THE SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN EAGLE

31 May 2026

Volume IX, Issue 5

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
No Apr Mtg	May 19	Jun 16	Jun 16 Chapter Zoom	Jul 16 Chapter Lunch Guest Speaker	Aug 14 Michigan MOAA State Convention	Sep 19 Retiree Appreciation Day
No Jul Mtg	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	No Nov Mtg	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,

We had a great meeting in April, and I want to thank Larry Powell for working with TACOM to help make it a success. Photos from the event are now posted on the website [CLICK HERE]. We are also looking at possibly moving our July meeting to TACOM, so stay tuned for more details.
Please mark your calendars for the first-ever Michigan Council of Chapters Convention on Friday, August 14, at the Doherty Hotel in Clare. We have an outstanding group of speakers lined up, including:

- CAPT Jim Carman, USN (Ret.), Vice President of Council/Chapter and Member Support, MOAA
- U.S. Representative Tom Barrett (MI-07)
- Terry J. Sabo, Director, Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency
- Virginia Gail Joyce, MOAA Board Member and Surviving Spouse Advisory Council

CLICK HERE to learn more.

Along with supporting MOAA's national legislative priorities, I encourage you to stay involved in veteran-related issues here in Michigan. One important issue right now involves current and former commissioned officers of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps, both of which are represented by MOAA.

At a recent meeting of the Michigan Commanders Group (MCG) Legislative Committee, members discussed four bills now before the Michigan House Government Operations Committee: HB 5262, HB 5278, HB 5279, and HB 5280. These bills are meant to better align Michigan law with existing federal recognition of NOAA and USPHS officers.
There was support within the MCG for HB 5280, which would extend Michigan retirement tax fairness benefits to qualifying NOAA and USPHS retirees. It is a limited and fiscally responsible measure that would affect only a small number of Michigan residents. Just as important, it would not create new categories of veterans or greatly expand eligibility. However, questions remain about HB 5262, HB 5278, and HB 5279, especially regarding how the Title 38 definition of "veteran" would be interpreted and applied.

Continued next page

Because of the realities of the current legislative session, the best short-term approach is to focus on moving HB 5280 forward while continuing discussions on the other bills for a future session, unless acceptable changes can be worked out with the House Government Operations Committee this year. We encourage members to contact their State Representatives, especially those who serve on the House Government Operations Committee, and ask them to support HB 5280 as a fair and reasonable measure for qualifying uniformed service retirees. CLICK HERE to engage.

Legislators pay attention when constituents speak up in a respectful and thoughtful way. Even a short email or phone call can make a real difference.

Advocacy remains one of MOAA's most important missions, and your involvement helps strengthen our voice on behalf of all who have served.

Respectively,

Rich

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

Michigan MOAA Leaders Take Advocacy to Capitol Hill

By LCDR Rich Higgins, USN (Ret.) and COL Bruce Bahr, ARNG (Ret.)

In mid-April, representatives from the Michigan Council of Chapters joined MOAA leaders from across the country in Washington, D.C., for the annual Advocacy in Action (AiA) event—an intensive, high-impact opportunity to bring the voice of the uniformed services community directly to Congress.

This year, we were proud to represent Michigan alongside MOAA national staff, including CAPT Paul Frost, USN (Ret.), MOAA's Program Director for Financial Education and Veteran Services, and Karen Ruedisueli, MOAA's Director of Government Relations for Health Affairs. Together, we engaged Michigan's congressional delegation on issues that matter most to currently serving, retired, and veteran service members and their families.

Preparation and Purpose

The AiA program began with a full day of briefings, training, and coordination designed to ensure a unified, informed message across all participating states. Sessions included partner presentations, legislative updates, and targeted advocacy training to prepare participants for meetings on Capitol Hill .

Armed with current data, talking points, and a clear strategy, Michigan's team was ready to effectively communicate MOAA's 2026 legislative priorities.

