month until the official launch, there are several ways MOAA members can begin showing their support as the campaign draws closer.

## [TAKE ACTION: Ask Your Lawmakers to Support MOAA's Annual Campaign](#)

First, the basics: The 2022 AiA event will be held virtually from April 1-29. Based on Capitol Hill security measures and nationwide health challenges, we will again exercise appropriate measures of caution to bring our messages to legislators via virtual engagements. However, there may be opportunities for you to engage your legislators in person (safely) when they are home during Congress' spring break (April 11-22).

This year's advocacy topics:

- Support the Major Richard Star Act (concurrent receipt for combat-injured servicemembers)
- Reduce TRICARE Mental Health Copayments
- Enact a 4.6% Military Pay Raise in the FY 2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)

Learn more about each topic, and how MOAA chooses the topics, below. But first:

### What You Can Do Now

Contact a MOAA Chapter. Most engagements during the April campaign will originate from MOAA's councils and chapters. Their legislative leaders and volunteers make most of the appointments and arrangements with legislative offices. One of the advantages of the virtual environment is the use of online meeting platforms (Zoom, Teams, etc.) which can facilitate engagement from home; please contact your local chapter to see if they can add you to their efforts – it could be as easy as sending you a link to a meeting.

[Check out MOAA's Virtual Chapters](#)

[Find Your Local Chapter](#)

Save the Date. If you are not near a chapter, please mark your calendar for April 1 as the kickoff for AiA engagements. We will share another article like this one with more up-to-date information, talking points, and fact sheets on our three topics, as well as links to the latest information and MOAA's web-based letters, along with the phone number for MOAA's Capitol Switchboard if you would rather call your legislators.

Stay Informed. Be sure to subscribe to the weekly MOAA Newsletter for the latest AiA news and updates (MOAA members can [click here](#) to update their newsletter preferences). Keep up with all the latest advocacy news at MOAA's [Advocacy News page](#).

### How MOAA Picks the Topics

People often ask how we come up with the topics each year, and some wonder if their priorities are being considered in that process. I can assure our members we consider all the priorities, which are usually found within groupings of these priorities on our website. The decisions are driven by guidelines established by our board of directors. We want to ensure we are taking care of the currently serving troops and their families – as members of an officer association, we should be proud MOAA maintains this important perspective.

We also want to address an issue within our health care portfolio, as our members continue to see this as one of their priorities. When conditions permit, we also seek to leverage momentum on important issues – often the case in the second session of a Congress as they wrap up work from the previous year.

This year's topics:

The Major Richard Star Act (concurrent receipt for combat-injured servicemembers). Target legislation is H.R. 1282 with 186 co-sponsors as of Feb. 14 – picking up 35 new co-sponsors this session. The Senate's bill, S. 344, has 55 co-sponsors as of Feb. 14. We will build on this momentum from last year to get these bills to a floor vote, or have the bill's language made part of the FY 2023 NDAA with support from House and Senate leaders. This legislation impacts over 50,000 combat-injured service members who were not able to serve their full 20 years due to those injuries. Passage of this bill will also impact current and future members who may face the same fate of early retirements due to combat injuries.

TRICARE Mental Health Copayments. MOAA supports the Stop Copay Overpay Act (H.R. 4824) – mental health is increasingly important, and the issue is getting attention on the Hill due to pandemic impacts and the effects of social media on children's well-being. This topic acknowledges the national shortfall of access to quality mental health care and addresses TRICARE's financial barrier to care when it is available – a problem MOAA can help fix. This legislation will benefit our currently serving families on TRICARE Select and our working-age retirees and their families.

Military Pay Raise at 4.6%. This will be worked in the FY 2023 NDAA with insights in the president's budget and input from the Armed Services Committees in both chambers. Some legislators are interested in adjusting pay tables for the junior enlisted. We have yet to see details of any such plans, but in the meantime, we remain focused on the 4.6% raise for all ranks. This topic addresses the currently serving and their families (pay and benefits) and is significantly important to those who are about to retire.

What's Next?

We will follow up with several actions over the coming weeks:

The MOAA AIA website will be live in mid-March for those who want to get a head start on lobbying for these three important topics. Watch for updates at [MOAA.org/AiA](https://MOAA.org/AiA).

As noted above, around the same time our website goes live, a follow-up article at [MOAA.org](https://MOAA.org) will share links to everything you would need to go it alone with your legislators. However, we ask that you consider reaching out to your local chapter to possibly join their efforts.

