THE SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN EAGLE

30 April 2026

Volume IX, Issue 4

2026 Meetings

Board Meetings			Chapter/Other Meetings			
Jan 20	Feb 17	Mar 17	Jan 29 Chapter Lunch/ Induction of Officers	Apr 13-16 Advocacy in Action	April 17 Chapter Lunch TACOM Guest Speaker	May 9 International Armed Forces Dining out
None	May 19	Jun 16	May (TBD) Chapter Dinner	Jun 16 Chapter Zoom	Jul 16 Chapter Lunch Guest Speaker	Sep 19 Retiree Appreciation Day
None	Aug 18	Sep 15	Oct 20 Chapter Zoom Mtg	Nov 5 Chapter Mtg / Election of Officers	Nov 9 Veteran's Day Remembrance	Dec 19 Wreaths Across America
Oct 20	None	Dec 15				

Unless otherwise noted, our in-person meetings take place at "The Rusty Bucket" 30450 Telegraph Rd, Bingham Farms, MI 48025. The meetings are announced well in advance via email, our website and this newsletter. If you need information about chapter happenings, contact one of our Board members at this link.

Chapter Board Members

President & Treasurer
LCDR Rich Higgins, USN (Ret)

Vice President & Membership
CDR Roy Yaple, USN (Ret)

Secretary and Surviving Spouse Liaison
LTC Larry Powell, USA (Ret)

Chapter Address

Chapter Digital links:
Chapter web site, www.semimoaa.org

For all non-digital correspondence use the following address:
560 Barrington Rd. Grosse Pointe Park, MI 48230

Membership

Membership is open to those who hold or have ever held a warrant or commission in any component of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard, Public Health Service, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and their surviving spouses.
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. MOAA members proudly hail from every branch of the uniformed services. To them, we have made the same promise that they have made to their country: Never Stop Serving. Although membership in the national MOAA organization is not a requirement to join this Chapter, we strongly encourage you to join. The basic level of MOAA membership is free.
To become a member click HERE

Under the Eagle's Wing...a Message from the President

Greetings all,

I'd like to extend a warm welcome to our newest members. We're honored to have you join our community of dedicated officers who continue to serve—through advocacy, fellowship, and support to one another and the uniformed services represented by MOAA. I encourage each of you to get involved, attend an event, and bring your perspective to our mission. You'll find this chapter to be both impactful and rewarding.

It was my privilege to partner with Capitol Area Chapter President COL Bruce Bahr (ARNG, Ret.) in representing the Michigan Council of Chapters at MOAA's Advocacy in Action (AiA) event in Washington, D.C., where MOAA members from across the country met directly with more than 300 lawmakers and/or their legislative aides from 49 states to advocate for issues impacting currently serving, retired, and veteran service members and their families.

During our time on Capitol Hill, we met with Legislative Aides representing Michigan Senators Gary Peters and Elissa Slotkin and Representatives Shri Thanedar (MI-13), Tom Barrett (MI-07), Debbie Dingell (MI-06), and Hillary Scholten (MI-03), and advocated for MOAA's 2026 Legislative Priorities, including:

- The Richard Star Act – restoring full earned benefits for combat-injured retirees
- The Military CARE Act – implementing a digital reporting system to document Military Treatment Facility access issues
- The Shutdown Fairness Act – ensuring continued pay for service members, including eligible NOAA members, during government shutdowns
- The GUARD VA Benefits Act – protecting veterans from predatory claims practices

These conversations were substantive, well-received, and reinforced the importance of consistent, informed engagement with lawmakers and their staff.

One of the most meaningful moments of the week was attending the Honoree Ceremony held in a hearing room at the Dirksen Senate Office Building, where several lawmakers and staff were recognized for their leadership and commitment to advancing legislation supporting service members and their families. Honorees included, Senators Tim Kaine and John Boozman, Representatives Don Beyer and Mike Kelly, and Legislative Aides Patrick Flood and Jordan Nasif. CLICK HERE to learn more.

Their recognition was a powerful reminder that advocacy works—and that relationships with elected officials and their staffs truly matter.

And on a lighter note, one of the highlights was riding the Capitol trolley that connects the Senate and House office buildings, avoiding a 20-minute walk in 90+ degree weather.

Continued next page

I strongly encourage all members to mark your calendars for the Michigan Council of Chapters Convention on Friday, August 14, 2026, at the Doherty Hotel in Clare, Michigan.