Dividing to Multiply Our Impact

To maximize coverage of Michigan's delegation, our team split into two groups for Capitol Hill meetings:

- **Team 1 (Higgins & Frost):**
- Met with legislative aides representing Representatives **Tom Barrett (MI-07), Debbie Dingell (MI-06), Shri Thanedar (MI-13)**, and **Hillary Scholten (MI-03)**
- **Team 2 (Bahr & Ruedisueli):** Met with Representative **John Moolenaar (MI-02)**. He and his staff were very receptive to the MOAA agenda. Also met with legislative aides representing Representatives **Jack Bergman (MI-01)** and **Lisa McClain (MI-09**)

In addition, we collectively engaged with staff from the offices of **Senators Gary Peters and Elissa Slotkin,** ensuring Michigan's Senate delegation also heard directly from MOAA.

This coordinated approach allowed us to deliver consistent messaging while tailoring discussions to each office's priorities, committee assignments, and constituent interests.

Key Issues: Clear, Consistent, and Compelling

Across all meetings, we focused on MOAA's top legislative priorities for 2026:

- **The Richard Star Act** – Restoring full earned benefits for combat-injured retirees
- **The Military CARE Act** – Improving access to care through accountability and reporting
- **The Shutdown Fairness Act** – Ensuring uninterrupted pay for service members during government shutdowns
- **The GUARD VA Benefits Act** – Protecting veterans from predatory claims practices

See Michigan Advocacy next page

These conversations were substantive and productive. Congressional staff were engaged, asked thoughtful questions, and demonstrated a clear interest in understanding both the policy details and the real-world impact on Michigan's military and veteran communities.

Advocacy in Action—Literally
The hallmark of AiA is direct engagement. On April 15, participants conducted a full day of scheduled appointments across Capitol Hill, meeting lawmakers and staff in both House and Senate offices . These face-to-face discussions are where advocacy becomes action—turning policy priorities into meaningful dialogue and, ultimately, legislative progress.

Relationships Matter
Beyond policy discussions, AiA reinforces a critical truth: relationships drive results.
One of the most impactful moments of the week was attending MOAA's awards ceremony at the Dirksen Senate Office Building, where lawmakers and staff were recognized for their leadership in supporting the uniformed services community. Events like this underscore the importance of sustained engagement and bipartisan cooperation.
Equally important were the informal interactions—conversations in hallways, shared meals, and even navigating Capitol Hill logistics—that help build trust and familiarity with congressional offices.

A Michigan Perspective
From our perspective, Michigan was well represented. By coordinating our efforts and leveraging the expertise of MOAA national staff, we ensured that our delegation received a clear, unified message backed by both national insight and state-level impact.
We also reinforced that MOAA is not a one-time visitor—but a consistent, credible partner in the legislative process.

Looking Ahead
Advocacy doesn't end when AiA concludes. The real work continues at home—through follow-up communications, district office engagement, and grassroots member involvement.

We encourage all members to stay engaged:

- Respond to MOAA Calls to Action
- Participate in chapter and council advocacy efforts
- Build relationships with your elected officials at the local level

Every email, phone call, and meeting reinforces the message we carried to Washington: the voices of the uniformed services community matter—and they are being heard.

LCAPT Paul Frost (USN Ret), MOAA Program Director for Financial Education and Veteran Services accompanies Rich and Bruce for a selfie (left). 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 (right).

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**.

MOAA Stresses Need for a National Veteran's Strategy

During recent testimony before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, Jen Goodale, MOAA's director of Government Relations for Veterans and Retired Affairs, told the committee that we need a National Veteran's Strategy similar to the National Security Strategy. The bipartisan National Veterans Strategy Act (S. 3726) would create guidance similar to the National Strategy, defining objectives and coordinate efforts across agencies.