Your April issue of Military Officer (available to Life and Premium members) will include a message from MOAA's president highlighting the AiA efforts, as well as more details on the topics and what we are trying to achieve with your help. Very important: The publication also will include tear-out letters for you to fold, seal, stamp, and mail to House and Senate leaders, making them even more aware of our efforts and seeking their support. These letters will highlight the Major Richard Star Act.

Throughout April, we will provide articles and links to Calls to Action via our new Legislative Action Center, which allows you to send messages to your legislators via our web-based letter service.

April 11-22 is the congressional working period in the states and districts: Your legislators will be home and hard at work campaigning. This is a golden opportunity to seek an appointment in person or virtually, depending on the comfort level of those involved.

Thank you for reviewing this timeline and putting some of these dates on your calendar. MOAA's reputation for advocacy is largely the result of our grassroots network across the nation; certainly, one of the main reasons The Hill news outlet has recognized MOAA as a top lobbyist for 15 years in a row. Our members have always been a part of this continued success.

## Meet MOAA's New Legislative Action Center

*By MOAA Staff*

If you frequently engage with your lawmakers on issues key to MOAA's mission, first please accept the sincere appreciation from everyone here at MOAA – your efforts are critical to our success protecting and expanding the earned pay and benefits for the uniformed services and veteran communities.

Second, you may notice some changes at our [Legislative Action Center](#) and on individual "Take Action" messages. Our new system is designed to make it even easier to reach out to your lawmakers on these issues, as well as track what MOAA is engaging on in the halls of Congress.

Here are some answers to some of the questions you may have about the new setup: [MOAA Take Action Center Instructions Video](#)

# Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Approves Voluntary Law Providing Property Tax Relief

COL Monti Zimmerman, USA (Ret)

VCOC Legislative Affairs Committee Chair

January 24, 2023 was a great day for the implementation of our voluntary law to provide property tax relief to surviving spouses of those who died on active duty. Fairfax County, who has the most KIA and died on active duty surviving spouses of any tax jurisdiction, voted in the affirmative for the relief. Click on below link to View the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors vote to provide property tax relief, scroll from time 4:05 to 4:39:

[The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Meeting of January 24, 2023](#)

Loudoun County is the other jurisdiction in Virginia voluntarily enacting the ordinance is, where two surviving spouses reside. With only two of the Virginia 50 counties enacting enacting ordinances, the requirement for a Constitutional Amendment is necessary.



Above: Virginia Senate, Vote for passage of SJ 231 Constitutional Amendment to provide property tax relief for surviving spouses of military members who died on active duty



Above: Surviving Spouse Kristen Fenty, COL Monti Zimmerman, USA (Ret) Senator Jeremy McPike, SJ 231 Sponsor, Surviving Spouse Traci Voelke, Surviving Spouse Erica Meadows



Above: Surviving Spouse Kristen Fenty, COL Monti Zimmerman, USA (Ret), Senator Jeremy McPike, SJ 231 Sponsor, Surviving Spouse Traci Voelke, Surviving Spouse Erica Meadows



# **VCOC Recognized for Legislative Advocacy by Senator Bryce Reeves (R 17th)**



Above: Taken by Senator Jeremy McPike (D 29th), VCOC Legislative Affairs Committee Chair COL Monti Zimmerman, USA (Ret) and VCOC President CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret) USNR are recognized on the floor of the Virginia Senate, 23 February 2023, for Legislative Advocacy by Senator Bryce Reeves (VA 17).

View the Virginia Senate Live Session Video Stream of above citation by Senator Bryce Reeves (R 17th) and Virginia Lieutenant Governor Winsome Earl Sears, Regular Session, 23 February 2023, 10:30am at: [Virginia Senate Live Session Video Stream](#)

# **A Conversation With Representative Abigail Spanberger (VA 07) and Virginia Senator Bryce Reeves (R 17th)**



With these conversations, VCOC President CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret) interviews Congresswoman Abigail Spanberger (VA 07) and Virginia State Senator Bryce Reeves (R 17th). Each discuss their career, following with spotlight on their work on Veterans Legislation in 2022, also the value of VCOC grass roots legislative advocacy.

Click on links below to listen.

[A Conversation With Representative Abigail Spanberger \(VA 07\)](#)

[A Conversation With State Senator Bryce Reeves \(R-17th\)](#)

# A Conversation with Tonya Star

With this interview, VCOG President CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret) interviews Tonya Star, Surviving Spouse of MAJ Richard Star, USA (Ret). Tonya spotlights her life, the Major Richard Star Act, also the value of Grass Roots Advocacy for passage of the Star Act.