This one-day event will focus on Membership, Advocacy, and Community—with an outstanding lineup of speakers and opportunities to connect with fellow MOAA members from across the state. Whether you're a long-time member or newly joined, this convention is designed to inform, energize, and strengthen our collective impact.

If you haven't already done so, please take a moment and CLICK HERE to visit the Council website and submit your RSVP. Your early response helps us finalize planning and ensure a successful event.

Our chapter continues to grow because of members like you—committed, informed, and willing to stay engaged. Whether through attending meetings, supporting our initiatives, or participating in advocacy efforts, your involvement makes a difference.

Thank you for your continued service and support of MOAA and our Southeastern Michigan Chapter.

Respectively,

Rich

Rich Higgins, LCDR, USN (Ret.)
President
Southeastern Michigan Chapter
Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)

LCDR Rich Higgins (USN, RET) and COL Bruce Bahr (ARNG, Ret) meet with Sen. Gary Peters' legislative assistant Nicole Meservey, accompanied by Karen Ruedisueli, MOAA's Director of Health Affairs (Top left). CAPT Paul Frost (USN Ret), MOAA Program Director for Financial Education and Veteran Services accompanies Rich and Bruce for a selfie (left). Members of MOAA staff along with representatives from chapters across the country pose on the Capitol steps. (above)

Chapter Luncheon and Tour

We are honored to have BG Behn, Commanding General, U.S. Army Tank-automotive and Armaments Command, Army Materiel Command as our host and guest speaker at our upcoming General Meeting and luncheon. We will meet on the Detroit Arsenal on Friday, April 17th at 12:00 noon. The Arsenal is located at 6501 E. 11 Mile Rd, Detroit Arsenal, MI. The main gate for public access is on Mound Rd. just south of 12 Mile Rd. An email was sent with details for accessing the installation and where to meet.

See you there!

Disclaimer

- The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is a nonprofit military and veterans association dedicated to maintaining a strong national defense and ensuring our nation keeps its commitments to currently serving, retired, and former members of the uniformed services and their families and survivors.
- The Southeastern Michigan Chapter of MOAA (SEMI M OAA) is affiliated with the Michigan Council MOAA and the national MOAA Organization and are all nonpartisan
- All material or other information - including links - contained in the SEMI MOAA newsletter is provided as a public service to military service members and their families.
- The contents of this publication is subject to periodic updating.
- Although every attempt is made to ensure that information is accurate and timely, the content is presented "as is" and without warranties.
- Use of the information is strictly voluntary and at the user's sole risk.

US Representative Names and Districts

Click to open webpage

5 - Tim Walberg
6 - Debbie Dingell
7 - Tom Barrett
8 - Kristen Rivet
9 - Lisa McLain
10 - John James
11 - Haley Stevens
12 - Rashida Tlaib
13 - Shri Thanedar

119th Congress

Michigan MOAA State Convention – Join Us in Clare!

Mark your calendar now for the Michigan Council of Chapters' first statewide MOAA convention, to be held Friday, August 14, 2026, at the Doherty Hotel in Clare, Michigan. This inaugural event will bring together MOAA members and chapter leaders from across the state for a day focused on strengthening our chapters and expanding our impact in support of the uniformed services community.

The convention will center on three important themes that define MOAA's mission at the local level: Membership, Advocacy, and Community. Throughout the day we will share ideas for growing and sustaining strong chapters, discuss effective ways to support MOAA's legislative priorities, and explore opportunities for chapters to deepen their engagement within their local communities.

We are assembling an excellent lineup of speakers. Confirmed participants include Terry J. Sabo, Director of the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency, Virginia "Gail" Joyce, MOAA Board Member and nationally recognized leader on MOAA's Surviving Spouse Advisory Council, and Congressman Tom Barrett. Additional speakers are being invited as the program continues to develop.

