



# Heartlander

South Central Florida Chapter  
March 2019



## South Central Florida Chapter of MOAA

P.O. Box 7841  
Sebring, FL 33872



### Chapter Officers:

- President: Mike Borders, tel. (h) 863-402-8292; (c) 703-795-8776
- Vice President: Fred Carino, tel. 863-381-3636
- Treasurer, David Grey, tel. 785-282-5445
- Secretary: Mark Milia, tel. 407-222-4867
- Recruiting/Retention: Ed Gadbois, tel. 808-280-7773
- Legislative Affairs: Tom Nunnallee, tel. 863-446-0055
- Personal Affairs: Craig Smith, tel. 207-703-3402
- Newsletter: Bob Brooks, tel. 863-471-6318
- Past President: Roy Whitton

Our Web Site: [www.scfcmoaa.org](http://www.scfcmoaa.org)

Florida Council of Chapters website: [www.moaaf.org](http://www.moaaf.org)

Take Action. MOAA Legislative Action Link:

<http://www.moaaf.org/takeaction/?tab=Legislative-Action-Center#Legislative-Action-Center>

**5 March 2019:** Dinner/social with spouses/better halves/significant others: 6:30 PM, Caddy Shack. 3122 Golfview Road, Sebring, FL

**3 April 2019.** Board Meeting: 1700 (5:00 PM) Business Meeting, 1830hrs (6:30 PM). Venue: Sea Services Museum, 1402 Roseland Ave., Sebring, FL 33870, (corner of Kenilworth and Roseland, about a mile east of Sebring High School).

Do you want to get away? Come join us at the Florida Council of Chapters of MOAA annual convention. This year it will be held at Safety Harbor Resort and Spa in Tampa. The convention runs from 20/21-23 June. You can get the convention rate for three days before or after if you want to make a mini-vacation out of it. See the following link for more info and to register: <http://moaaf.org/Convention.aspx>.

**President's Message:** This edition of the *Heartlander* focuses on Legislative Affairs. This is the second March that we put such emphasis on legislative advocacy. Why? MOAA is first and foremost an advocacy organization. As a Forbes Top 10 winner for lobbying as a Veteran Service Organization, MOAA is the leader in our nation's capital when it comes to advocating for our nation's veterans, currently serving, and future members of the military. MOAA is recognized as a perennial co-chair of the *Military Coalition*, an organization of some 35 military/veteran-related groups. Our MOAA leadership is well-known in D.C. —respected for their knowledge and passion (Cont.)

**President's Message (Cont):** for our military. We know that we don't have unions in the military, and for good reason. But MOAA is as close as it comes. When you take advantage of TRICARE for LIFE, or a range of other benefits, you can thank MOAA. And MOAA doesn't just look out for officers. When MOAA "Storms the Hill" in April, it is advocating for all uniformed service members—every service, every rank, past, current, and future. When you get the cards or electronic messages requesting that you contact your elected representatives, you need to do so. The benefits you save may be your own. These are earned benefits that our elected representatives have either failed to protect, or are interested in chipping away at. When MOAA advocates for particular legislative action, it is rarely to ask for something new. It is almost always asking that our political leaders in Washington keep the promises that were made years ago. Whether it be pay parity for the active force, resistance to increases in TRICARE or pharmacy fees (or even elimination of the earned benefit), taking care of "forgotten" widows, or whatever, MOAA is the sentinel at the gate. I cannot emphasize strongly enough how important it is that you take action when asked to do so. It matters. I had the privilege to participate in the Storming the Hill event last April. I will do so again this April in my capacity as the Vice President for the Florida Council of Chapters of MOAA. I will report back to you afterwards. The Storming event involves MOAA representatives from all over the country. We get formal training/education prior to the event, and then for one day, all senators' and representatives' offices are visited by MOAA members from their respective state. In the case of Florida, we have to visit 29 offices in one day. We use three teams to do this, meaning that we visit 9 or 10 offices per team. It is a long, but very interesting and rewarding day. It gives new meaning to TAKE ACTION.

Our March dinner is on the 5th at 6:30 PM at the Caddy Shack. We look forward to seeing you there—be there or be square!!

**Membership Renewal:** Chapter Members, it's time to "REUP" for 2019. Please bring to the next meeting \$20 in cash, or a check made out to SCFC of MOAA in the same amount. If you would like to mail it to us the address is: SCFC of MOAA, PO Box 7841, Sebring, FL 33872. Scholarship donations are also appreciated.

