Volume XII, Issue 31 Dec 2024

THE METRO DETROIT METEOR

Chapter Board Members

President - CDR Roy Yaple, USN (Ret)
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Treasurer - LCDR Rich Higgins, USN (Ret)
Secretary - LTC Larry Powell, USA (Ret)
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Chapter Address

Chapter Digital links:

- Chapter web site, www.semimoaa.org
- MOAA web presence.

https://www.moaa.org/chapter/southeasternmichigan/

For all non-digital correspondence use the following address:
4704 Mount Brighton Rd. Brighton, MI 48116

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Important Information

It's time to pay your 2025 Member Dues

Member dues are still $20. If you have questions about your dues, you can contact Rich Higgins. They can be paid on line **here** or you can mail a check made out to Southeastern Michigan MOAA to 4704 Mount Brighton Rd. Brighton, MI 48116.
To remain current, dues should be paid by **15 January**

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

2024 Meetings

Board Meetings			Chapter/Other Meetings		
Jan 25	Mar 21	May 23	Apr 18, Chapter Lunch	June 20 Chapter Lunch	May 10 International Armed Forces Dining out
Jul 24	Sep 18	Oct 17	Aug 20 Chapter Lunch	Sep 21 Retiree Appreciation Day	Nov 7 Chapter Mtg / Election of Officers
Dec 7			Nov 10 Veteran's Day Remembrance	Dec 14 Wreaths Across America	

A Fireball - A Message from the President

Thank you to all members of our chapter during 2024 and we look forward to you renewing your chapter membership for 2025. Chapter dues will remain at $20 for 2025 and we encourage you to to invite other officers to chapter membership.

We made solid progress in chapter operations including continuing operation of our chapter website and regular publishing of our chapter newsletter. Some key goals for 2025 are:

Plans for four in-person meetings, regular Board meetings, and associated events including:
International Armed Force Night in Canada (May 2025).
Retiree Appreciation Day (September 2025).
Veterans Day Remembrance Service (November 2025).
Wreaths Across America (December 2025)

A MOAA ROTC/JROTC awards program running from March to May.

Recruiting and retention to retain at least 90% of current member and increase chapter membership from 34 to at least 40. We anticipate the much-awaited new Association Monitoring System that will open up communication potential with many new prospects.

Opportunities for increased community service and engagement as well as fundraising initiatives to support the chapter's mission.

Increased activity in legislative advocacy. For the first time in several years, our Chapter President will personally travel to Washington DC in April to support legislative initiatives for troops and their families.

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**.

VA Targets 1 Million Eligible Veterans in Health Care Enrollment Push

A new VA outreach campaign will target eligible veterans who've yet to enroll in its health care system, to include about 1 million unenrolled veterans who served in Vietnam, the Gulf War, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

The campaign will include text messages, emails, public service announcements, paid advertising, and events designed to reach veterans. It comes in response to concerns from veterans about health issues potentially linked to repeated blast exposures, including mental health challenges and thoughts of suicide.

VA researchers are urgently studying the health impacts of such exposures. Enrolled veterans can access specialty screenings and services for health issues related to blast exposure. Veterans from Vietnam, the Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, and other specific locations are eligible for VA health care based on their deployments, regardless of health conditions.

The VA encourages all eligible veterans to apply for VA care today. According to national reviews, VA's health care system continues to offer better health outcomes and higher trust ratings than non-VA care, often at a lower cost.

MOAA has long championed a robust VA health system, emphasizing its critical roles in clinical care, research, training, and emergency response. To ensure the sustainability of the VA's direct care system for veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors, MOAA is prioritizing the passage of the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act.

This legislation is a top priority for MOAA and the entire veteran community as the 118th Congress nears its end; even if you've already reached out to your legislators on behalf of the bill, consider sending another message to ensure it remains on their to-do list before the end of the session.

Earlier this year, VA expanded eligibility for veterans exposed to toxins and hazards, allowing them to enroll directly in the VA health system. This outreach is part of the largest campaign in VA history, initiated by the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act in 2022. Since then, over 835,000 veterans have enrolled in VA health care, 900,000 have upgraded their priority groups, and 4.4 million have applied for disability compensation benefits.

"We don't want veterans to wait – they should enroll in VA health care today to get full access to primary care, mental health care, regular screenings, specialty care, and more," VA Secretary Denis McDonough said in a press release announcing the outreach campaign. "That's what this outreach effort is all about: getting veterans in our care, because veterans who come to VA are proven to do better."

Ask Your Lawmakers to Support the VA by Passing the Dole Act

Source: MOAA.org

MEMBERSHIP

2025 Member Dues

It's that time of year to start thinking about the Chapter dues. Member dues are still $20. If you have questions about your dues, you can contact Rich Higgins. They can be paid on line here or you can mail a check made out to Southeastern Michigan MOAA to 4704 Mount Brighton Rd. Brighton, MI 48116.

Do you know an active, former, or retired officer or surviving spouse of a military officer who could join our chapter? Wonder what to say? Please consider reaching out to those you know and encouraging them to join our chapter.

Upcoming Events

Vet to Vet Connect.