[A Conversation with Tonya Star, Surviving Spouse of MAJ Richard Star](#)

# Spotlight on the Chapters

## VCOC President Installs PACMOAA Officer Slate

The Portsmouth Area Chapter held their first dinner meeting for 2023 on 12 January, Roger Brown's Restaurant and Sports Bar, Portsmouth, Virginia.

During the dinner, VCOC President CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret) installed the PACMOAA Officer Slate 2023, also highlighted the VCOC Homepage Front page to the Chapter membership.

View Story here: [PACMOAA Salute, January 2023](#)

Pictured below: Incoming PACMOAA President CAPT Bruce LaLonde, USN (Ret) presents Certificate of Appreciation to VCOC President CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret).



# Levels of Excellence

Congratulations to our Council and ten member chapters presented the Levels of Excellence Five Star Award for 2021, presented at the MOAA National Meeting in Kansas City.

## **Virginia Council of Chapters**

**Central Virginia Chapter**

**Falcons Landing Chapter**

**George C. Marshall Chapter**

**Heritage Chapter**

**Mount Vernon Chapter**

**Northern Virginia Chapter**

**Portsmouth Area Chapter**

**Richmond Area Chapter**

**Southwest Virginia Chapter**

**Virginia Peninsula Chapter**



# VCOC Chapter President Interview Series

With the ongoing Chapter President Interview Series, VCOC President CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret) interviews our Council Presidents, also Program Director, Council and Chapter Affairs, CAPT Frank Michael, USN (Ret).

Each interviewee tells a story, to include highlight of their careers in the United States Military, following with spotlight on overall activity for 2022, also the value of VCOC membership and legislative advocacy. Click below links to listen.

[A CONVERSATION WITH THE CENTRAL VIRGINIA CHAPTER PRESIDENT CAPT JOHN WARNECKE, USN \(RET\)](#)

[A CONVERSATION WITH THE SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA CHAPTER PRESIDENT CAPT MATT HAAG, USN \(RET\)](#)

[A CONVERSATION WITH THE PORTSMOUTH VIRGINIA AREA CHAPTER PRESIDENT COL BILL SMITH, USA \(RET\)](#)

[A CONVERSATION WITH THE MT. VERNON CHAPTER PRESIDENT Col. DOUG "SMASH" YUROVICH, USMC \(RET\)](#)

[A CONVERSATION WITH COL MARK RICH, USA \(Ret\), MOAA RICHMOND AREA CHAPTER PRESIDENT.](#)

[A CONVERSATION WITH Col. PHIL WALSH, USMC \(Ret\), PRESIDENT, MOAA FALCONS LANDING CHAPTER.](#)

[PROGRAM DIRECTOR, MOAA COUNCIL AND CHAPTER AFFAIRS, CAPT FRANK MICHAEL, USN \(Ret\)](#)

## Surviving Spouse Corner

Maj Sherry Ferki, USA (Ret)

I am the Surviving Spouse Liaison for VCOC, a retired Army nurse, the Surviving Spouse Liaison for PACMOAA, and a member of the Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter. Surviving spouses have not been represented in the CRIER in the past and I would like to start having a column in each CRIER. Surviving spouses make up 13-14 % of MOAA members and can serve in any chapter leadership position if they so desire.



Some of the resources available to surviving spouses include:

MOAA's Surviving Spouse Page includes sections like Surviving Spouse Corner; Surviving Spouse FAQs and Resources; and Health Care: How You and Your Family Can Access These Critical Benefits. <https://www.moaa.org/content/topic-and-landing-pages/i-am-a-surviving-spouse/>

I encourage each chapter to include the Surviving Spouse Corner article from MOAA each month at <https://www.moaa.org/content/about-moaa/meet-our-leaders/surviving-spouse-advisory-committee/surviving-spouse-corner/>. The articles are timely and very informative. The website also has archived articles that may be useful.

The Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter is another great resource, and they meet monthly. The program meetings alternate social meetings. Download a membership application at this link. It can also be obtained by sending a request to [mssvc02@gmail.com](mailto:mssvc02@gmail.com).

Webinar this year on Preparing a Spouse for Survivorship (2022) <https://www.moaa.org/content/benefits-and-discounts/transition-and-careers/transition-center-webinars/preparing-a-spouse-for-survivorship>

Several 2023 JLC Initiatives related to Surviving Spouses are currently being presented in the General Assembly. More information about them including a position paper for each one is available at <https://www.dvs.virginia.gov/dvs/joint-leadership-council-veterans-service-organizations-2>.