**REUP Campaign for 2019**  
**We Achieved a 100% Renewal Rate**  
**Thanks and Congratulations!!!**

## Message for the Heartlander from Col Dan Merry, USAF (Ret), MOAA's National Vice President for Government Relations

Last year at this time I wrote to you to share my view on grassroots advocacy and how impactful you all can be when you forge relationships with members of Congress and their staffs. Members of Congress will know about MOAA from one of three likely places, from home by talking with people like you; on the Hill by talking with people like me; or because they themselves are MOAA members or they know someone who is. My team and I, here in Alexandria, continue to rely on you to make our engagements on this end even more meaningful – for those who are already doing this, I thank you. For those of you who are not, I encourage you to make a concerted effort to become an advocate.

For those latter individuals, as some have asked, “What are some of the first steps to becoming an advocate? And please don’t tell me to go to their office as it is simply too far away.” I get it, Tallahassee is a bit of a hike from Tampa, over 250 miles (Miami is 500). But if close enough, a visit is one of the most impactful things you can do – people who visit offices are highly likely to vote and encourage others to do so. For those who are too far away, personal letters and phone calls make a difference too.

Starting with letters and phone calls: as we hear from staffers, and from experience, we know personal letters (typed or handwritten) get attention – usually by the staff members who prioritize these for their Member. Keep them short enough to invite the read; include a salutary note that acknowledges them and thanks them for support (give previous example with specifics if available). Next, frame your request; i.e., “*I am writing today to ask you to support H.R. 553, the initiative to repeal the forfeiture of a portion of their purchased annuity to offset the Dependency Indemnity Compensation from the VA. You may already be aware and supportive but I wanted to personally enlist your follow-on support as this is very important to me and many others beyond those surviving spouses.*”

Then, follow up with a phone call to the staff, ensure you talk to as many of them as possible, get to know them by name and ask them directly if they saw your letter and if they made sure their Member had a chance to review it. If you do this a couple of times it will be like learning to ride a bike – gets easier and the experience keeps getting better. In the end, our elected officials know their future depends on how well they take care of people like you, like us, who are very willing to engage the political process. Thank you for making this effort to join our army of advocates.

**Would you like to buy a MOAA polo shirt or some other MOAA item?** Go to the MOAA “Store,” click on the following link: <http://www.tmgwebstores.com/moaa/default.html> You can also call them at 1-866-860-9293. They have everything from men’s and ladies’ polos, coffee cups, lapel pins, hats, you name it.

## From the Florida Council Legislative Chair – *Bob Bienvenue*

It has been my privilege to serve as the FCoC Legislative Chair since 2014. Over that time, I have become more familiar with the make-up of the 29 positions in the Florida Congressional Delegation. I monitor the sponsorship and voting records of all those elected officials. To my dismay, I have not seen the level of support I expected from our delegation for the issues and legislation that MOAA asks us to promote. Those of us who actively advocate MOAA’s agenda and communicate routinely with our elected Representatives hear and read their public statements which often do not line up with their official acts. We have been disappointed many, many times, not achieving support for our goals on behalf of the 880,000 currently serving military and their families, military retirees and their dependents, and surviving spouses here in Florida. But I persevere because as an officer I “share in a fundamental and continuing responsibility to protect the interests and welfare of the Nation and of the men and women who are and have been in our charge.” **[MOAA Resolution No. 6]**

- With all of that in mind I ask you to commit to becoming an active advocate during the upcoming legislative year for those constituents listed above. Here’s what you can do: Visit this MOAA.org webpage, and enter your email address to begin to receive the Weekly MOAA Newsletter [http://moaa.highroadsolution.com/moaa\\_preference\\_page/EmailSearch.aspx](http://moaa.highroadsolution.com/moaa_preference_page/EmailSearch.aspx) Be sure that you look at the preferences and check all those you wish to be informed on.
- Often there will be a link in the Newsletter articles that say something like “**ACT NOW to send the MOAA message to Congress**”. The participation rate for sending those requests is very low – **let’s do our job to reverse that** – just click on the link and it will take you to a background statement and the draft message ready to send via email to your representatives (based on the zip code and address in your MOAA membership file.)
- A day or two after sending out those messages call your congressperson’s DC office to ask how she/he will be reacting to that message. Go to this link <https://www.house.gov/representatives#state-florida> to find your congressperson then click on their name to go the website with contact info to find their phone numbers. (Cont.)