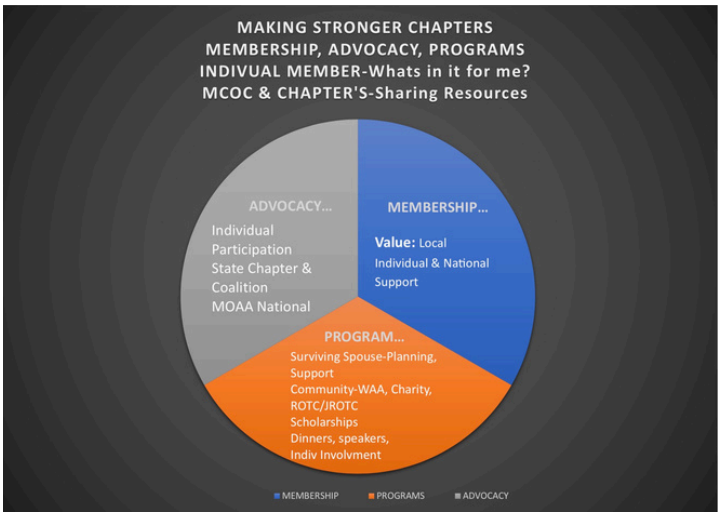
To assist with planning, information about the convention is posted on the Council website along with a short, no-obligation RSVP survey. The survey asks a few quick questions—such as how likely you are to attend, your chapter affiliation, and whether you might stay overnight at the hotel or participate in the optional Friday evening dinner. Your responses will help the Council estimate attendance and plan meeting space and meals. No payment is required at this time, and submitting the RSVP does not commit you to attend.

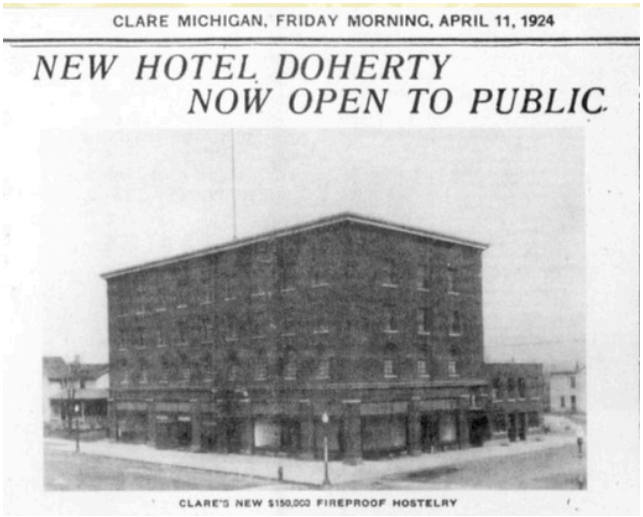
For those traveling from a distance, a block of rooms has been arranged at the Doherty Hotel using the reservation code MICoC. Discounted rates are $112 for Thursday night (August 13) and $156 for Friday night (August 14).

You can learn more about the event and RSVP here:

https://www.moaamcoc.com/convention.html

We hope members from every Michigan chapter will consider joining us for this important first statewide gathering. Your participation will help ensure that this new Michigan Council convention becomes a valuable annual opportunity for collaboration, leadership development, and fellowship among MOAA members across our state.




CLARE MICHIGAN, FRIDAY MORNING, APRIL 11, 1924

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Legislative Corner

The MOAA Advocacy Update

Every week, MOAA's advocacy leaders and other experts discuss issues of importance to our members and the uniformed services community. Watch the latest **here**.

To stay informed, you can subscribe to the MOAA YouTube channel **here.**

To contact your legislators and to learn about what MOAA is working on with Congress, click **here**.

Advocacy Actions Through MOAA's Legislative Action Center

Supporting Service Members Through MOAA's Advocacy Platform

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) provides a user-friendly Advocacy section on its homepage that empowers individuals to support Service Members in a variety of impactful ways.

Accessing the Legislative Action Center

By clicking on the "Legislative Action Center" under the Advocacy section, users can take several steps to influence legislation and policy. With just one click, you have the ability to write letters directly to your Congressional representatives, ensuring your voice is heard on important issues.