JLC 2023-01 Expand Tax Relief for Surviving Spouses of Military Service Members to include "Died in the Line-of-Duty". "Expands the current tax exemption for real property available to the surviving spouses of soldiers killed in action to the surviving spouses of soldiers who died in the line of duty with a Line of Duty determination from the U.S. Department of Defense" per Virginia "Legislative Information System. This is in the form of a Constitutional Amendment this year. The 2022 JLC objective that was passed by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor left the tax relief at the discretion of the local communities. The constitutional amendment would make it mandatory for all communities. HJ533 Delegate Tran (House bill) and SJ231 Senator McPike (Senate bill)

JLC 2023-02 Real Property Tax Exemption Effective Date would amend the Veterans Real Property Tax law to make explicit that the local jurisdictions must provide a veteran or surviving spouse the exemption as far back as the veteran or surviving spouse is eligible, but not earlier than 1 January 2011, regardless of when the veteran or surviving spouse applies. HB1470 Delegate Watts and HB23671 Delegate Wiley  
JLC 2023-4 Appropriate \$400,000 (GF) for State Veterans Cemeteries; Eliminate Spouses/Dependent and Guard/Reserve Burial Fee. Three House bills relate to this, 1 is for funding and 2 Senate bills again with 1 for funding. This would apply to the Albert G. Horton Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery in Suffolk. The fee for spouses is currently

\$400.00. National Cemeteries operated by the VA, like the one in Quantico and Culpepper, are 100% federally funded. They do not have a burial fee for veterans or spouses.

Please let me know if I can be of any assistance to you. Contact me at [navmedarmynurse@gmail.com](mailto:navmedarmynurse@gmail.com) or 757-922-7030.

## VCOC Homepage

In reminder, the [VCOC Homepage](#) presents six primary sections: About Us, Chapters, Meetings and Resources, Crier Newsletter, Legislative Affairs and Contact Us.

The purpose of our homepage is fourfold. First, provide an online platform to assist in ensuring the longterm viability of VCOC. Second, further grow the MOAA brand in Virginia. Third, provide a platform for VCOC chapter involvement and recognition. Finally, provide an improved call to action to VCOC membership, encouraging website visitors to multiple actions, such as joining a MOAA chapter.

To the aforementioned, chapter stories are most welcome for posting to the VCOC Homepage in an ongoing basis. Contact VCOC Webmaster CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret) at [mvng288@aol.com](mailto:mvng288@aol.com) with any stories or announcements that you may have.

## VCOC Strategic Plan

In accordance with the MOAA Strategic Plan 2022-2026, MOAA Council and chapter Policies and Procedures Guide and VCOC By Laws, the VCOC Strategic Plan was approved by majority vote at the VCOC Executive Committee Meeting on 31 October 2021.

View the VCOC Strategic Plan here: [VCOC Strategic Plan 2022-2024](#). Scroll down to the VCOC Strategic Plan 2022-2024.

The MOAA Strategic Plan establishes and articulates the MOAA Board of Directors' strategic vision, mission, values, goals, and six specific strategies to accomplish MOAA's mission.

View the MOAA Strategic Plan here: [MOAA Strategic Plan 2022-2026](#)

# VCOC Meeting Schedule 2023

The VCOC Meeting Schedule for 2023, subject to modification:

Second Quarter Meeting: April 12, 10:00am - 12:00pm, Hybrid Meeting, Zoom Virtual with in person attendance encouraged, George C. Marshall's Dodona Manor, 312 East Market Street, Leesburg, Virginia.

Third Quarter Meeting: July 12, 10:00am - 12:00pm, meeting type and location TBD.

Fourth Quarter Meeting: October 11, 10:00am - 12:00pm, Biennial Meeting and Luncheon, location TBD.

## Council And Chapter Awards

**MOAA Levels of Excellence Award:** Each year, councils and chapters may request to be recognized for one of two Levels of Excellence awards. Councils and chapters that want to be considered for [Levels of Excellence Awards](#). Levels of Excellence Award need to submit a nomination by May 1.

**Col. Marvin J. Harris Communications Awards:** MOAA's annual contest identifying those councils and chapters that do an outstanding job communicating with their members.

**Col Steve Strobridge Award for Advocacy:** Council: Col Michael Kelly, USAF (Ret), Kansas State Legislative Liaison, Kansas.

**Council of Chapters Chapter:** Dr. Ron Sarg (posthumously), formerly Legislative Chair, Dover (Del.) Chapter.

**2022 Surviving Spouse Liaison Excellence Award:** Surviving Spouse Liaisons work at the Council and Chapter level to ensure fellow survivors remain connected to the military family and participate in local and national programs and advocacy efforts.

**MOAA ROTC/JROTC Awards Program:** MOAA has PDF fillable certificates for ROTC and JROTC available for leaders to add their chapter name and the name of the award recipient.