### WHO CAN JOIN MOAA?

MOAA membership is open to all officers, commissioned or warrant, whether on active duty, retired, former, reserve or national guard of all the seven uniformed services, including the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Public Health Service.

**From the Florida Council Legislative Chair – Bob Bienvenue (Cont.)**

- One additional action is to call their District office (phone numbers can be found the same way as above) to talk to a staffer there and let them know what you have done and ask them to follow-up to be sure you get a response.

MOAA has already published its Goals for the year. What is going to happen next is that the President's Budget

Request will be released on March 12<sup>th</sup> and MOAA will pour over it to identify possible impacts on our constituents. **The "Calls for Action" will come in a furious barrage** after that leading up to the **Annual**

**Storming the Hill** scheduled for April 10<sup>th</sup>. In addition, specific legislation will be drafted by the House Armed Services and Senate Armed Services Committees to incorporate the proposals in the President's Budget and address other matters such as options to reduce the annual deficit reported out by The Congressional Budget Office late last year. **Read about those threats to retirement, healthcare and other compensation/**

**benefits here:** [https://www.moaa.org/Content/Publications-and-Media/News-Articles/2019-News-Articles/Advocacy/Tell-Congress-Not-to-Shrink-the-Deficit-by-Shorting-Troops-and-Veterans.aspx?](https://www.moaa.org/Content/Publications-and-Media/News-Articles/2019-News-Articles/Advocacy/Tell-Congress-Not-to-Shrink-the-Deficit-by-Shorting-Troops-and-Veterans.aspx?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=TMNsend&utm_content=NC+AFHR+1+ERet+L+NC)

[utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=TMNsend&utm\\_content=NC+AFHR+1+ERet+L+NC](https://www.moaa.org/Content/Publications-and-Media/News-Articles/2019-News-Articles/Advocacy/Tell-Congress-Not-to-Shrink-the-Deficit-by-Shorting-Troops-and-Veterans.aspx?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=TMNsend&utm_content=NC+AFHR+1+ERet+L+NC)

**More requests to "Take Action" regarding any legislative provisions are sure to result.**

Your chapter President and Legislative Liaison have received the February FCoC **Communique** with more detailed suggested actions at the chapter level to reinforce the message that will be carried to the DC offices to be visited by the Florida Storming team in April.

***The bottom line to fulfilling MOAA's mission on an individual basis is to be INFORMED, be ENGAGED, and be PERSISTENT. MOAA is out front leading us in this mission but the grassroots team alongside is the key to success.***

**Meanwhile from Tallahassee: Steve Murray, Lt. Col., USAF, (Ret), Communications Director, Florida Department of Veterans Affairs  
Election Day 2018**

Amendment 10 was approved by Florida voters during the Nov. 6, 2018 election. The Constitutional Amendment makes the [Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs](#) a constitutionally *required* office reporting to the Governor and Cabinet. It took effect Jan. 8, 2019. FDVA operates a network of [seven state veterans' homes](#) and provides statewide [outreach](#) to connect Florida's more than 1.5 million veterans with their earned services, benefits and support.

Gov. Ron DeSantis, a Navy veteran, became Florida's 46th governor on Jan. 8, 2019. Former State Rep. (Cont.)

**Meanwhile from Tallahassee: (Cont.)**

**Inauguration**

[Danny Burgess](#), an Army Reserve Captain, was appointed as Executive Director of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs by Governor DeSantis and the Cabinet during the Jan. 11 Cabinet Meeting.

**2019 Florida Legislative Session**

The 2019 session will begin on March 5, 2019 and conclude on May 3, 2019. The status of proposed veteran-related legislation can be monitored by visiting <http://floridavets.org/news/veteran-legislation/>.

**FDVA is advocating for two pieces of known legislation in the coming session.**

1. As written in Florida Statute, any partially disabled veteran who is age 65 or older, any portion of whose disability was combat-related, and who was honorably discharged, may be eligible for a discount from the amount of ad valorem tax on the homestead commensurate with the percentage of the veteran's permanent service-connected disability. The discount currently does not carry over to the surviving spouse upon the death of the recipient. FDVA is seeking to expand the benefit to the surviving spouse to match other existing veteran-related property tax benefits via a joint resolution on Homestead Exemption for Surviving Spouses of Deceased Disabled Veterans. Florida voters in the November 2020 general election would vote on the issue, and if passed, the benefit would take effect on Jan. 1, 2021.
2. A bill is under consideration which allows FDVA the option to fund the annual [Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame](#), to include the travel reimbursements of Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame Council members.