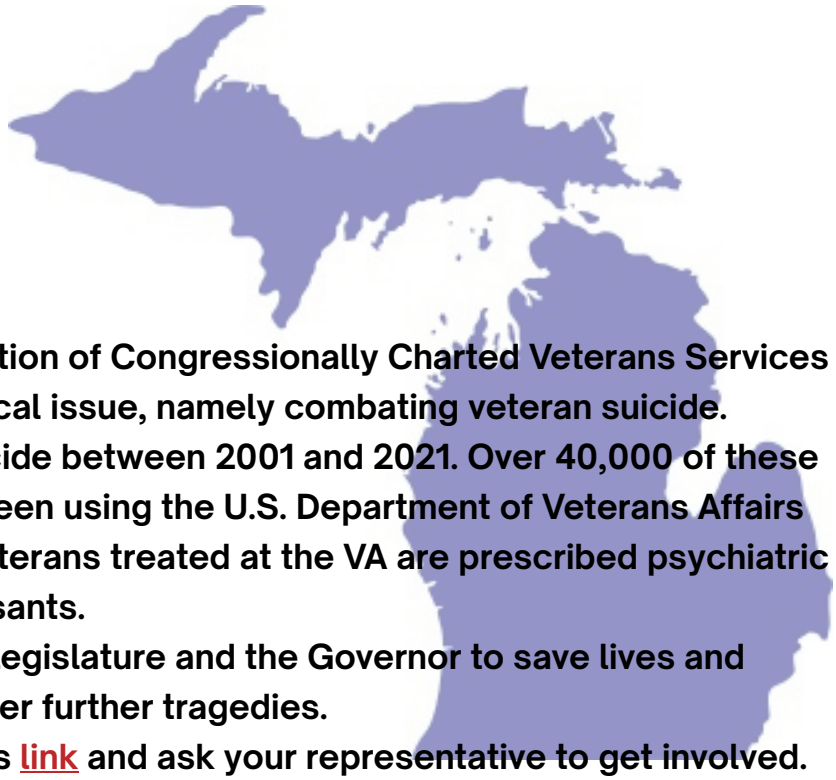
In addition, MOAA expressed support for five other legislative actions under consideration:

- Mammography Access for Veterans Act (S.3395)
- Fraud in VA Disability Exams Act (S.3000)
- Justice for ALS Veterans Act S.749)
- Carlton H. Ingram Veterans' Benefits Protection Act (S.4140)
- Stuck on Hold Act (S.3170)

This article appears on MOAA's website (MOAA.org). To read the full article, go to this link.

To contact your representative and ask for their support for these issues, go to this link.

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 member:

Doctor John Todd. John Todd, our newest member, brings a wealth of experience as a former Army Aviator, University Professor, and Attorney.
In July 1967, Dr. Todd was drafted and qualified for the WORWAC Program. He served as a gunship pilot in Vietnam for five months, accumulating 500 combat hours. During his final mission, he was wounded while engaging a regiment of North Vietnamese Army soldiers, resulting in a loss of vision and other significant injuries. His bravery was recognized with the awarding of the Purple Heart, shortly after earning the Distinguished Flying Cross for his heroic actions.

Following his military service, John pursued graduate studies in Constitutional History at the University of Michigan. He continued his academic journey in Political Science at Columbia University and later attended Georgetown University Law School, deepening his expertise in both legal and political fields.

John served under two Presidents, contributing his knowledge and leadership at the highest levels of government. He demonstrated a strong commitment to public service by authoring and passing legislation in Congress that provided benefits for widows and orphans of disabled veterans, reflecting his dedication to supporting vulnerable communities.

In 2013, John was honored as the Disabled Veteran of the Year, a distinction celebrated at a ceremony with President Obama. Please watch this **video** to learn more about John, you'll be glad you did.

John devoted 42 years to full-time college teaching, shaping the minds of future leaders and scholars. After his extensive academic career, he retired as Professor Emeritus, highlighting his enduring commitment to education and scholarship.

John has been married for 52 years. He and his wife attended law school together; she has served as a prosecutor, an Assistant U.S. Attorney, and remains active in legal practice. Dr. Todd retired from college teaching in 2021. Together, they are proud parents of two daughters and have one grandson. The Todd family has made Rochester Hills their home since 1979.

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.