**ROTC and JROTC fillable PDF certificates, click here:** [MOAA Certificates of Recognition and Pins](#)

Medals and certificates can be purchased at the [MOAA Store](#). Note for high schools and universities requesting that someone from MOAA make a presentation: If there is a local MOAA chapter in your area, you may want to consider contacting them. Many of our 400-plus MOAA affiliates are still supporting ROTC/JROTC programs in their area. These programs are entirely voluntary; no MOAA chapter is under any obligation to present a certificate to ROTC and JROTC units. You can use the [Chapter Locator](#) to find your closest available chapter.

## Community Outreach Grant 2023

The MOAA Foundation started accepting applications for its 2023 Community Outreach Grants. Grants of up to \$5,000 are offered to MOAA councils or chapters providing services to local military and veteran families — either directly or through partnerships with other community organizations — in one of 10 areas of critical military and veteran family need: housing, food assistance, employment, health (including behavioral health), family strength, community reintegration, financial assistance, legal assistance, transportation, and emergency relief. The application website and grant criteria can be found here: [Community Outreach Grant Application](#)

## Veterans Eligible for Travel and Hotel Discounts

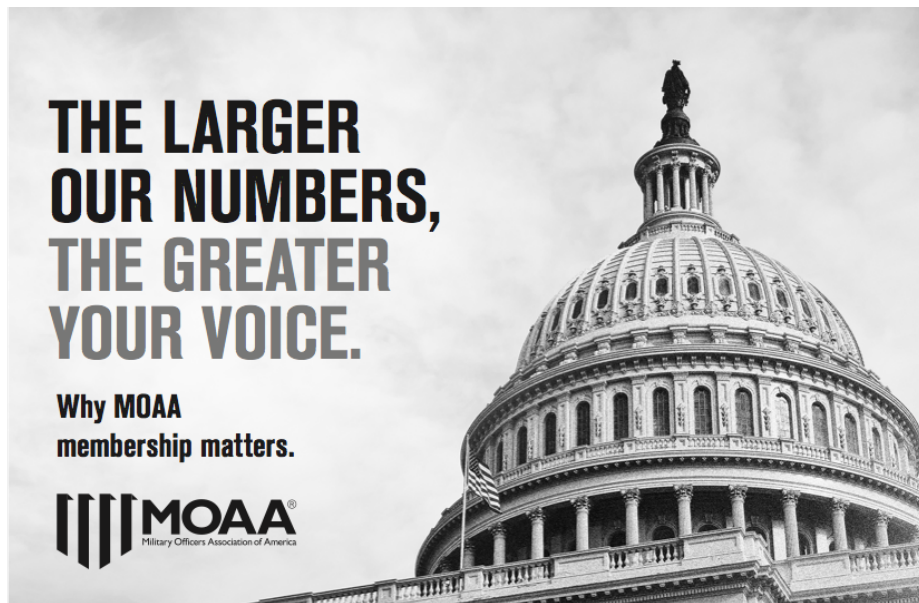
[American Forces Travel](#) is a Department of Defense online leisure travel website managed by Morale, Welfare, and Recreation and supported by Priceline. Veterans can access exclusive deals on hotels, flights, rental cars, cruises, packages and event tickets.



Now 350,000 strong, the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is the country's leading organization protecting the rights of military servicemembers and their families. Those who belong to MOAA not only lend their voices to a greater cause, but they also gain access to extensive benefits tailored to the needs and lifestyles of military officers and their surviving spouses. MOAA members proudly hail from every branch of the uniformed services. To them, we have made the same promise they have made to their country: Never Stop Serving.

# THE LARGER OUR NUMBERS, THE GREATER YOUR VOICE.

Why MOAA  
membership matters.



Select YOUR Membership:  LIFE  PREMIUM  BASIC

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Rank/Branch of Service \_\_\_\_\_  
 Active  Retired  Former  Reserve  National Guard  Surviving Spouse  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_

To ensure deliverability of MOAA communications, please provide a personal email without a ".mil" domain if available. We value your privacy. MOAA does not rent or sell its members' emails to third parties. If you include your email address, you will receive e-communications from MOAA as a member benefit. Visit [www.moaa.org/email](http://www.moaa.org/email) for details.

Spouse Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Spouse email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Your spouse has access to all of your MOAA member benefits.  
 Local Chapter Name \_\_\_\_\_

**For LIFE or PREMIUM options, choose one of the following payment methods:  
Method of payment**

Check (please make payable to MOAA)  Visa  Mastercard  AMEX  Discover  
 Charge my card the full amount due \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Card number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**For LIFE only, consider E-Z Pay with 10 convenient, interest-free installments**

You'll receive monthly invoices, and your balance will reflect credit for any unused dues paid on your current annual membership.