**Key Upcoming Events**

- March 5 – Opening Day of 2019 Florida Legislative Session
- March 27 – Senior Day at the Florida Capitol
- March 29 – National Vietnam War Veterans Day
- April 2 – Florida National Guard Day at the Capitol
- May 3 – Closing Day of 2019 Florida Legislative Session

**FDVA Legislative Affairs Office (Tallahassee)**

Allison Sitte

FDVA Legislative and Cabinet Affairs Director

Phone: (850) 487-1533, ext. 7723

[SitteA@fdva.state.fl.us](mailto:SitteA@fdva.state.fl.us)

Jessica Hunter (née Kraynak)

FDVA Deputy Legislative and Cabinet Affairs Director

Phone: (850) 487-1533, ext. 7712

[HunterJ@fdva.state.fl.us](mailto:HunterJ@fdva.state.fl.us)

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(Cont.)

## Meanwhile from Tallahassee: (Cont.)

### Florida Veterans' Benefits Guide

The 2019 edition of the *Florida Veterans' Benefits Guide* is now available for shipping. Contact (850) 487-1533 to order your copy today. An online version of the guide is available at <http://floridavets.org/resources/va-benefits-guide/>.

## SURVIVING SPOUSE CORNER—Craig Smith, Surviving Spouse and Personal Affairs Chair

MOAA Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter met 29 January 2019. The Agenda included Legislative issues, Benefits and Finances, Benefits Education and Counseling, and SBP/DIC Latest Bill HR-553 followed by general discussion.

The big three items MOAA will focus on in the new congress will be **Pay, Tricare and SBP/DIC offset**. Lt. General Akins and Admiral Doran Chairman of MOAA's BOD, both addressed the group.

This Legislative year a new congress was installed, all bills including **HR 553 SBC/DIC offset** will have to be resubmitted to the new congress. Please contact your representative to pressure them on being a sponsor and vote for this Bill. To date there are 83 co-sponsors. Although a senate bill has not been introduced you can still contact your Senators to be aware of this Bill. Tricare and Tricare for Life is also on the chopping block. Be aware that you will be paying more for this coverage if congress gets it way. Again, your voice is crucial to stop the attacks on your earned benefits.

Dan Merry announced that storming the Hill date is 10 April this year. If you intend to go you need to coordinate with MOAA State Council by March 8th.

General Discussion focused on the needs of surviving spouses. They should ensure they have 2 to 3 months of emergency savings set aside as it takes that long to reinstitute Retiree spousal benefits. And up to six months living expenses. Ensure access to passwords, all bank accounts are in both names as well as safe deposit boxes, after one spouse said all their important death documents were in his name and after he died it already has been 4 months for the court to authorize the bank to open it. It was suggested to use and keep updated the survivors, checklist available on the MOAA website. They should also be aware of assistance at local Survivor Support Centers, Retiree Service Office on most Military bases, Area Agency on Aging, most cities and Survivor Outreach Services. It was recommended to do a Google search on any of the above key words and of course MOAA.

Spouses should be aware of unscrupulous Financial Services that are not Military affiliated and are only interested in making money off of your loss.

The next quarterly meeting will be April 27, discussion will focus on "How best to help a new Surviving Spouse, and Effective ways to disseminate information for Surviving spouses (who are not MOAA members). Everyone is encouraged to email Micki or Gail with suggestions. (Cont.)

## SURVIVING SPOUSE CORNER (Cont.)

The Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter is open to Surviving Spouses only but you need to register to gain access. Applications can be obtained by contacting Craig Smith for a hard copy to mail or obtain an email version. My contact info is below [craigsmith03905@yahoo.com](mailto:craigsmith03905@yahoo.com) or call 207-703-3402. Or by contacting the two Chair persons below.