Exploring Legislative Subjects

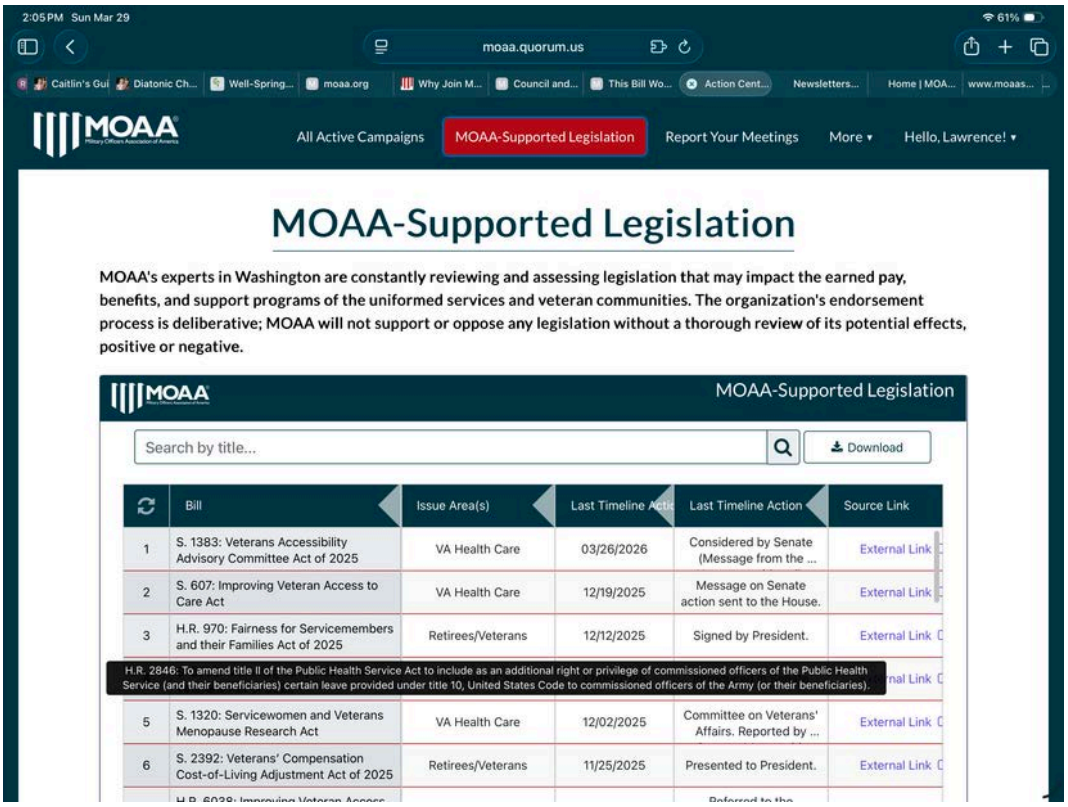
The platform offers options to select specific subjects, such as "Currently Serving" or "DOD Health Care." Once you choose a subject, you are presented with a list of bills currently under consideration, giving you the opportunity to review and support legislative efforts relevant to those topics.

MOAA Supported Legislation

If you are seeking broader legislative initiatives, an option labeled "MOAA Supported Legislation" is available across the top menu. This section features a curated list of approximately 50 bills that are being processed in either the House or the Senate. You can explore these bills and lend your support to the ones that matter most to you.

Take Action

Please take a moment to review the available resources and let your representatives know which issues are important to you. To take action, click on this **link**. Your participation helps ensure that the concerns of Service Members receive proper attention.



Advocacy at the State Level

The Michigan Commanders Group, a coalition of Congressionally Charted Veterans Services Organizations, has identified its most critical issue, namely combating veteran suicide. 133,867 U.S. Military veterans died by suicide between 2001 and 2021. Over 40,000 of these suicides occurred for veterans who had been using the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for their care. More than 68% of all veterans treated at the VA are prescribed psychiatric drugs and 28% are prescribed antidepressants.

Urgent action is needed by the Michigan Legislature and the Governor to save lives and ensure more Michigan families do not suffer further tragedies.

To learn more about this subject, go to this link and ask your representative to get involved.

The chapter welcomes the following new members:

Steve Moon. U.S. Army retired Chaplaln (Colonel) Steve Moon served as Methodist chaplain on active duty 1982-2013. His many duty locations included LA, GA, CO, NJ, VA, KS, MI, MD, HI, Germany, and the Pentagon. Following his military retirement he worked at Logistic Management Institute, Tysons Corner, VA in support of the US Army Office of the Chief of Chaplains. He grew up on a farm in Iowa and now lives with my wife Kathleen in Novi, MI. His education includes degrees from Vennard College, Asbury Theological Seminary, John Wesley Theological Seminary, Central Michigan University, and the Army War College. He joined MOAA (TROA at the time) earlier in his career and has greatly appreciated their support for many years.