Enclosed is my check payable to MOAA for \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 (1/10th of my dues: invoices will be sent monthly for remaining dues)  
 Charge my credit card above in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 (1/10th of my dues: invoices will be sent monthly for remaining dues)  
 Check here to have your credit card automatically charged monthly for the remaining installment payments.

Dues to MOAA are not deductible as a charitable contribution for federal tax purposes. Annual membership dues include a \$16.95 subscription to Military Officer magazine.

**Send To: MOAA, PO Box 1488 • Merrifield, VA 22116-9820**

**For faster service, call (800) 234-MOAA (6622) or visit [www.moaa.org/join](http://www.moaa.org/join).**


**LIFE  
Membership Dues**


Dues are based on your current age.

49 and under	\$894
Age 50-54	\$852
Age 55-59	\$804
Age 60-64	\$740
Age 65-69	\$662
Age 70-74	\$574
Age 75-79	\$476
Age 80-84	\$370
Age 85-89	\$266
Age 90-94	\$171
Age 95-99	\$104
Age 100+	FREE

**PREMIUM  
Membership Dues**

**One-Year PREMIUM**  
\$59 (Surviving Spouse – \$53)

**Two-Year PREMIUM**  
\$100 (Surviving Spouse – \$90) 

**Three-Year PREMIUM**  
\$132 (Surviving Spouse – \$120) 

\*off full annual rate

**BASIC  
Membership Dues**

**FREE**

M2200DGCHP

# MOAA Guidance On Partisan Political Activities

**Partisan Political Activities:** As organizations exempt from federal taxation under Sec. 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code, MOAA and its affiliates must take care to avoid engaging in partisan political activities. Under IRS rules, we are prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.

**Candidates for Public Office:** A candidate for public office is an individual who offers himself or her- self, or is proposed by others, as a contestant for an elective public of- fice, whether such office is national, state, or local, and includes incumbent candidates. The prohibition also extends beyond declared candidates and may apply to efforts to recruit an individual to run for office or advance exploratory activities. The prohibition also applies to advocating for the platform of one political party over another.

**Prohibited Activities:** Activities which constitute participation or intervention in a polit- ical campaign on behalf of or in opposition to a candidate include, but are not limited to, the publication or distribution of written or printed statements or the making of oral statements on behalf of or in opposition to such a candidate. It is clear that the prohibi- tion on partisan political activity prohibits such outright actions such as posting a “Vote for Biden” or “Vote for Trump” on the organization’s website, or “Support Republican Candidates” or “Vote Democratic.”

In addition to these obvious examples, the prohibition goes well beyond direct expres- sions of support. In determining whether an organization is engaged in unlawful parti- san political activities, the IRS ap- plies a “facts and circumstances” test. The IRS looks not only to the expressed language, but to external factors, such as the commu- nication’s timing, its targeted audience, and how the message relates to public policy positions that distinguish a candidate in a campaign.

**Consequences for Violations:** The consequences to an organization that violates the prohibition on partisan political activity can be severe including the loss of its tax ex- empt status and the imposition of certain excise taxes. For public charities, like The MOAA Foundation and the MOAA Scholarship Fund, the IRS can disallow tax deduc- tions for charitable contributions. In addition, for an organization whose mission in- volves advocacy on key military community issues, MOAA must seek support from elected representatives from both parties. Engaging in partisan political activities on behalf of one party or candidate would seriously undermine MOAA’s ability to achieve the bipartisan consensus on key issues essential to achieving its legislative objectives.



**Personal Opinions:** As individuals, members and leaders of MOAA and MOAA's affiliates are not prohibited from engaging in partisan political activities so long as they do so in way that makes it clear they are acting for themselves and do not appear to be speaking on behalf of MOAA or its affiliates. For example, it is permissible for an individual to express his or her personal preference in support of or in opposition to a candidate or political party. And they may do so publicly. However, when expressing their personal opinions or preferences, they may not make reference to their MOAA position, use MOAA communications channels, use MOAA letterhead or newsletters, identify themselves as MOAA leaders, or imply that MOAA or its members share their beliefs.

## **MOAA HAS FOUR VIRTUAL CHAPTERS**

They are: Uniformed Services Nurse Advocates Virtual Chapter, the Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter, the Public Health Service Virtual Chapter, and the Chaplains Virtual Chapter.

