

THE METRO DETROIT METEOR



Chapter Board Members

- President - CDR Roy Yaple, USN (Ret)
- Vice President - LTC Tom D'Alio USA (Ret)
- Treasurer - LCDR Rich Higgins, USN (Ret)
- Secretary - LTC Larry Powell, USA (Ret)
- Surviving Spouse Liaison - COL Noreen Diedo, USA (Ret)

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

Disclaimer

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- 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.
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Important Information

New Chapter Officers slated.

At our most recent Chapter meeting the following officer positions were filled:

- President: Rich Higgins
- Vice President: Rob Kull
- Secretary: Larry Powell
- Treasurer: Open
- Surviving Spouse: Noreen Diedo
- Past President: Roy Yaple

(We are still looking for someone to fill the treasurer position)

Representative Names and Districts

Click to open webpage

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 5 - Tim Walberg | 10 - John James |
| 6 - Debbie Dingell | 11 - Haley Stevens |
| 7 - Elissa Slotkin | 12 - Rashida Tlaib |
| 8 - Dan Kildee | 13 - Shri Thanedar |
| 9 - Lisa McLain | |
- These will be updated in the next edition

2024 Meetings

In 2024, the chapter will hold four separate meetings of the chapter general membership and other associated events. The Chapter officers will meet separately monthly for management and administration of the chapter (Board of Directors). Chapter members are welcome and encouraged to attend these Board of Directors meetings. If you are interested in attending a Board meeting, please contact the President and he will send you the Zoom link.

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 xx			Nov 10 Veteran's Day Remembrance	Dec 14 Wreaths Across America	

A Fireball - A Message from the President

Thank you to each and every chapter member and a special thank you to all elected and appointed officers who served in positions of chapter leadership during this year. This includes Vice-President, Tom D'Alio, Secretary Larry Powell, and Surviving Spouse Liaison Noreen Diedo. And a separate thank you to Rich Higgins who joined the chapter in January, and has served ably as Treasurer, Webmaster, and Legislative Aide.

Early in this year, the chapter conducted an in-depth chapter viability assessment and with the Michigan Council of Chapters of MOAA, developed a course of action to prepare the chapter for future success.

The chapter recruited nine additional members in 2024. Nearly 90% of chapter members have stayed with us over the last two years. The chapter held regular recruiting events in Warren and at the Selfridge Retiree Appreciation Day and encouraged each member to recruit new members.

The chapter successfully executed a comprehensive annual schedule of events with four in-person meetings and associated events. The chapter Board of Directors met on a regular basis to administer chapter operations.

We continued publishing our monthly newsletter, the Meteor; this year represented the most newsletters published in the 64-year history of the chapter. This would not have been possible without the dedicated and creative efforts of Larry Powell and Rich Higgins.

The chapter revised its MOAA online web presence and implemented its first ever website. www.semimoaa.org Again, Thank You and Well Done to Webmaster Rich Higgins for his time, skill, and initiative in providing a modern cost-effective, and informative presence on the internet.

The chapter served the community including achieving a five year high in recognizing outstanding student performance in area ROTC and JROTC programs.

The chapter volunteered and raised funds for the chapter for the first time ever.

The chapter has volunteers serving on a continuing basis in at least three different service opportunity locations. We have made inroads with MISIDE, a Detroit area social service and community support organization.

Chapter members enjoyed participation in the May International Armed Forces Night in Troy and the recent November Remembrance Service at the Cathedral of St. Paul in Detroit.

Chapter members were active in legislative advocacy on a national and state basis.

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](#).

More than 17,000 letters were sent to Congress this past summer through MOAA's Legislative Action Center to drive home the urgency of the three Advocacy in Action Summer Campaign issues. It's not too late to weigh in. It takes only a few minutes to log in to the Legislative Action Center and let your representatives hear from you.

Increasing Junior Enlisted Pay

Both the House and Senate versions of the FY 2025 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) include provisions addressing this issue: The House NDAA proposes a 15% pay raise for servicemembers E-1 to E-4 in addition to the 4.5% raise for all personnel, while the Senate version suggests a 1% increase for E-1 to E-3 beyond the general 4.5% raise. These measures are a step in the right direction, but continued advocacy is necessary to ensure our junior servicemembers can support themselves and their families.

Restoring the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH)

The House version of the NDAA proposes restoring BAH to 100% for FY 2025, moving closer to our goal of a permanent fix. Unfortunately, the Senate version does not address this issue, highlighting the need for continued advocacy to achieve a comprehensive solution.

Supporting Combat-Injured Veterans

The Major Richard Star Act, which aims to eliminate the unfair offset between DoD retirement pay and VA disability compensation, has seen significant support in Congress. Despite this, neither version of the NDAA includes the bill. It remains critical that lawmakers hear from constituents on this important issue, particularly as we approach the 119th Congress.