Anthony (Tony) Woodrich. A former USAF Captain (honorably separated), has over 30 years of project management experience. He served at Hanscom AFB as a Manufacturing Officer/Buyer, Civil Engineering Officer, and Prime BEEF OIC before joining Administrative Controls Management (ACM), his family's firm.
Tony has led project management and EVMS efforts across automotive, pharmaceutical, FAA, nuclear, and utility sectors. His work includes PMO development, cost estimating, CPM scheduling, and capital project audits. He has supported EPC forecasting for pharmaceutical facilities, developed maintenance forecasting systems for truck assembly plants, and improved scheduling practices for construction firms.
He has trained clients through organizations such as the Construction Association of Michigan and instructed the Army Corps of Engineers worldwide on cost estimating and risk practices. He also contributed to a $2B DOE estimate.
Tony is a PMI PMP Certified Instructor, FAA DOT Facilities Instructor, and ACM executive, where he leads training, team development, and veteran hiring initiatives.

We also welcome the following new members:
Brian Corcoran
Steve Eastin
Bruce Chapman

Mark your calendars! This year's event will be held on this side of the border. It promises to be an enjoyable evening of food and fellowship. Please plan to attend.

Chapter Social and New Member Recognition

Join us this May for an evening of camaraderie and to welcome our new members. We'll be meeting at the historic Karl's Cabin in Plymouth, 6005 Gotfredson Rd.
This event is still in the planning, so keep an eye out for an email in the coming weeks with all the details

Chesterfield VA Home 5K

Michigan Veteran Homes at Chesterfield Township (MVHCT) is excited to announce its 5th Annual Community Run, Walk, or Roll on Saturday, June 6, 2026—celebrating five years of serving those who served and honoring the heroes in our community.

This event is open to individuals of all abilities and brings our community together for a meaningful day of movement, connection, and gratitude. All proceeds directly support the MVHCT Charitable Support Fund, enhancing quality of life for our members through programs, activities, outings, and more.

You don't have to be a runner to participate. We are looking for cheerleaders to give out high 5s along the route. There will also be a Silent Auction to raise money to support the residents.

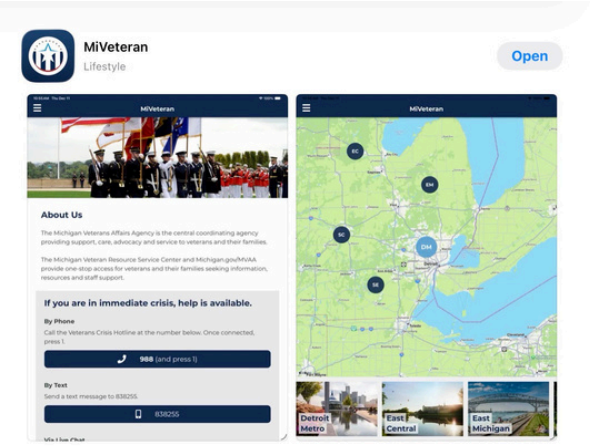
To volunteer, click this link

National Veterans Wheelchair Games

Be part of a great experience. Several events are planned throughout the Detroit metro area. While the specific events and venues are still being finalized, you can register now to volunteer and be part of the excitement.

NO PRIOR EXPERIENCE IS REQUIRED. Each volunteer assignment will represent a critical task involving anywhere from 3-4 hours. Register for one or more that fits your availability. There are roles and opportunities to match anyone's interest or experience. Whatever you can contribute, you'll make a positive impact to the Veterans' experience.
To register go to this link.

Have you downloaded the Michigan Veteran App?



The Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency has recently launched a new mobile application designed to assist veterans in accessing important resources and services. The app is available for download from both the App Store and Google Play.

Key Features

- Emergency Assistance: The app provides quick access to emergency assistance for veterans in need.
- Job Search: Users can search for employment opportunities directly within the app.
- Veterans Service Officer Locator: The app helps veterans find a Veterans Service Officer who can assist with their needs.
- Regional Services Finder: Services can be located by geographic region, making it easier for veterans to find nearby support.

Benefits and Resources

- Education: Information about educational benefits and opportunities is available through the app.
- Disability: The app offers details on disability benefits for eligible veterans.
- DD214 Requests: Veterans can request their DD214 military discharge documents within the app.
- Housing: Resources and information about housing assistance are accessible.
- Other Services: The app includes additional resources to support veterans' needs.

MOAA SIGNATURE GROUPS

Join MOAA Leadership and your fellow MOAA members on these hosted cruises and land tours.