Interested in participating in one of these virtual chapters, or in championing another group? Contact CAPT Pat L. Williams, USN (Ret), MOAA's Program Director for Engagement, at [patw@moaa.org](mailto:patw@moaa.org), or CAPT Erin Stone, JAGC, USN (Ret), Senior Director for Council and Chapter Affairs, at [erins@moaa.org](mailto:erins@moaa.org), for more information.

## **DIC Surviving Spouses/DIC Facebook Page**

Join the Facebook page “ DIC Surviving Spouses/DIC Increase Advocacy “ today and get involved!

For more information contact MOAA surviving spouse Edith Smith, phone (703) 569-3380 or email [esmith@capitolcrusader.com](mailto:esmith@capitolcrusader.com)

View the Page at: [MOAA Surviving Spouse Facebook Page](#)

# USS John F. Kennedy (CV 67) International Peacekeeping Forces, Lebanon

CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret)



The purpose of this article is to share the story of the deployment of the USS John F. Kennedy in 1983. Destined for an otherwise routine Mediterranean Sea Deployment, Kennedy was diverted that year to support of International Peacekeeping Forces, Lebanon.

During this deployment, MOAA Vice President, Council/Chapter Member Support CAPT Jim Carman, USN (Ret) was aide to RADM Roger Box, USN, embarked as Commander Carrier Group Six, aboard the USS John F. Kennedy (CV 67). I served on the JFK Bridge Watch Team, which included 24/7 flight operations. From the Naval History and Heritage Command homepage, a brief history the Big John Deployment in 1983 follows.

“Washington Post military correspondent George C. Wilson (whose book, Supercarrier, would chronicle the deployment that unfolded) embarked, sailed from Norfolk on 27 September 1983, and after conducting carquals off the Virginia capes (27

September-2 October) set course, with CVW-3 (VF-11 and VF-31, VA-75 and VA-85, VS-22, VAW-126 and VAQ-137, and HS-7) for Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, for a port visit from 13-16 October. During the voyage, over 2,000 "pollywogs" were initiated into the order of King Neptune's realm when the ship crossed the Equator on 8 October. While in Rio, John F. Kennedy's crew provided material and manpower aid for the John F. Kennedy Brazilian Elementary School. They bid farewell to Rio on 17 October as the ship steamed east for another deployment to the Med.

On 23 October 1983, while John F. Kennedy was en route to the Med, a suicide bomber struck the U.S. Marine Corps Multi-National Forces (MNF) Barracks at Beirut International Airport, killing 241 Marines. That same day, another suicide car bomb killed 58 French paratroopers. Five days after those terrorist acts, John F. Kennedy entered the Med, one day ahead of schedule. The prevailing international situation resulted in her scheduled 2-7 November port visit to Marseille, France, being cancelled. John F. Kennedy's VF-31, however, suffered two tragic losses inside of three days. On 8 November 1983, Lieutenant (jg) Cole P. O'Neil and Commander John C. Scull (RIO), died when their F-14A (Modex AC 205) inexplicably flew into the sea while on a CAP station near the coast of Lebanon. Another VF-31 F-14A (AC 212) on 11 November; Lieutenant David P. Jancarski, the pilot, suffered serious injuries in the egress, Lieutenant Commander Oliver L. Wright (RIO), emerged from the ordeal unhurt. HS-7 helos rescued both men, the Sea King flown by Lieutenant Commander Thomas R. Withers, with Aviation Antisubmarine Warfare Operator 3d Class John Curran and Aviation Antisubmarine Warfare Operator Airman Daniel Rockel as rescue crewmen, picking up Jancarski and the Sea King flown by Lieutenant Richard A. Strickland, with rescue aircrew Mark Phillips and Mike Mellema, picking up Wright.

On 24 November 1983, the carrier's C-1A Trader, Caroline II, was lost at sea, during a ferry flight, near Palma. Aviation Machinist's Mate 2d Class Fernando Pena perished in the crash.

That same day, 24 November 1983, John F. Kennedy's F-14As began flying tactical air reconnaissance pod system (TARPS) missions over Lebanon, their crews gathering valuable intelligence to target Syrian positions for the gunfire support ships offshore. John F. Kennedy, together with Independence, continued to provide support for the MNF throughout the rest of 1983, as the result of which the planned port visit to Alexandria and a Suez Canal transit were cancelled. Instead, John F. Kennedy returned to Haifa on the morning of 28 November, remaining there until 1 December. John F. Kennedy engaged in combat for the first time soon thereafter, when she returned to the waters off Lebanon. On 3 December 1983, two VF-31 F-14As, on a TARPS mission, the Tomcat flown by Lieutenant Commander John C. Burch with Lieutenant John W. Miller as RIO, the escort flown by Lieutenant Gregory G. Streit with Lieutenant (j.g.) James E. McAloon as RIO, encountered surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) and anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) fire.

