THE SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN EAGLE

30 June 2026

Volume IX, Issue 6

Board Meetings		
Jan 20	Feb 17	Mar 17
Apr No Mtg	May 19	Jun 16
Jul No Mtg	Aug 18	Sep 15
Oct 20	Nov No Mtg	Dec 15

Chapter/Other Meetings			
January 29 Chapter Lunch/ Induction of Officers	**February** No Meeting	**March** No Meeting	**April 13-16** Advocacy in Action 17 Chapter Lunch TACOM Guest Speaker
May 9 International Armed Forces Dining out	**Jun 16** Chapter Zoom	**Jul 16** Chapter Lunch Guest Speaker	**Aug 14** Michigan MOAA State Convention
Sep 19 Retiree Appreciation Day	**Oct 20** Chapter Zoom Mtg	**Nov 5** Chapter Mtg / Election of Officers **Nov 9** Veteran's Day Remembrance	**Dec 19** Wreaths Across America

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,

Summer is shaping up to be a busy and productive season for MOAA members across Michigan. Planning continues for the Michigan Council of Chapters Conference on Friday, August 14 at the Doherty Hotel in Clare. Built around the themes of Membership, Advocacy, and Community, the conference will feature presentations by Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency Director Terry Sabo, Congressman Tom Barrett (tentative), MOAA Vice President CAPT Jim Carman, and Christina Bahr, the Capitol Area Chapter Surviving Spouse Liaison, along with opportunities to network with fellow MOAA members from across the state. Registration is open, and I encourage you to consider attending this inaugural event. Click HEREto learn more.

Closer to home, I would love to hear your ideas on ways our chapter can become more engaged in supporting the veteran community in Southeast Michigan. If you have an interest in volunteering your time, talents, or expertise, please let me know.

On June 2, I had the pleasure of joining Chapter Vice President Roy Yaple and his wife, Linda, at the Rochester Hills Public Library for an engaging presentation by Dr. John Todd, one of our newest chapter members. Dr. Todd shared the fascinating historical events and ideas that helped shape the path to the Declaration of Independence. To learn more about Dr. Todd's remarkable life and accomplishments, I encourage you to watch "My Life: Dr. John Todd", a video profile produced by Oxford Community Television that covers his early life, his service as a helicopter gunship pilot during the Vietnam War, and the subsequent injury that left him blind. John also discusses his transition to civilian life, earning a law degree from Georgetown and his dedicated 40-year career in higher education and advocacy for veterans.

On the advocacy front, we continue working with the Michigan Council of Chapters to secure recognition of retired officers of the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Commissioned Corps as veterans under Michigan law. These men and women serve in two of our nation's eight uniformed services and are recognized by the VA as veterans. Our current efforts focus on Michigan legislation that would extend equitable treatment to qualifying NOAA and USPHS retirees while aligning state law more closely with existing federal standards. To learn more and find out how you can help, visit the Advocacy page on the Council website at moaamcoc.com.

Continued next page

Finally, I invite you to join us for our next chapter membership meeting on Thursday, July 16, at the TACOM. Our guest speaker will be Chris Causley, founder and president of the Michigan Military Technical & Historical Society, who will present "Donald Nelson and the Arsenal of Democracy." This promises to be a fascinating look at Michigan's critical role in supporting victory during World War II. Click HERE to RSVP by July 6.

I hope to see many of you in July and again in Clare in August as we continue to strengthen our chapter, support our veterans, and advance MOAA's mission.

Respectively,

Rich

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

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

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**.

What's Next for a Key Caregiver Support Bill

By: René Campos

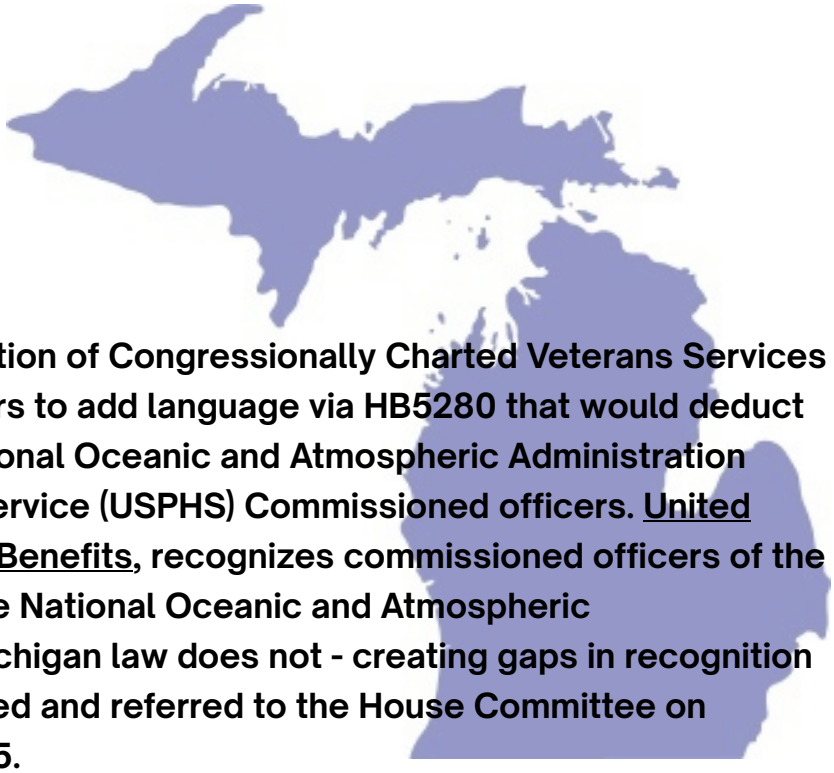
Bipartisan legislation that would strengthen long-term stability for military and veteran caregivers has one more hurdle to clear before it can be put before the full House of Representatives for a vote.