If you have a specific question or concern the following Chairpersons are more than willing to help you address your specific concern. Their contact information is below:

Gail Joyce  
[mssvc02@gmail.com](mailto:mssvc02@gmail.com)  
(214) 676-2132

Micki Costello  
[mssvc02@gmail.com](mailto:mssvc02@gmail.com)  
(214) 770-4140

**If you want to sign up for a range of updates from MOAA National**, you can go to: [http://moaa.highroadsolution.com/moaa\\_preference\\_page/EmailSearch.aspx](http://moaa.highroadsolution.com/moaa_preference_page/EmailSearch.aspx) and follow the prompts. It gives various options for the type of information desired, as well as the frequency you may wish to receive it. Don't miss out on this valuable resource!

## Are you looking for a way to serve veterans in a very direct and meaningful way?

Well, here is your chance. The County Veteran Services Office, located right behind the Watering Hole restaurant is short staffed and needs help desperately. They need someone to answer phones, greet folks coming in, and generally serve as an all-around receptionist. There is no pay for this job, but there is reward—the reward of helping our veterans. If you want to volunteer, call Denise Williams or Carol West at 863-402-6623.

**New Members:** None this month

**March Birthdays:**

Mar 4	Ronald Buckley
Mar 4	Roger Desjardins
Mar 8	Lance Marine
Mar 9	Michael Borders
Mar 10	Daniel Fennell
Mar 23	Jim LeVangie
Mar 25	David Humble
Mar 28	Peggy Branch

**Editor's Note:** If your birthday is not recognized, it is because you did not include it on your application form. Please contact our Secretary, Mark Milia at 407-222-4867, and provide the same.

**Nametags:** If you don't have and DO want a chapter nametag, please let us know. We need your info as you want it to appear on the tag: Name, Rank, Service. Spouse/significant other's name. The cost is \$10.00 each. Here is an example:



## **MOAA's Top 10 Legislative Goals for 2019 Explained:**

### **1. The Goal: Ensure any TRICARE reform sustains access to top-quality care.**

**Background:** Access to quality care is paramount for all beneficiaries in TRICARE programs and VA Community Networks - regardless of location. Access has been enhanced by technology, such as the DoD-VA Electronic Health Record and the expansion of telehealth capabilities.

**MOAA's Stance:** Savings gained from reforms should benefit the health care system and beneficiaries. Military treatment facilities (MTFs) remain instrumental to an operational medical force, which is necessary to support a military ready force, and should continue to support beneficiary care to sustain medical training platforms.

**Actions:** Strengthen our partnership with Defense Health Agency (DHA) working groups and executive sessions. Engage The Military Coalition's Healthcare Committee. Continue to administer and drive results of MOAA's health care surveys. Closely monitor the new role DHA has for oversight of MTFs.

**[TAKE ACTION: [Visit our Legislative Action Center](#)]**

### **2. The Goal: Prevent disproportional TRICARE fee increases.**

**Background:** The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) recently introduced, as a potential option, TRICARE for Life enrollment fees and minimum out-of-pocket requirements as ways the federal budget could escape red ink.

Independent of the CBO report ([PDF](#)), DoD and Congress have stated retiree health care costs are spiraling out of control, and beneficiaries do not pay enough for their health care. Based on DoD's own data, MOAA knows this is not true - the difference is attributable to rising institutional and readiness costs. Despite that, the report and the ongoing budget pressure have turned TRICARE For Life into a potential target for fee increases to offset readiness or other programs.

**MOAA's Stance:** Military retirees, through their service and sacrifice, have paid in full for their TRICARE For Life benefits. Congress - not DoD - should determine appropriate TRICARE fees.

**Actions:** Reverse or significantly decrease the 2018 TRICARE Prime copayment increases for grandfathered/Group-A beneficiaries. Modify fee structure to reduce out-of-pocket costs for successive specialty appointments, such as physical therapy or mental health care. Protect TRICARE For Life as a second payer to Medicare Part B.

### **3. The Goal: Sustain military pay comparability with the private sector.**

**Background:** A residual 2.6-percent pay-raise gap still exists between servicemembers and private-sector civilians, attributable to three years of pay-raise caps. Political pressure to reduce costs might lead Congress to again cap military pay raises, widening the pay-raise gap between military and civilians.

**MOAA's Stance:** As the cost of labor increases across the nation, so too should the paychecks of our uniformed servicemembers. Adequate pay and allowances - (Cont.)

## **MOAA's Top 10 Legislative Goals (Cont.)**

including competitive raises - are key to recruiting and retaining an effective all-volunteer force. This issue affects all currently serving uniformed personnel and their families, and succeeding on this issue has a positive, far-reaching impact. Any pay raise set by the FY2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) must match the Employment Cost Index (ECI) increase of 3.1 percent -- anything lower will make the pay gap wider.