The following morning, 4 December 1983, John F. Kennedy and Independence aircraft (CVW-6) pounded Syrian anti-aircraft and artillery positions near Hammana,

Lebanon, in a coordinated retaliatory strike. VA-85 flew seven combat sorties and VA-75 three, in addition to launching two of its KA-6Ds to serve as aerial refuelers for the strike aircraft; VAQ-137's EA-6Bs provided electronic countermeasures/electronic support measures, while VF-11 flew CAP missions with its F-14s and VF-31 flew rescue CAP and CAP over the force offshore with their Tomcats. SAMs, however, downed one Independence A-7E and one John F. Kennedy VA-85 A-6E.

Syrian troops captured Lieutenant Robert O. Goodman, the Intruder's bombardier/navigator (ultimately released on 3 January 1984, he returned to the United States). Lieutenant Mark A. Lange, Lieutenant Goodman's pilot, however, died from injuries received during the ejection. On 7 December, the Syrians returned Lange's body to the American Embassy in Beirut. A Christian Lebanese fisherman and his son picked up Commander Edward K. Andrews, the A-7E pilot, CVW-6's commander, and he soon reached American hands.

Secretary of Defense Casper W. Weinberger, issued authorization on 10 December 1983 for John F. Kennedy's indefinite stay in the eastern Med. Not transiting to the Indian Ocean as previously scheduled, John F. Kennedy thus began 1984 continuing her support of the MNF. On 20 January, the carrier left the eastern Med; she visited Naples (23-30 January) before returning to her station off Lebanon. In response to a resumption of hostile artillery fire upon U.S. Marine positions, CVW-3's Intruders carried out air strikes against the offending guns, taking no losses in return.

John F. Kennedy, given a brief respite from MNF support duty to conduct NATO exercises near Cyprus in conjunction with the British and French navies, changed station to north of Alexandria on 22 March 1984. On 9 April, she received orders to proceed to Naples, where she would stay from 12-18 April. While there, Saratoga relieved John F. Kennedy, releasing her to sail for home."

In April of 2011, I attended an evening with Caroline Kennedy, where she presented her book "She Walks In Beauty". When meeting, she inquired if I had stayed in touch with my Kennedy shipmates. With her reminder, I thanked her for the encouragement, replying that I would.

In the 2014 timeframe I reactivated with MOAA, to include volunteering to serve in Chapter and Council leadership positions. Amidst my renewed MOAA membership and activity, I was indeed able to reconnect with a Kennedy shipmate - in this case, MOAA Vice President Council and Chapter Affairs CAPT Jim Carman, USN (Ret).

Among the many benefits of MOAA membership is the opportunity to reunite with a shipmate, then tell our story. To reuniting with Jim some 40 years later and to the service of each member of the crew on the Big John, this brief history closes with the final page of our cruise book: In Memoriam, by Kennedy Chaplain James E. Doffin, Jr., USN.



# IN MEMORIUM

When we remember that everything is passing, that all persons, things, and events as we know them shall one day disappear, the paths of reality itself draws us to meditation. We are less inclined to take life for granted, to fall into complacency. We become more awake, aware, and appreciative. Each day is a gift to be lived simply.

To our fallen shipmates, we pay tribute; we commend them to Almighty God; and we do more. These men invested their life's blood in the future of America, and they made an act of faith in us. They believe that you and I would redeem that investment of their lives by creating the future they believed worth dying for. Our commitment of freedom, dignity, peace, and justice must guarantee that their sacrifice was worthwhile.

CHAPLAIN JAMES E. DOFFIN, JR. CAPT. USN

navysite.de



# **Military Officers Association of America**

**Organized February 12, 1929  
Incorporated 1944**

## *Preamble*

**To inculcate and stimulate love of our country and the flag;**

**To defend the honor, integrity, and supremacy of our National Government and the Constitution of the United States;**

**To advocate military forces adequate to the defense of our country;**

**To foster the integrity and prestige of uniformed service;**

**To foster fraternal relations between all branches of the various Services from which our members are drawn;**

**To further the education of children of Service personnel;**

**To aid personnel of the Services from which our members are drawn, and their family members and survivors, in every proper and legitimate manner; and**

**To present their rights and interests when Service matters are under consideration.**



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- Improve legislative effectiveness, national and state.
- 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.
- Improve vitality and excellence of chapters.

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The Newsletter is published for members and friends of the MOAA Virginia Council of Chapters.

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