The MOAA-supported Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement (3R) Act (H.R. 2148) already has moved through both the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees — a significant milestone reflecting broad recognition of caregivers' role as the backbone of veterans' long-term care.

But the bill must receive approval from one more committee, the House Ways and Means Committee, before the House can vote on it.

[TAKE ACTION by clicking this link: **Ask Your Lawmakers to Pass the Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement Act**]

Advocacy at the State Level



The Michigan Commanders Group, a coalition of Congressionally Charted Veterans Services Organizations, is engaging State legislators to add language via HB5280 that would deduct income taxes on pension benefits for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and United States Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned officers. United States Code, Title 38 (38 USC) - Veterans Benefits, recognizes commissioned officers of the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) as veterans, but Michigan law does not - creating gaps in recognition and benefits. The House Bill was introduced and referred to the House Committee on Government Operations in November 2025.

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

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 **Captain Jim Carman, USN (Ret.), CAE,** Vice President, Council/Chapter and Member Support. **Terry J. Sabo**, Director of the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency, **Christina Bahr**, Capitol Chapter Surviving Spouse Liaison, and **Congressman Tom Barrett.**

Registration opens on June 15th.

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.

CAPT Jim Carman

Vice President, Council/Chapter and Member Support

Congressman Tom Barrett

Michigan's 7th Congressional District

Terry J. Sabo

Director, Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency

Christina Bahr

Surviving Spouse Liaison Capitol Area Chapter Mich.

America 250 Events

Here are a few events in the area. I encourage you to get out and participate in the celebration. If none of these are close to home, Google can help find one that is. Sharing the Spirit (below) can be done from your living room couch!

The Henry Ford — Dearborn
The Henry Ford is hosting a year-long celebration called "America: 250 Years in the Making." Special exhibits, historical programs, new displays in Greenfield Village, and events highlighting American innovation will run throughout 2026.

Mill Race Village — Northville
On July 4, 2026, Mill Race Village will host an America's 250th celebration featuring Revolutionary War-era reenactors, militia demonstrations, and a public reading of the Declaration of Independence. Organizers are billing it as one of Metro Detroit's premier Semiquincentennial events.

Sharing the Spirit of America
July 8, 1776 - july 8, 2026
6:00PM EDT
Around the Nation, Around the Globe

The concept is simple: a simultaneous nationwide reading of the Declaration of Independence, with Americans reading the document together at the same time. Just as the Declaration was read to the people for the first time on July 8, 1776, Americans and their global community of friends and neighbors—in all 50 states, five territories, DC, and U.S. Minor Outlying Islands—will read the Declaration of Independence together. The American spirit and the moral center of the Declaration —All Men Are Created Equal— memorialized 250 years ago, continue to hold true today.

City of Sterling Heights
Sharing the Spirit of America July 8, 2026, 6:00 PM The city is looking to recruit 250 people to help form a 2, 5, and 0 on the football field while we do the reading of the Declaration of Independence at 6 p.m. They hope to capture this powerful visual by drone and/or video from the pressbox. ADA compliant with restroom access. **RSVP required**. Email: mdavis@sterlingheights.gov; 39701 Dodge Park Rd, Sterling Heights MI 48313
America250MI Event Page

Michigan Military Technical & Historical Society

Save the date

We will be returning to the **Detroit Arsenal** for our next meeting. Our guest speaker will be **Chris Causley**. Chris is the founder and current president of the Michigan Military Technical & Historical Society in Eastpointe, Michigan.

Mark your calendars for Thursday, July 16 from 12:00 to 2:00 pm.

Recent Events

New member John Todd gave a presentation on the Declaration of Independence at the Rochester Hills Public Library on June 2. Several Chapter members attended. John looks forward to meeting more of our membership.

Pictured below is John and his two lovely assistants who are holding up a replica of the Grand Union Flag (a.k.a. the Continental Colors) that was raised by General George Washington on January 1, 1776, at Prospect Hill. It includes 13 alternating red and white stripes with the British Union Jack in the upper left, symbolizing the colonies' initial push for representation while remaining loyal to the British Crown.

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Veterans History Project

The United States Congress created the Veterans History Project (VHP) in 2000 as part of the American Folklife Center (AFC) at the Library of Congress, one of the world's most respected research and cultural institutions.