Hosted by The War Memorial's Veterans Committee, this free special veterans gathering is set for Thursday, Jan. 9, from 8 to 9 a.m. Start your year off right with coffee and breakfast treats in the Alger Center. This is a chance to meet with fellow veterans, share stories of service, and connect with the committee.
Whether you're recently discharged or a seasoned veteran, The War Memorial's Vet-to-Vet gathering is a chance to join in camaraderie and endless stories of courage and honor. Your service deserves recognition, and this event is our way of saying thank you for your dedication and sacrifice.

To register click here

Opportunities to Serve

Awards-ROTC and JROTC Season Starting Up for MOAA Medals.

Like many other MOAA chapters, our chapter works with local high schools and universities to recognize outstanding student leaders in JROTC and ROTC units. Recognition is normally supported by awarding of the MOAA medal and certificate. JROTC and ROTC programs make a big difference in the lives of these students, their families, and educators within those schools. It is not only a significant achievement, but also gives those of us privileged to participate in these ceremonies to have a glimpse of the leaders of the future "on their way forward". MOAA medal season is normally in the spring in the March-May timeframe. We normally restock our medals from the MOAA store and coordinate presentations during the spring. If you are interested in participating, please contact Roy Yaple. Presentations are a very positive experience and program administration is relatively straight forward.

Chapter Opportunities for Service

The chapter Treasurer position remains open. If you are interested in possible serving in this position, please contact yapler@comcast.net We will be happy to answer question and provide training. The major activity for this position is tracking and crediting member dues payments.

The chapter is also looking for a person to manage the chapter ROTC/JROTC MOAA medals program. The main period of activity for this responsibility runs from January to the end of May and involves purchasing medals and certificates and communicating with schools for delivery of medals. Note that if you are aware of a school with a JROTC program that does not have an MOAA medal, please contact yapler@comcast.net and will can almost certainly add them to our list of high schools. We currently work with the University of Michigan, Eastern Michigan University and 12 metro area high schools.

Freedom Center Opportunities for Detroit Metropolitan Airport Military and Families

If you are traveling by air through Detroit, or know a veteran traveling at DTW, please consider availing them of the Freedom Center military lounges in the Evans (D17) or McNamara Terminals (A43). Open to anyone with a military ID card (or veterans designation on their Michigan drivers license). The lounges are staffed by volunteers, many of them former military or former airline employees. Normally the Evans Center is open 6AM-7PM and the McNamara Center is open 6AM to 10PM. Note that if volunteers are not available, the center will be closed for certain shifts. Families are welcome. Water, coffee, and snacks are available as well as some nice chairs to relax in.

Items of Interest

Fisher House Detroit Opens in Detroit November 26, 2024

Chapter members Rich Higgins and Roy Yaple, along with members of the Northwestern Michigan Chapter, Capital Area Chapter, and Army Navy Club of Grand Rapids were privileged to attend the Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony for the Fisher House Detroit which opened on November 2026, 2024. This facility will serve the needs of veterans' families while the veteran receives care at the VA Medical Center in Detroit. The Fisher House Detroit, marks the opening of the 99th Fisher House. After the ceremony, attended by Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan and other VIPs, we were able to tour the modern, warm three story facility.

Ending the Wait - Future Recommendations for Veterans and VA Claims

In September, MOAA and Disabled American Veterans (DAV) issued a report, "Ending the Wait for Toxic-Exposed Veterans". Veterans have been exposed to toxins while serving for over 100 years. The new report investigates that history regarding how the VA and earlier organizations have cared for those who serve and recommended changes to lower the average time between an exposure and the receipt of full VA benefits. The report offers a guiding path for the VA to reform the toxic exposure claims process and expand on progress achieved with the August 2022 signing of the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act.
For more information including the personal stories of other veterans, see www.endingthewait.org. or

https://www.dav.org/ending-the-wait/
MOAA's Military Officer Magazine, November 2024, pages 16 and 17

Want to continue supporting your military brothers and sisters? Volunteer as a Buddy mentor in MVAA's Buddy to Buddy Veteran Mentorship Program. This program provides support and connection to resources to all Michigan service members and veterans by utilizing trained, veteran volunteers. The program is free, confidential, and open to any individual who served, regardless of time served or discharge.

To learn more about our Buddy to Buddy Veteran Mentorship Program, visit: Michigan.gov/MVAAB2B

Surviving Spouse Info

Are you, or do you know a surviving spouse? Did you know that MOAA has a virtual chapter for surviving spouses with valuable information for you.

The Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter needs you, and you need the Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter if you are a surviving spouse or a surviving spouse liaison. The only requirements are to be a surviving spouse or a surviving spouse liaison, and a member of MOAA. There are no dues.

MOAA now has six virtual chapters -- affinity groups offering opportunities for camaraderie, solving problems, and sharing information.

MOAA's virtual chapter provides a place for surviving spouses and surviving spouse liaisons to learn important information, share ideas, and form new relationships with friends who share a common bond. A member recently commented that she got the most useful and important information from this group that she could not find other places.

They meet once a month on the third Tuesday of each month; however, not in November or December due to busy holiday schedules.

Resources for You

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. Please contact chapter member Henry Storm at ancientgrape@gmail.com or Roy Yaple at yapler@comcast.net for links to these weekly Zoom events. (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).

Veterans Crisis Line

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