**Actions:** Maintain continuous, unified messaging to legislators and service leadership, advising annual military pay raises approved by Congress correlate with ECI to help overcome damage done by the three recent pay caps (2014-2016). Coordinate with The Military Coalition to address this wide-reaching imperative of support to those in uniform, and seek closure of the 2.6-percent gap as soon as feasible.

### **4. The Goal: Stop erosion of compensation and non-pay quality-of-life benefits.**

**Background:** Other components of compensation are equally essential to recruiting and retaining the all-volunteer force. Political pressure to reduce costs could encourage Congress to reconsider the calculations for the basic allowance for housing (BAH), as it has done in recent years. First was an attempt to do away with BAH for dual-military families. The following year, Congress attempted to do away with the with-dependent rate BAH for those dual-military couples with children.

**MOAA's Stance:** Other pays and allowances are essential to shaping the force with the proper skill sets and experience. As the Blended Retirement System matures, these pays will become even more important to recruiting and retention.

**Actions:** Continue to oppose proposals to reduce compensation or undermine long-term retention. Assess progress of the Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation's review of Regular Military Compensation and potential changes to a salary system.

### **5. The Goal: End financial penalties for military survivors.**

**Background:** Nearly 67,000 military survivors lose between \$900 and \$1,500 per month due to the widows tax. The widows tax is the amount of Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) payment offset by Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC).

**MOAA's Stance:** SBP and DIC are two different payments for two different reasons. The offset should be eliminated, and DIC should be improved to align with other federal survivor benefits. Additionally, survivors' and dependents' educational assistance benefits should be increased.

**Actions:** Ensure legislation is introduced in the 116th Congress to address survivor benefits. Educate legislators, staffers, and other stakeholders about the inequities. Mobilize MOAA members and The Military Coalition to engage and press for legislation to be included in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). (Cont.)

## **MOAA's Top 10 Legislative Goals (Cont.)**

### **6. The Goal: End concurrent receipt penalties for military retirees.**

**Background:** Retirees with a 40-percent or lower disability rating and those with a 30-percent or higher disability rating who are forced to retire before completing a full 20-year military career, are prohibited from receiving military retired pay concurrent with VA disability compensation. Political pressure to keep budget costs down has remained the main threat to getting legislation passed to end these financial penalties.

**MOAA's Stance:** All eligible retirees should receive both retirement and disability compensation.

**Actions:** Ensure legislation is introduced in the 116th Congress to address Chapter 61 inequities. Educate legislators and congressional staff about the impact these financial penalties have on some of our most vulnerable retirees. Mobilize our membership and The Military Coalition to engage Capitol Hill.

### **7. The Goal: Achieve equity of benefits for Guard and Reserve members with their active duty counterparts.**

**Background:** An operational Guard and Reserve is an essential component to the national defense strategy because they make up approximately 38 percent of U.S. uniformed manpower.

**MOAA's Stance:** Achieving pay and benefits parity with active duty forces is vital to recruiting, retaining, and sustaining forces for the Guard and Reserve supporting our nation's defense strategy.

**Actions:** Encourage Congress to advance equal pay and benefits for similar service by the Guard and Reserve relative to active duty troops. Build partnerships with federal agencies, such as the Department of Labor, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, and state governors to expand and strengthen employer support for Guard and Reserve members. Appeal to The Military Coalition and its Guard and Reserve Committee to expand influence and reach in all areas affecting pay and benefits issues.

### **8. The Goal: Strengthen DoD-VA collaboration and services to support wounded warriors and an expanding population of women veterans.**

**Background:** Programs developed to support wounded warriors and their families and caregivers since Sept. 11, 2001, continue to be essential to readiness and the war-fighting mission of the future. Veterans who served in past and current wars still struggle to obtain needed benefits due to the lack of congressional action on key issues, particularly [toxic exposures and their long-term impacts](#).

The Pentagon has worked to forge collaborative relationships with other government and nongovernment agencies - most significantly the VA. Also evolving is a greater appreciation for the specific differences in health care and support for women veterans.

**MOAA's Stance:** Improving upon this collaboration will require investments in leadership, resources, and funding - to include oversight and reporting. (Cont.)

