



THE SOUTHEASTERN



MICHIGAN EAGLE



28 February 2026

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Groundhog Day is a North American tradition observed each year on February 2, best known for its lighthearted weather prediction. According to folklore, if a groundhog emerges from its burrow on that day and sees its shadow, winter will last six more weeks; if it does not see its shadow, an early spring is expected.

The custom has roots in ancient European weather lore. Early Germanic and Celtic peoples marked the midpoint between the winter solstice and the spring equinox as a seasonal turning point. Christians later observed this date as Candlemas, a feast day that included weather sayings suggesting that clear skies on February 2 meant more winter ahead. German immigrants brought these traditions to North America in the 18th and 19th centuries.

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In Europe, animals such as hedgehogs or badgers were used in similar weather traditions. In Pennsylvania, where hedgehogs were not native, settlers substituted the groundhog, an animal common to the region. The first documented Groundhog Day celebration in the United States took place in 1887 in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. There, a groundhog named Punxsutawney Phil became the most famous “forecaster,” drawing thousands of visitors each year.

Although Groundhog Day has no scientific basis and groundhog predictions are largely symbolic, the holiday endures as a cultural tradition. It blends folklore, seasonal awareness, and community celebration, offering a moment of humor and hope during the depths of winter.

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www.semimoaa.org





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

Greetings,

We had an outstanding gathering at the Rusty Bucket on January 26. Members viewed a compelling video presentation by CAPT Jim Carman, MOAA's Vice President for Council/Chapter and Member Support, highlighting MOAA's long history of effective advocacy and outlining the Association's current legislative priorities. If you were unable to attend, the video is available on YouTube ([CLICK HERE](#)) and well worth your time.

Our chapter leadership remains committed to bringing informative and engaging speakers to our meetings. Thanks to the efforts of our Secretary, LTC Larry Powell, USA (Ret.), we have secured an exceptional lineup:

- April 16: Brigadier General Beth A. Behn, 25th Commanding General of the U.S. Army Tank-automotive and Armaments Command (TACOM). BG Behn oversees a \$30 billion budget and manages the Army's ground equipment supply chain, including four depots and two arsenals, ensuring global readiness for our forces. This will be a rare opportunity to hear directly from one of Michigan's senior Army leaders.
- July 16: Chris Causley, Founder and President of the Michigan Military Technical & Historical Society in Eastpointe, will present "Donald Nelson and the Arsenal of Democracy." Mr. Causley will highlight Michigan's critical role in World War II industrial mobilization and the leadership behind the "Arsenal of Democracy."

If you know of a dynamic speaker who would benefit our members, please let me know. We welcome your suggestions as we continue strengthening the value of our chapter programs. As MOAA gears up for April's Advocacy in Action on Capitol Hill, please [click the links below](#) to log on to MOAA's Legislative Action Center and ask your congressional representatives to support the following MOAA 2026 legislative priorities:

- [The Shutdown Fairness Act \(S. 3168\)](#), which would ensure members of the armed services, to include the reserve component, receive their pay during any future lapse in appropriations. As written, the bill does not explicitly include members of the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps or the NOAA Commissioned Corps, who should be added before the bill moves to a vote.
- [The Military Care Act \(H.R. 6796\)](#), which would require the Defense Health Agency to establish a digital system that allows beneficiaries to report and track access to care problems.
- [The Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement Act \(H.R.2148/S. 879\)](#), would help close these gaps by providing professional development, employment assistance, and retirement planning specifically tailored for veteran caregivers.



- Governing Unaccredited Representatives Defrauding (GUARD) VA Benefits Act (H.R. 1732), which would restore enforcement authority and criminal penalties for unaccredited individuals and companies that illegally charge veterans and survivors for VA disability claims assistance.
- Improve and Enhance the Work Opportunity Tax Credit Act (H.R. 6231/S. 3265), which would continue to offer this tax credit to employers and include military spouses to improve financial stability for the currently serving military family and increase military readiness and retention rates.

Please let me know if you have any suggestions to help improve our Chapter.

Rich

Rich Higgins, LCDR, USN (Ret.)