July 12-21, 2026	Highlights of Eastern Europe River Cruise	9-nights from **$3,999**
October 1-10, 2026	Western Europe Yacht Cruise	9-nights from **$4,999**
April 25-May 2, 2027	Castles Along the Rhine River Cruise	7-nights from **$4,199**
July 19-27, 2027	France & Spain Yacht Cruise	8-nights from **$5,799**
September 14-25, 2027	Circle Iceland Yacht Cruise	11-nights from **$8,999**
Sept. 25-Oct. 4, 2027	Battlefields of WWI & WWII Tour	10 days from **$6,495**

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Email Address: mail@MOAAvac.com

For complete details, including detailed day-by-day itinerary, please visit us online

Wreathes Across America

The Chapter will be adopting the Roseland Park Cemetery in Berkeley. We will be raising funds for scholarship through the purchases of wreathes. As described in Chapter President Rich Higgins' March column, you can purchase throughout the year and participate in the wreathe laying ceremony on 19 December. To purchase 1 or more wreathes, click on this **LINK**

2026 THEME: REMEMBER ME

"We often speak of "our service members" as though they are one unified group. Yet within that group are countless individuals, each with a name, a family, and a story that helped shape the freedoms we cherish today. While we honor them collectively, we can sometimes overlook the deeply personal sacrifices: the parent who never met a grandchild, the young recruit asked to shoulder more than any teenager should, the veteran who returned home carrying memories too heavy to share."

- Karen Worcester, Executive Director, Wreathes Across America

Southeastern Michigan MOAA Chapter ROTC/JROTC Awards Program

Our chapter is active in recognizing high performing students from university and high school ROTC and JROTC programs through presentation of the MOAA ROTC/JROTC medal.We are looking for a chapter member who would like to learn the ropes of this program. Most activity takes place in mid-January when medals are ordered and during February and March in communicating with schools to schedule award delivery and presentation. Each school's award ceremony is somewhat different. Schools involved include the University of Michigan, Eastern Michigan University, Anchor Bay High School, Detroit Public Schools, Howell High School, Genesee Career Institute, and others. If you are interested in learning about this program or presenting a medal, please contact Roy Yaple, yapler@comcast.net

Volunteering at Michigan Veteran Homes

Volunteering at Michigan Veteran Homes is a meaningful way to honor those who served by enhancing their quality of life - through connection, companionship, and care. There are a wide variety of opportunities for volunteers that include:

On-site and Off-site Activities
Community Outings
Special Events
Care Share Buddy
No Member Dies Alone
...and more

To complete an application, please visit https://www.michigan.gov/mvh/locations/michigan-veteran-homes-at-chesterfield-township and select "Support" and "Volunteering."

If you have questions related to volunteering at Michigan Veteran Homes at Chesterfield Township, contact Volunteer Coordinator, Hilary Kuretich at KuretichH@michigan.gov or 586-256-9921.Your paragraph text

Gray Area Retiree Spotlight: New AI Tool for Establishing Retired Pay Accounts

As part of their commitment to innovation, the Defense Finance and Accounting (DFAS) office announced that they are now using Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology to assist with establishing retired pay accounts. The AI Data Scrape technology provides faster processing times, reduces human error, and decreases delays in account establishment for retired members. For more information on this and other gray area finance details, go to this **link**.

In Case You Missed It: Our AskDFAS Tips Video is a Hit!

It has been a year since DFAS launched their “AskDFAS Tips” video on the DFAS YouTube channel, and they want to make sure you didn’t miss out! In case you did, now is the perfect time to get acquainted with this fantastic resource.

The video, titled “AskDFAS Tips: A Simple Way to Manage Your Retired or SBP Pay Account,” is a short, five-minute guide to the helpful online tools available on AskDFAS. If you’ve ever needed to submit a form, change your pay account details, or ask a question, this video is for you. Join over 18,000 customers who viewed this video to learn more about using our tools and managing your pay!

Are you prepared for the loss of a spouse?

Preparing for the Loss of a Spouse: Essential Steps

Last month, I promised to provide information to help couples prepare for the loss of a spouse. While this is not always an easy topic to discuss, it is important for couples to have the conversation and ensure they are ready for this eventual event. Below are key steps to consider in your preparations.

Gather Important Documents

- Collect all critical papers, such as DD214 forms, wills, living wills, durable power of attorney, insurance policies, birth and marriage certificates, and any relevant passwords.
- Ensure all signature cards are up-to-date and accessible.
- Review all insurance policies to confirm beneficiaries and policy details.
- Make certain utilities are listed in both spouses' names to avoid complications.
- Check your state's regulations regarding car registration requirements.
- Verify that car titles list owners' names with "or" rather than "and" to facilitate transfer of ownership.