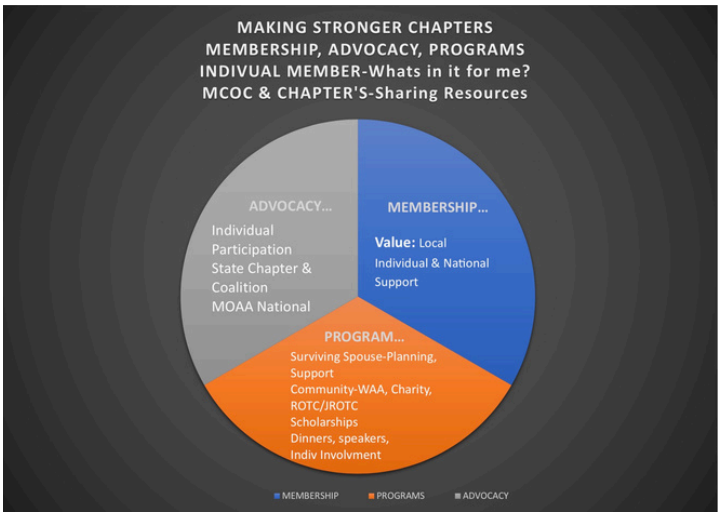
To assist with planning, information about the convention is posted on the Council website along with a short, no-obligation RSVP survey. The survey asks a few quick questions—such as how likely you are to attend, your chapter affiliation, and whether you might stay overnight at the hotel or participate 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.

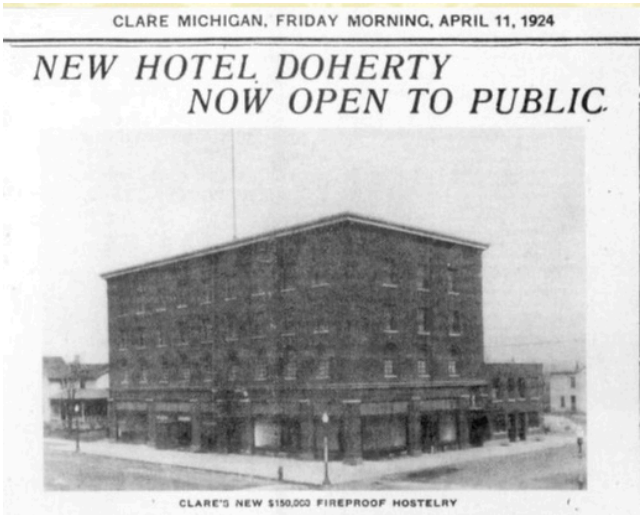
For those traveling from a distance, a block of rooms has been arranged at the Doherty Hotel using the reservation code MICoC. Discounted rates are $112 for Thursday night (August 13) and $156 for Friday night (August 14).

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

NEW HOTEL DOHERTY
NOW OPEN TO PUBLIC

CLARE'S NEW $150,000 FIREPROOF HOSTELRY

Memorial Day Events

Here are a few events in the area. I encourage you to get out and participate in am activity to support Memorial Day. If none of these are close to home, Google can help find one that is.

Resurrection Cemetery, Clinton Township
Monday, May 25, 2026; Section 55, 10 a.m.
Mass will be held.
Father Michael Quaine of St. Michael Catholic Community will preside over a beautiful Memorial Day Mass. The gathering will be tented and situated amidst the gorgeous greenscape of Resurrection Cemetery. After Mass, community fellowship and delicious refreshments, head over to the American Veterans Memorial for the dedication of veteran tablets.

American Veterans Memorial at Resurrection
Monday, May 25, 2026, 11:30 a.m.
Veteran service and dedication of Veteran tablet inscriptions.