President



Members gathered at the Rusty Bucket



2026 Meetings

Board Meetings			Chapter/Other Meetings			
Jan 20	Feb 17	Mar 17	Jan 29 Chapter Lunch/ Induction of Officers	Apr 6-9 Advocacy in Action	April 16 Chapter Lunch TACOM Guest Speaker	May 9 International Armed Forces Dining out
None	May 19	Jun 16	Jun 16 Chapter Zoom	Jul 16 Chapter Lunch Guest Speaker	Sep 19 Retiree Appreciation Day	Oct 20 Chapter Zoom Mtg
None	Aug 18	Sep 15	Nov 5 Chapter Mtg / Election of Officers	Nov 9 Veteran's Day Remembrance	Dec 19 Wreaths Across America	
Oct 20	None	Dec 15				

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

Chapter Board Members

President - LCDR Rich Higgins, USN (Ret)
 Vice President -CDR Roy Yaple, USN (Ret)
 Treasurer - Vacant
 Secretary - LTC Larry Powell, 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:
 560 Barrington Rd. Grosse Pointe Park, MI 48230

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 MOAA) 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.

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](#)

US Representative Names and Districts

[Click to open webpage.](#)

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

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](#).

Long-Sought Fix for Combat-Wounded Veterans Takes New Path in Congress

By: MOAA Staff

MOAA hosted members of Congress, executive branch officials, Hill staffers, and valued supporters Jan. 14 for a reception marking the start of the second session of the 119th Congress.

The event, held at The Monocle Restaurant on Capitol Hill, also served as an opportunity to share MOAA's top legislative priorities for the upcoming year.

“Bringing stakeholders together on Capitol Hill fosters the collaboration required to move shared priorities forward,” said Maj. Gen. April Vogel, USAF (Ret), MOAA's vice president of Government Relations. “This reception created space for constructive dialogue, strengthened relationships, and kept the focus where it belongs: on servicemembers, veterans, their families, and survivors.”

Every attendee also received a list of “[MOAA's New Year's Resolutions for Congress](#).” These bills will serve as top focus areas for our association's advocacy efforts in 2026.

Learn more about these bills, and how you can support MOAA's work to pass them, below. Note: This is not an all-encompassing list of MOAA's legislative efforts. For more, visit our [Legislative Action Center](#).

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

To send an email to your representative and ask them to support this Bill, go to this [link](#).



Advocacy at the State Level

The Michigan Commanders Group, a coalition of Congressionally Chartered 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.



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The chapter welcomes the following new members:

Rachel Bayles. Rachel is a cybersecurity analyst working for a space lab at University of Colorado. Originally from New York City, she served in the USCG between 1993-1996. In her free time she is pursuing a master's degree in artificial intelligence. She used to visit Michigan as a child in the summers because her cousins were some of the original founders of The Cherry Hut.

Mike Powers. Mike is retired Coast Guard and served on icebreakers when afloat - three of which were on the Great Lakes and one out of Seattle - during his tour aboard the (USCGC POLAR SEA), he was XO - the ship became the first US surface ship to reach the North Pole (1994). While ashore, he worked in radio electronics, computers, and communications. He served for 21 years retiring as a Commander, holding CO positions twice; once each afloat and ashore.

His wife Kathy is a retired Colonel, USMCR and held mostly administrative jobs while following him to his various Coast Guard assignments.

Mike Jenkins. Mike Jenkins is a Lieutenant at Coast Guard Sector Detroit. He joined MOAA about 10 years ago while attending OCS. He retires in June after 25 years in the Coast Guard. He and his wife reside in Rochester Hills.

Mike Johnson. As a child, Johnson lived in many places as his father served 27 years in the Air Force. After graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy, he earned a master's degree in Mechanical Engineering from MIT. As a submarine officer, he served 8½ years, conducting strategic deterrent patrols, a nuclear refueling overhaul, and a "reconnaissance" mission north of the Arctic Circle near the U.S.S.R. He concluded active duty as an engineering instructor at USNA while earning an MBA, a professional engineer license, and a private pilot's license. Johnson continued his service in the Navy Reserve as an Engineering Duty Officer, completing three tours as a Commanding Officer earning the Legion of Merit and two Meritorious Service Commendation Medals. In civilian life, he retired as an international executive sales director for Eaton Corporation, a Fortune 200 diversified industrial company.

For more than 25 years, CAPT Johnson has volunteered as a Blue and Gold Officer, promoting the U.S. Naval Academy and mentoring and interviewing applicants. This year, he assumed leadership of the Academy's 2,500-member volunteer team nationwide.



Stay Alert: Protect Yourself from Membership Scams

MOAA often uses email and online channels to communicate with its members about their membership status. However, we realize it may sometimes be difficult to discern legitimate messaging from scams. If you receive an email or online message about your membership that seems suspicious, do not respond. Contact MOAA's Member Service Center immediately at 800-234-6622 to verify its legitimacy.