VHP's purpose is to collect, preserve and make accessible the personal accounts of U.S. military veterans and Gold Star Families so that future generations may hear directly from veterans and better understand their service.

The Chapter is considering collecting personal accounts from members in the chapter. Veterans from all branches and ranks of the United States military who served from World War I through the more recent con!icts are eligible to participate. As contributors to this national preservation effort, volunteers from around the country interview veterans and collect first person narratives. VHP accepts veterans' personal narratives in the forms of original, unedited audio and video recorded interviews, photographs, letters, diaries, journals and unpublished memoirs.

In order to be accepted, we must follow the 30-20-10 Rule:

- 30 minutes is the minimum length required for audio- or video-recorded interviews

and/or

- 20 pages is the minimum number of pages required for memoirs, diaries or journals

and/or

- 10 is the minimum number of photographs, letters, maps or pieces of 2-D artwork

If you are interested, or know someone who is interested, in participating in this project, send an email to Larry Powell at L-spowell@ameritech.net, with the subject Veterans History Project (or VHP).

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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State of Michigan Veteran Benefits

The Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency (MVAA) has launched a State of Michigan Veteran Benefits webpage. The webpage was created as a one-stop resource for veterans and their dependents to navigate benefits and services available within the state of Michigan.
“Our goal is to ensure veterans can easily find resources and support available throughout the state,” said MVAA director Terry J. Sabo. “This new webpage reinforces that Michigan is a great place for veterans and their families to live, raise a family, work and retire.”

Information on available state benefits and resources include:

- Burial
- Education
- Employment and entrepreneurship
- Financial and legal assistance
- Housing
- Incarcerated veteran programs
- Income and property taxes
- Recreation
- Transportation

Veterans and their families can also download the MiVeteran app to access additional resources and information directly from their mobile devices. The MiVeteran app is available for free and can be downloaded on your mobile device in the App Store and Google Play Store.

Wreathes Across America

The Chapter will be adopting the Roseland Park Cemetery in Berkeley. We will be **raising funds for scholarships** through the purchases of wreathes. ***You can purchase wreathes 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

Surviving Spouse Planning & Helpful Resources

by Christina Bahr

One of the greatest gifts we can give our spouses and families is preparation. While no amount of planning can remove the emotional difficulty of losing a loved one, having important information organized and understanding available resources can significantly reduce uncertainty during an already challenging time.

When a spouse passes, surviving family members are often required to navigate multiple systems, each with its own contacts, forms, and documentation requirements. These may include military benefits, VA benefits, Social Security, healthcare coverage, and civilian retirement or employer benefits.

Key areas surviving spouses should be familiar with include:

Immediate Steps Following a Loss

- Obtain certified death certificates
- Notify Social Security
- Notify the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS)
- Contact the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
- Notify current or former employers regarding retirement and insurance benefits
- Gather important documents such as marriage certificates, DD214s, insurance policies, wills, trusts, and account information

Important Survivor Benefits

Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP)

- Monthly annuity for eligible surviving spouses
- Administered through DFAS

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)

- Tax-free VA benefit for eligible surviving spouses
- Applications may be completed with assistance from a Veterans Service Officer (VSO)

Social Security Benefits for Surviving Spouses

Eligible surviving spouses may qualify for survivor benefits through the Social Security Administration

TRICARE for Life

- Continued healthcare coverage for eligible surviving spouses
- Requires Medicare Part B and updated DEERS information

Civilian Employer & Retirement Benefits

- 401(k)s, pensions, life insurance policies, and other employer-sponsored benefits may require separate beneficiary claims

Helpful Resources

DFAS Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP)
https://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/provide/sbp/
VA Dependency & Indemnity Compensation (DIC)
https://www.va.gov/family-and-caregiver-benefits/survivor-compensation/dependency-indemnity-compensation/
TRICARE Survivor Information
https://tricare.mil/survivor
Social Security Survivor Benefits
https://www.ssa.gov/survivor
DEERS Information
https://milconnect.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect/public/faq/DEERS-About_DEERS
MOAA Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter
https://www.moaa.org/content/chapters-and-councils/virtual-chapters-and-groups/surviving-spouses/
Nokbox
https://www.thenokbox.com

Final Thought

Preparation is not about planning for death—it is about caring for the people we love. Taking time now to organize important information, understand available benefits, and document key contacts can make an overwhelming situation more manageable for those left behind.
As Surviving Spouse Liaisons, one of our most important roles is helping military families become aware of these resources before they are needed.

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 ancientgrape@gmail.com 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 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.

Something New!!

For the past 14 years, I have been helping veterans and their family members navigate the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) websites, and help them find the information they were looking for. Over the years I have gather thousands of documents, created hundreds of slide decks, video overviews, audio overviews, infographics, sitemaps, visual roadmaps, and battle plans.

It didn't take me long to realize, the information collected was for the veteran community, the processes and skills sets, I that used, to gather that information applied to their spouses, dependents, parents, and caregivers as well. Rather them keep this gold mind of information locked up in my filing cabinet, I thought - it was time to share. Click to go to **Ed's Blog.**

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.

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