Highland Twp Memorial Day Weekend Events – Highland Twp Memorial Day Ceremonies
8:00 am: Highland Cemetery (561 N Milford Rd, Highland Charter Twp, MI 48357)
8:45 am: Highland Veterans Memorial Park (200 W Livingston Rd, Highland Charter Twp, MI 48357)
9:30 am: West Highland Cemetery (S Hickory Ridge Rd, Milford, MI 48380)
3 ceremonies conducted by Highland VFW Post 9914

Lake Orion Memorial Day Weekend Events – Lake Orion Memorial Day Parade
Blanche Sims Elementary School (465 E Jackson St, Lake Orion, MI 48362)
Lake Orion will host brief ceremonies.
9:00 am: Eastlawn Cemetery (37 E Flint Road Lake Orion)
10 am: Downtown Lake Orion at Children's Park (201 S Broadway St #335, Lake Orion, MI 48362).
11:00 am: A parade will be held in Downtown Lake Orion at Flint St & Broadway. Parade steps off at Blanche Sims Elementary School (465 E Jackson St, Lake Orion, MI 48362).

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

MISSION & HISTORY

The National Veterans Wheelchair Games is the world's largest annual wheelchair sports and rehabilitation event solely for military veterans. The event demonstrates the unstoppable character of veterans and seeks to foster wider respect and opportunities for all people with disabilities.

The National Veterans Wheelchair Games is open to all U.S. veterans with spinal cord injuries, amputations, multiple sclerosis, or other central neurological conditions who require a wheelchair for athletic competition. Every year, hundreds of American heroes from World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, and the post-9/11 era compete in this celebration of sport, courage and camaraderie.

NO PRIOR EXPERIENCE IS REQUIRED to VOLUNTEER. 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.

For more information or to review the volunteer handbook, go to this **link** Questions? Contact the NVWG Volunteer Team at NVWGVolunteers@va.gov.

You don't have to be enrolled in VA health care to access life-saving suicide prevention support. Emergent suicide care services covered by VA can help

If you or a Veteran you know is facing a crisis, help is available right now. You don't have to be enrolled in VA benefits or VA health care to use it.

Thanks to the Veterans Comprehensive Prevention, Access to Care & Treatment (COMPACT) Act Emergent Suicide Care benefit, eligible individuals can receive free emergency suicide crisis care at VA and community facilities, regardless of enrollment status. This benefit is designed to remove obstacles and make it easier for you to get support if you're in a suicide crisis.

Sometimes the most important thing is knowing you're not alone. The Veterans Crisis Line is available 24/7 for Veterans, their families and those who care about them, whether you're in immediate crisis or just need someone to talk to.

You don't need to be enrolled in VA benefits or VA health care to use the Veterans Crisis Line, either. Trained responders can help you talk through what's going on, explore options, and connect you to local resources if needed. **To reach the Veterans Crisis Line, Dial 988 then Press 1, chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat, or text 838255.**

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

On April 17th, the Detroit Arsenal was our host for our General Meeting. BG Beth Behn, Commanding General was the keynote speaker followed by a tour of the Material Fielding Branch.

ROTC / JROTC Medals Program

During the month of April, the chapter presented medals to 13 cadets across the southeastern Michigan region. These medals honor cadets who have demonstrated exceptional leadership skills and academic excellence, encouraging them to continue striving for success in their future endeavors.

Chapter member David Garey presents medals to University of Michigan Army and Air Force ROTC

Chapter Secretary Larry Powell (not pictured) presented a medal to a cadet at Anchor Bay HS. The cadets posed for a group photo left.

Other programs not pictured included Eastern Michigan ROTC; JROTC for the Detroit Public Schools, Southgate, Genesee Career Institute and Howell high schools

Trump signs executive order directing FDA to review psychedelics designated as breakthrough therapy drugs

President Donald Trump signed an executive order April 16 that he said "directs the FDA to expedite their review of certain psychedelics already designated as breakthrough therapy drugs."

The president said "in 2024, a study from Stanford University, 30 special operation veterans with traumatic brain injuries underwent — it's called ibogaine treatment — ibogaine, remember the name," noting that they "experienced an 80 to 90% reduction in symptoms of depression and anxiety within one month."

"In Texas, Republican leaders have already committed $50 million to the ibogaine research. And today, the federal government is making a $50 million research investment in its own. And so that was just approved just last night," Trump announced.

"We're also opening a pathway for ibogaine to be administered to desperately ill patients under the right to try law," Trump said.

"Today's order will ensure that people suffering from debilitating symptoms might finally have a chance to reclaim their lives and lead a happier life, just lead a happier life," he added.