MOAA provides scam prevention resources at MOAA.org/scams that can help you combat all types of fraud. Some MOAA-specific details that may help you spot suspicious messaging:

- Life members whose dues are paid in full will never be asked for additional dues payments.
- Spouses of deceased Life members inherit their membership at no additional cost.
- Spouses are not eligible for membership; MOAA will never solicit a spouse to join. (Surviving spouses, however, are eligible for membership.)
- Basic and Premium members may receive renewal or upgrade communications from MOAA via mail, email, text message, or phone. If you're unsure whether a message is authentic, DO NOT REPLY to the message — contact the Member Service Center at 800-234-6622 for confirmation.



MOAA SIGNATURE GROUPS

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

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

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Email Address: **mail@MOAAvac.com**



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



Upcoming Events

Veterans Resource Fair

On Feb. 12, gather for a free Veterans Resource Fair. Veterans and their families will have access to a wide range of essential services when more than 25 organizations from across metro Detroit gather for the resource fair. Attendees can connect with organizations offering support related to employment, housing, healthcare, education, mental health services, Veterans Affairs benefits, and more — all in one location.

To register, click on the “Veterans Resource Fair”.



Mark your calendar for a series of events occurring at the Grosse Pointe War Memorial. These events are always well done and provide lots of information and entertainment.



FEB
12

Veterans Resource Fair

Feb 12, 2026

Join us for the Veterans Resource Fair, a one-stop event dedicated to supporting those who have served.

VET CONNECT SEMINAR SERIES

MAR
12

VetConnect Seminar Series with Dave Laycock

Mar 12, 2026

Join us as we welcome Dave Laycock as he discusses the cause, effect, treatment and recovery of post-traumatic stress disorder.



MAR
14

USAFA Blue Delta Concert

Apr 14, 2026

Join us as we welcome back the United States Air Force Academy Ensemble Blue Delta for a free performance.



MAR
27

Vietnam Veterans Day Welcome Home Luncheon

Mar 27, 2026

In commemoration of National Vietnam War Veterans Day, veterans and their families are invited to join us for a special afternoon lunch to commemorate their bravery and sacrifice during the Vietnam War.



APR
8

Vet-To-Vet

Apr 8, 2026

Hosted by The War Memorial's veterans committee, gather with fellow veterans for camaraderie at The War Memorial. This will be a chance to connect with members of the committee, and catch up with area veterans.



APR
22

Staying Connected: You're Not Alone

Apr 22, 2026

Join Dr. Judy Jacobs, PhD, RN, LPC as she discusses the importance of connecting with others to build up our resilience to the stressors that can ultimately cause illness. She will discuss various ways to get involved with your family, friends, and/or community.

If interested in participating in any or all of these free events go to this [link](#) for more information and to register. The War Memorial is located at 32 Lake Shore Drive, Grosse Pointe Farms, MI 48236
Phone: 313.881.7511



Wreathes Across America



The Chapter will be adopting the Roseland Park Cemetery in Berkeley. We will be raising funds for purchases of wreathes throughout the year and participate in the wreath laying ceremony on 19 December. Stay tuned for more info!

2026 THEME: REMEMBER ME

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

- Karen Worcester, Executive Director, Wreathes Across America

Southeastern Michigan MOAA Chapter ROTC/JROTC Awards Program

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



Chapter Opportunities for Service

The chapter **Treasurer** and **Surviving Spouse Liaison** positions remains open. If you are interested in serving, please contact rlhigginsjr@yahoo.com We will be happy to answer questions and provide training. The major activity for the treasurer position is tracking and crediting member dues payments. The Surviving Spouse position



Join MOAA's Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter

MOAA's Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter is an affinity group whose members share information and ideas with others in a virtual environment. After starting the virtual meetings through quarterly teleconferences, the Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter now meets monthly through Zoom. Almost 40 states are represented in the membership. This chapter is intended to be an enhancement to, rather than take the place of, geographic chapters, and there are no dues.

Several weeks in advance of each meeting, members receive an email alerting them to the date and time of the gathering; a follow-on email with instructions for joining is sent several days prior to each meeting. The session is kept to an hour and a half and members can log on or off according to their schedule. Topics of discussion and presentations have included Survivor Benefit Plan-Dependency and Indemnity Compensation offset updates, financial information, and updates from MOAA national as well as other items of interest.

Members participate to the extent they are able. While the chapter is geared toward surviving spouses and surviving spouse liaisons, any MOAA spouse is welcome for membership. MOAA's mantra "Never Stop Serving" is espoused to make a difference locally, statewide, and nationally.

Download a membership application [at this link](#). It can also be obtained by sending a request to mssvc02@gmail.com.



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.

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 challenges of being a surviving spouse.

This Facebook group is private, but you can request to join. Click on this [link](#) to request to join.

VA Healthcare, Pension and Compensation; Weekly Zoom Calls



phillipmartin.info

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.

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