## **MOAA's Top 10 Legislative Goals (Cont.)**

As we progress, DoD's and the VA's evolving systems must continue in sync and remain fully aligned to delivering seamless care and benefits.

**Actions:** Monitor the FY 2019 NDAA requirement for a review and assessment of DoD and service wounded warrior programs. Seek legislation forcing the VA to address known gaps in benefits to veterans. Involve The Military Coalition's Veterans Committee to expand influence and reach in all areas affecting veterans' issues. Engage and advocate on behalf of the VA - when needed - to ensure the agency is adequately resourced and equipped to deliver benefits to veterans without backlogs or delays. Preserve the integrity of and access to DoD and VA health systems for dually eligible beneficiaries.

### **9. The Goal: Ensure timely access to service-earned VA benefits.**

**Background:** The veteran population of nearly 22 million is projected to decline in coming years. Demand for VA health care and benefits, however, steadily grows because of the aging and unique demographics of this population.

**MOAA's Stance:** Major health care and benefit system reforms have been implemented in recent years but require an ongoing commitment and investments to meet demand and ensure timely access. Continuing implementation will pose challenges to fund evolving technologies, infrastructure, [electronic health records](#), full staffing at every echelon, and the various support systems that tie these efforts together. Further, political forces continue to threaten or erode the core VA health and benefit missions and foundational services.

**Actions:** Oppose efforts to use veterans' disability benefits compensation or other benefits to pay for VA system improvements and diminish or restrict access to service-earned benefits. Press DoD and the VA to achieve true interoperability of electronic medical, personnel, and benefits records to improve medical outcomes and delivery of benefits. Mandate DoD and the VA to develop protocols and establish a mechanism to address service-connected illnesses and environmental exposures and institute a framework for managing toxic exposures that might happen in the future.

### **10. The Goal: Protect military and veteran family support programs and policies.**

**Background:** Congress and DoD recognize military and veteran family quality of life is critical to recruiting and retaining the all-volunteer force. Often, support programs for military and veteran families are the first to be cut when government funds become tight.

**MOAA's Stance:** It is necessary to update family support programs and policies to reflect the needs of today's military families. Spouse employment, children's education, special needs, commissaries and exchanges, and morale, welfare, and recreation (MWR) programs are essential today. Adequate, affordable, and safe housing remains a concern for all military families, especially those in high-cost areas where options are limited. (Cont.)

## MOAA's Top 10 Legislative Goals (Cont.)

**Actions:** Educate members of Congress and their staffers on the importance of military family readiness and issues affecting military and veteran families. Protect programming and subsidies essential to MWR and family readiness. Eliminate health and safety hazards in military base housing. Decrease military spouse unemployment and underemployment. Ensure quality of life and health of military and veteran families.

### Chapter Calendar

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### PURPOSES OF THE MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is a not-for-profit corporation that is operated exclusively to further the interests of the nation and its uniformed services personnel, their family members, and survivors.

#### From the preamble to the Bylaws of The Military Officers Association of America

- To inculcate and stimulate love of country and 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

**We unite to form THE MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA**

**TAKE ACTION!!**  
[www.moaa.org](http://www.moaa.org)

## Chapter Members in Action



**Mike presents February guest speaker Mark Barie with a MOAA cup. Mark spoke about the Civil War.**

### MOAA Legislative Goals for 2019:

- Ensure any TRICARE reform sustains access to top-quality care.
- Prevent disproportional TRICARE fee increases.
- Sustain military pay comparability with the private sector.
- Block erosion of compensation and non-pay quality of life benefits.
- End financial penalties for military survivors.
- End concurrent receipt penalties for military retirees.
- Achieve equity of benefits for Guard/Reserve members with their active duty counterparts.
- Strengthen DoD-VA collaboration and services to support wounded warriors and an expanding population of women veterans.
- Ensure timely access to service-earned VA benefits.
- Protect military and veteran family support programs and policies.