A paper published in the journal Chronic Stress said ibogaine is a "psychoactive indole alkaloid which is extracted from the Tabernanthe iboga rainforest shrub and has been used for centuries in Central Africa for initiatory rituals."

"Ibogaine treatment is reported to alleviate a spectrum of mood and anxiety symptoms and is associated with self-reported improvements in cognitive functioning in individuals with substance-use disorders. During treatment, ibogaine allows the evocation and reprocessing of traumatic memories and occasions therapeutic and meaningful visions of spiritual and autobiographical content, which are of central relevance in addressing PTSD-related psychological content," it added.

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**

GUARANTEED LOWEST PRICES *from* The Official Travel Agency of MOAA

MOAA VACATIONS

Toll-Free Telephone: 1-800-211-5107

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 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

Michigan Veterans Trust Fund

On Feb. 25, 1946, Gov. Harry Kelly signed Public Act 9 into law, creating the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund from $50 million in post-World War II reserve funds. Since then, the MVTF has helped veterans of every wartime era overcome unexpected expenses ranging from utility bills to home repairs to mortgage assistance and get back on their feet financially.
The Emergency Grant Program is intended to help veterans overcome an unforeseen situation causing a temporary or short-term financial emergency or hardship that a grant will resolve and for which the applicant can demonstrate the ability to meet future expenses.

Eligibility

- Honorable discharge or a general discharge under honorable conditions
- 180 days of active duty service during a period of war or 180 days of active duty with award of Armed Forces/Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal
- A minimum of one day of wartime service with separation due to mental/physical disability incurred in the line of duty
- Dependents can apply if veteran is eligible under certain circumstances

Michigan Veterans Trust Fund One Pager
Michigan Veterans Trust Fund: 65+ Peacetime Program One Pager

How to Apply

Applications for assistance are reviewed and decided upon by committees appointed by the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund Board of Trustees. Appeals and reviews are sent to the board for consideration at their monthly meeting. The seven-member board is appointed by the Governor and has constitutional authority over Emergency Grant Program expenditures and policies. MVTF grants may be applied for through the MVTF county committee serving the veterans county of residence.

For additional information, click on this **link**.

Surviving Spouse Corner: When Love Costs Too Much

By: Dr. Vivianne Wersel

When a servicemember passes away, their surviving spouse is often left with limited benefits. One of the toughest rules is that if the surviving spouse remarries before age 55, they immediately lose all their benefits. This is an added burden for a group that's already struggling.

The private sector views the same situation through a very different lens, and some advocates are pushing for new laws, such as the Love Lives On Act, to update the rules and make them more equitable. They believe that since military families make so many sacrifices, they shouldn't have to make more, and that it's just not right that surviving spouses must choose between getting remarried and losing their benefits or remaining unmarried to keep their benefits.

For many surviving spouses, the decision to remarry carries financial consequences that can affect long-term security. These policies were written decades ago, based on assumptions that no longer reflect the realities of today's military families.

Several legislative proposals aim to fix these unfair issues and provide better support to survivors and caregivers. Various bills have been introduced to address these problems:

The Caring for Survivors Act of 2025 (H.R. 2055 | S. 611) would restore and improve survivor benefits affected by outdated eligibility rules, ensuring spouses are not penalized as they rebuild their lives.

The Love Lives On Act of 2025 (H.R. 1004 | S. 410) addresses one of the most significant concerns among surviving spouses: the loss of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation and the Survivor Benefit Plan upon remarriage before age 55.

The Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement Act (S. 879) focuses on caregivers who leave the workforce to support wounded, ill, or injured servicemembers, helping protect their long-term financial and retirement security.

The Sharri Briley and Eric Edmundson Veteran Benefits Expansion Act of 2026 (H.R. 6047) The Sharri Briley and Eric Edmundson Veteran Benefits Expansion Act of 2026 (H.R. 6047)

This article appears on MOAA's website. To read the full article, click this **link**.

To ask your lawmakers to support these acts, click this **link**.

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