On the state level, the Michigan Commanders Group web site includes legislative advocacy functionality that enables you to support state military legislation including initiatives for suicide prevention, hyperbaric oxygen treatment, and veteran treatment courts, among others.

See www.michigancommandersgroup.org.

You can register for this web site and then you can send emails to your state legislators in support of the military issue(s) of your choice.

Upcoming Events

Vet Connect Seminar Series: Tri-County Veteran Navigators

Veteran Navigators was created to assist veterans and military families of all eras and discharge types. They work to connect veterans and their families to federal, state and local resources to ease issues regarding mental health, substance abuse, housing and other common issues that impact veterans in order to support healthier lifestyles and provide support.

The free seminar is planned for Tuesday, Dec. 3, from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. It will take place in the Patriot Gallery, on the lower level of The War Memorial located at 32 Lake Shore Drive | Grosse Pointe Farms, MI 48236. Go to this link to register:

<https://warmemorial.my.salesforce-sites.com/ticket/#/instances/a0FVm000002KWozMAG>

Wreaths Across America, 12:00 pm, Saturday Dec 14, 2024.

This year on December 14, 2024, 4600 participating cemeteries and two million volunteers across the nation will participate in Wreaths Across America (WAA). Over nine thousand veterans are buried at Resurrection Cemetery in Clinton Township. The WAA program at Resurrection Cemetery is the second largest in Michigan.

This year's program will again include a formal ceremony followed by the wreath-laying event. WAA's yearlong mission is to Remember the fallen, Honor those that serve and Teach the next generation the value of freedom. You can sponsor one or more wreaths at this link:

<https://www.wreathsassamerica.org>.

Members from our Chapter will meet at the cemetery (18201 Clinton River Rd. Clinton Township, MI 48038) to attend the ceremony and participate in the wreath laying.

If this is not near your home, you can go to the web site below with the name of a cemetery to find out if they are participating. If you are coming to Resurrection Cemetery in Clinton Township, it is recommended that you arrive by 1130. Please dress appropriately considering the weather; there may be some light refreshments. Normally several hundred people attend, and the program is about an hour in duration. While you are not obligated to place a wreath, there are plenty of wreaths available. You can sponsor wreaths, but do not have to buy a wreath to place one. As of this writing, there are approximately 8,300 wreathes still needed at this location.

While I do not know anyone interred at the cemetery, I still find wreath placement a very meaningful experience. If you have questions, please contact yapler@comcast.net

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.

Retired Activities Office (RAO) Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mount Clemens, MI Seeks Volunteers

The Retired Activities Office (RAO) is looking for at least two volunteers to support the office at Selfridge Air National Guard Base. Volunteers work to answer phone calls and serve clients walking into the office. Shifts are normally one day per week with three hours in the office and one hour travel time per shift. Shift days are Tuesday through Friday and shift hours are 9-12 or 12-3. The work is normally not too physical but does become more physical closer to the Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) date. RAD support involves setting up and tear down of tables and chairs, vacuuming, and bringing food and beverages into the RAD location (Wagner Enlisted Dining Facility at Selfridge) on the base in Mount Clemens. Knowledge in military personnel matters is a plus but not a requirement. Spouses of chapter members can also volunteer. If you are interested, please contact the office at (586) 239-5580

Items of Interest

New lifetime pass available for Military Veterans and Gold Star Families to access public lands.

Starting on Veterans Day (Nov. 11), veterans of the U.S. Armed Services and Gold Star Families can obtain a free lifetime pass to more than 2,000 federal recreation sites spread out across more than 400 million acres of public lands, including national parks, wildlife refuges, and forests. Federal recreational land management agencies offer additional lifetime passes, including a Senior Pass for US citizens or permanent residents over age 62 and an Access Pass for US citizens or permanent residents with a permanent disability. More information is available on NPS.gov. The Interior Department and other federal land agencies also offer fee-free entrance days for everyone throughout the year to mark days of celebration and commemoration, including the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., National Public Lands Day, and Veterans Day.

Funeral Honors

The Department of Defense (DoD) is responsible for providing military funeral honors. “Honoring Those Who Served” is the title of the DoD program for providing dignified military funeral honors to Veterans who have defended our nation.

Upon the Family’s request, Public Law 106-65 requires that every eligible Veteran receive a military funeral honors ceremony, to include folding and presenting the United States burial flag and the playing of Taps. The law defines a military funeral honors detail as consisting of two or more uniformed military persons, with at least one being a member of the Veteran’s parent service of the armed forces.

The DoD program calls for funeral home directors to request military funeral honors on behalf of the Veterans’ Family.

However, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Cemetery Administration cemetery staff can also assist with arranging military funeral honors at VA national cemeteries. Veteran organizations may assist in providing military funeral honors. When military funeral honors at a national cemetery are desired, they are arranged prior to the committal service by the funeral home. The Department of Defense began the implementation plan for providing military funeral honors for eligible Veterans as enacted in Section 578 of Public Law 106-65 of the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2000 on Jan. 1, 2000.

While many cemeteries have similar eligibility requirements for burial options for Veterans and their Families, some require state residency and some services, particularly for Family members, may require a fee.

Questions or comments concerning the DoD military funeral honors program may be sent to the address listed below.

The military funeral honors website is located at Militaryonesource.mil. This website also offers more detailed information on the “Honoring Those Who Served” program.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Military Community and Family Policy) 4000 Defense Pentagon, Room 5A726 Washington, DC 20380

For more information, please contact your local funeral home director or local county Veterans Service Office, or click [here](#).

Source: *HONORS* magazine

New TRICARE Contracts Take Effect Jan 1

A pair of contracts designed to improve the quality of care in Tricare’s civilian medical networks will take effect Jan. 1, 2025, according to defense officials.

The contracts are moving forward following a Jan. 31 decision in the U.S. Court of Federal Claims affirming the Defense Health Agency’s choice of TriWest Healthcare Alliance as the Tricare West Region’s new manager, denying a protest lodged by incumbent contractor Health Net Federal Services last year. The award, announced in December 2022, is worth up to \$65.1 billion over nine years. The new contracts hold the promise of greater provider network flexibility, improved choices and other benefits for Tricare beneficiaries, according to defense officials.

Humana Government Business will manage the East Region, which will cover 24 states plus Washington, D.C., and TriWest Healthcare Alliance will manage the 26-state West Region. Six states that are currently in the East Region will transfer to the West Region – Arkansas, Illinois, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas and Wisconsin. This shift provides a more equitable balance of beneficiaries, officials said. These states include about 1.5 million beneficiaries; all told there are about 9.6 million Tricare beneficiaries, to include members of the uniformed services, their families, retirees and their families.

TRICARE cont'd.

The new contracts, dubbed T-5 contracts, "do not change the Tricare benefit and offer all the same Tricare options," Defense Health Agency officials said in their announcement.

Enrolled beneficiaries living in either the East or West Region who don't want to change their current Tricare plan don't need to re-enroll during open season, which runs from Nov. 11 through Dec. 10.

Source: Military Times



Happy Birthday Michigan Freedom Center!

November 11, 2024 marks the 13th birthday of the Michigan Armed Forces Hospitality & Freedom Center. They have been providing Care, Comfort and Courtesy to our traveling military personnel and veterans for 13 years at the McNamara Terminal and the Evans North Terminal for 9 years.

All are invited to be a part of the Freedom Center family through volunteering or your generous financial support.

2025 COLA: 2.5%

The September 2024 Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W), released Oct. 10, was 309.046, 2.6% above the FY 2024 baseline of 301.236. This means the average CPI-W for the last three months of the fiscal year (July, August, and September 2024) is 308.729. The baseline is subtracted from this figure, with the result divided by the baseline (and rounded to the nearest tenth), to determine the 2025 COLA of 2.5%: $(308.729 - 301.236) / 301.236 = 2.49\%$

Source: MOAA.org

Military Tax Benefits

Did you know that there tax benefits for military personnel? For example, military pay, including retirement benefits are tax exempt. There are other benefits as well and more detailed information can be found at [Michigan.gov](https://www.michigan.gov).

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, we do not meet in November or December due to busy holiday schedules.

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.

Resources for You

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

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).

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.

ID Card office online is open!

Renewing Your Uniformed Services ID Card

Sponsors may request Uniformed Service ID (USID) Card renewal online, which if approved, are mailed directly to the card recipient; no in person appointments necessary. This page provides details on how to renew your USID card online.

NEW MILITARY ID ONLINE – To get a new Military ID, which is required by 2026, go to the following web site. **Online Uniformed Service Identification Card Renewal Pilot ([Next Generation ID Card](#))**

What's Changing?

Sponsors can request card renewals online through ID Card Office Online. Cards will be printed by the Government Publishing Office and mailed to the card recipient via U.S. mail.

Requirements

- Sponsor may be a Common Access Card (CAC) holder or a DoD Self-service Logon credential holder and requesting a renewal of an active USID card.
- The Sponsor and the card recipient must have email addresses listed in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) that they have authorized DoD to use for contacting them. (Authorization to use email for official contact can be made under "My Profile" on the IDCO website ID Card Office Online).
- The Sponsor's personnel status must extend at least 30 days in the future from the renewal request date.
- The card recipient has a photo saved in DEERS taken in the last 12 years.
- The card recipient's mailing address is present in DEERS and in the continental United States, Hawaii, or Alaska.
- Cannot be a Post Office (PO) Box.