**Take Action. MOAA Legislative Action Link:**  
<http://www.moaa.org/takeaction/?tab=Legislative-Action-Center#Legislative-Action-Center>

**Chapter Members in Action**



**Mike presents leadership award certificates to Mark Milia and Fred Carino. Mark and Fred were recognized for their leadership and community support.**



**At the Highlands County Veterans Council Military Ball, our own Fred Carino was announced as Highlands County "Veteran of the Year." John Cecil, President of the Sea Services Museum presented the plaque to Fred.**



**The MOAA Chapter donated a complete POW/MIA table to the Veterans Council to ensure it would always be present and that they would never be forgotten.**

## USEFUL ADDRESSES, PHONE NUMBERS AND WEB SITES

Air Force Retiree Services: (800) 531-7502;  
[www.retirees.af.mil](http://www.retirees.af.mil)

Arlington National Cemetery: (703) 607-8000;  
[www.arlingtoncemetery.org](http://www.arlingtoncemetery.org)

Armed Forces Retirement Home: (800) 422-9988;  
[www.afrh.gov](http://www.afrh.gov)

AAFES: (214) 312-2011; [www.aafes.com](http://www.aafes.com)

Army Retired Services: (703) 571-7232; <https://soldierforlife.army.mil/retirement>

Burial at Sea: (866) 787-0081; <http://www.public.navy.mil/bupersnpc/support/casualty/mortuary/Pages/BurialAtSea.aspx> Combat Related Special Compensation: <http://www.secnav.navy.mil/mra/CORB/Pages/CRSCB/default.aspx> DEERS: (800)-538-9552, Fax: (831) 655-8317; [www.tricare.osd.mil/deers](http://www.tricare.osd.mil/deers)

Defense Commissary Agency: [www.commissaries.com](http://www.commissaries.com)

DFAS Casualty Assistance Branch: (800) 321-1080 or (216) 5225955; (For Reporting a Retiree's death, option #1)

I.D. Cards Benefits and Eligibility: (866) 827-5672; <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl/appj/site;jsessionid=liU5y-4sPqyCtIImmGJJThnUWUeAanhb15EaGXQn4lh2pEEKpso!416826654?execution=e1s1>

Internal Revenue Service: (800) 829-1040; [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)

Marine Corps Retired Affairs: <https://www.manpower.usmc.mil/webcenter/portal/MRAHome>  
(Hover over "Veteran Marines" then click on "Retired Services")

Medicare: (800) 633-4227. TTY: (877) 486-2048;  
[www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)

Military Officers Assoc. of America: (800) 234-6622;  
[www.moaa.org](http://www.moaa.org)

National Burial Services: (800) 697-6940

NPC Navy Reserve Personnel Management (PERS 9):  
(866) 827-5672; [www.npc.navy.mil/career/reservepersonnelmgmt/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.npc.navy.mil/career/reservepersonnelmgmt/Pages/default.aspx)

Navy Casualty Assistance: (800) 368-3202

Navy Retired Activities Office: (866) U-ASK-NPC  
(866-827-5672)

MILL RetiredActivities@navy.mil; [www.npc.navy.mil/support/retired\\_activities/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.npc.navy.mil/support/retired_activities/Pages/default.aspx)

Reserve Component SBP: (866) 827-5672 ask for PERS-912

Retiree Dental — Delta Dental: (888) 838-8737;  
[www.trdp.org](http://www.trdp.org)

Servicemembers Group Insurance (SGLI): (800) 419-1473; [www.insurance.va.gov](http://www.insurance.va.gov)

Social Security Administration: (800) 772-1213;  
[www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)

**Pay/SBP Questions:** [www.dfas.mil](http://www.dfas.mil). Pay inquiries and update of pay or SBP records in case of death, divorce, or remarriage:

### Retiree:

Defense Finance and Accounting Service  
U.S. Military Retirement Pay  
P.O. Box 7130 London KY 40742-7130  
(800) 321-1080, (216) 522-5955

### SBP/RSFPP annuitant:

Defense Finance and Accounting Service  
U.S. Military Annuitant Pay  
P.O. Box 7131 London KY 40742-7131  
(800) 321-1080, (216) 522-5955  
(800) 669-8477; [www.insurance.va.gov](http://www.insurance.va.gov)

**Burial information:** (800) 827-1000; [www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov)

**GI Bill:** (888) 442-4551; [www.gbill.va.gov](http://www.gbill.va.gov)

**VA:** [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) **Regional offices:** (800) 827-1000  
(overseas retirees should contact the American Embassy/consulate)

**TDD** (800) 89-4833

**Insurance:** A Regional Office and Insurance Center  
PO Box 7208 (claims inquiries) -ORPO  
Box 7327 (loans) -ORPO  
Box 7787 (payments)  
Philadelphia PA 19101  
(800) 669-8477; [www.insurance.va.gov](http://www.insurance.va.gov)