Checklist for After the Loss

- Ensure the death certificate accurately identifies the cause of death.
- Gather all passwords and user IDs in a single, secure location.
- Share lock combinations and ensure access to safety deposit boxes and bank accounts.
- Review all investments with a financial advisor to understand current holdings and beneficiary designations.
- Assemble paperwork such as birth and marriage certificates, divorce decrees, and property distribution records.
- Check insurance policies for correct beneficiaries, especially in cases of second or third marriages.
- List all credit cards and balances, both personal and joint, and ensure each spouse has at least one card in their own name.
- Review mortgages and brokerage reports for accurate beneficiary information.
- Examine bank statements and check registers, verifying beneficiaries and co-signers.

- Check credit card statements for occasional expenses, such as estimated taxes, HOA fees, charitable gifts, and safety deposit box rentals.
- Review utility bills, including cable, internet, and phone services, to confirm both names are listed on the accounts when required.

MOAA's website has a few publications that are very helpful. Check them out **here**.

Currently, surviving spouses make up 12–14% of MOAA's membership, which is more than 44,000 members who have the ability to vote, contribute, and serve. The majority of these members are over 70 years old.
It is important to regularly remind everyone that a surviving spouse is considered a regular MOAA member. If a spouse was a life member, the membership is transferred to the surviving spouse at no additional charge. The surviving spouse does not need to have previously been a MOAA member, as she can join independently.
There are three membership levels available: LIFE; Premium (with 1, 2, or 3-year options); and Basic, which is free. Everyone who is eligible is encouraged to join or upgrade their membership.

Do you know a surviving spouse?

If you know someone who could benefit from being a part of our chapter or the MOAA Virtual chapter, contact one of the chapter officers to help them stay connected. The virtual chapter offers Associate Memberships for those who would like information on preparing for the death of their Spouse and caretaking for their Spouse.

Surviving Spouse Book Club.
Do you like to read? The Book Club meets via Zoom each third Monday, January - October at 4 o'clock. All members of the Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter are welcome to join. Zoom connection information is sent out several days in advance. To learn more, click **here**.

Are you on Facebook?

The MOAA Surviving Spouses and Friends group offers dedicated support and advocacy for spouses who have lost their loved ones in service.These programs provide a network of peers and resources to help navigate the vhallenges of being a surviving spouse.
This Facebook group is private, but you can request to join. Click on this **link** to request to join.

You can also find important information on their website. MOAAsurvivingspousevirtualchapter.org

VA Healthcare, Pension and Compensation; Weekly Zoom Calls

If you are in the White Lake or Milford area, please feel free to contact Henry Storm or Roy Yaple (yapler@comcast.net) about the VA breakfast meetings, Monday and Friday at 7AM at Leo's Coney Island in White Lake and Wednesday at 7AM at the Americus Grill in Milford. Breakfast is pay as you go and a wonderful place to enjoy fellowship with other veterans and ask questions on VA-related topics.

If you are applying for VA Healthcare or considering filing a VA disability claim, and are looking for help, please consider attending the weekly 4PM Thursday Zoom coffee or the noon Sunday Zoom podcast on VA Healthcare and Disability Claim topics.

This is the **link** for you to save to access the Website. Here you will find all of the links that are individually listed below :

- 12:00 - 1:00 PM EST Sunday Noon Veteran Sitrep Podcast
- 4:00 - 5:00 PM EST Thursday Vet Talk
- Facebook Page Trusted Helpers: A daily update on what is happening with your VA benefits
- 550+ Videos, created by Air Force Veteran Ed Ruckle, answering questions veterans, like you, have asked.

Please note that the VA 1010EZ, the form for applying for VA Healthcare has been revised as of this month (July 2024). If you applied in the past and were denied VA Health Care, another look with the new form may be appropriate to see if you qualify for VA Healthcare).

The end of a relationship. Loss of a job. Housing instability. Feeling a loss of purpose. At some point, everyone will face a challenge. Some of those challenges may develop into a crisis.

Recognizing a crisis in yourself or those you care about can help you know when to find support.

24/7 Confidential, Crisis Support, for Veterans and Their Loved Ones

Dial 988 then Press 1

Or text 838255