



“Columbia Express”

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4

APRIL 2026

UPCOMING EVENTS:

**MAY 15, Chaptr Mtg,
1130**

**MAY 14-16 Retiree
Appreciation Days**

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Our Preamble

To inculcate and stimulate love of our Country and the Flag; to defend the honor, integrity, and supremacy of our National Government and the Constitution of the United States.

To support all activities and legislation that benefit members of the uniformed services and their families, regardless of rank or branch of service.

To foster fraternal relations among all branches of the various services; to serve as the focal point for welcoming officers and families who live in the Midlands; to assist in their settlement; and to otherwise aid and present their rights and interests with respect to service matters.

We are united to form the Columbia Chapter of Military Officers Association of America, located at Columbia, South Carolina.

President's Prologue

Greetings to all friends and members of our great Columbia Chapter of MOAA. On behalf of your board of officers, HAPPY SPRING! (Hopefully, the pollen count will begin to diminish soon.)

As we move well into 2026, we wish to thank you for your continued support and interest in our vital mission to take care of all those who have, are, and will be serving our country in our Uniform Services, to include our families.

In order to effect legislation at both the state and federal levels of government, we rely on thriving and robust chapter (and national) membership across the nation. While I risk sounding like the proverbial broken record, the maintenance and focus on increasing our membership is the key to success. In conjunction with our membership strength, each of you can play a more direct role through MOAA's Legislative Action Center, which is a simple “fire and forget” avenue by which you can personally contact your state legislatures. You may address any number of legislative priorities, many of which are already included in the pre-written letters.

-Continued

President's Prologue

All you have to do is log into the following site where you can find the letters addressed to your respective political leadership, sign, and send.

As you know, the more letters they receive the greater our chances. It only takes a few minutes of your valuable time.

<https://www.moaa.org/content/topic-and-landing-pages/moaa-in-action/>

Thank you!

Did you know that you can join the numerous and diverse MOAA "Zoom" meetings, info briefs, and forums? If you receive the MOAA "Officers" magazine ...and peruse it...you will see them listed therein. (The magazine is for paying premium and life members. If you are a free "basic" member, you are encouraged to join MOAA national at the premium or life levels. They are worth it, if you wish to make a positive difference at the national/federal level of governance.) Anyone may also go online to MOAA.org and find the meetings listed.

If you do join a MOAA "Zoom" ...or Virtual Classroom... there is no requirement for you to prepare anything or even say a single word...just listen and learn.

Here are just a few of the many scheduled:

Protect Yourself, and Your Family, From Cybercrime

APRIL 22, 2026 | 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM EDT

MOAA's Legislative Update

APRIL 28, 2026 | 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM EDT

Is a Roth Conversion Right for You?

MAY 20, 2026 | 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM EDT

MOAA's Virtual Career Fair and Hiring Event

JUNE 04, 2026 | 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM EDT

If you require assistance accessing these meetings, just go to "MOAA.org" or please feel free to contact me or any of our Chapter officers, and we shall do our best to help you.

-Continued

President's Prologue

Friends, mark your calendars! Our next Chapter meeting is 15 May at the Ft. Jackson "1917 Club" which is the former NCO Club. The time remains 1130 to about 1300. We hope to see you there. (And, I'll work on keeping the meetings a bit shorter.)

ATTENTION: Online payment options for your lunches, annual dues, and or donations remain available thru MOAA National's Cheddar Up. Here is the link for that:

<https://my.cheddarup.com/me/studetom-1240>

Thank you, again, for your support of our Great Columbia Chapter.

Respectfully, **Carl**

"EVERYONE A RECRUITER!"

Columbia Chapter 2026 Meeting Dates: (Mark your calendars now!)

Friday, 15 May

Friday, 21 August

Friday, 16 October

Friday, 11 December



NEW! Chapter Dues Online Payment Option:
Click the link to pay annual Columbia Chapter dues

(\$20 for 1 year or \$50 for 3 years)

<https://my.cheddarup.com/me/studetom-1240>



Super Tip for Your C & P Exam!

From Mary Wanner, Disability Seminar Coordinator: To get the best results for your [Comp & Pen exam](#) implement the following: 1. Show up and cooperate. If you don't, your claim will be denied. 2. Bring a doctor's letter and [jot down notes](#) about your [medical condition](#). 3. Be direct, honest, and don't exaggerate or minimize. [Write down specifics](#) of how you react to your [disability](#). 4. Be prepared to speak with a specialist. 5. Take a witness. 6. After the exam, [make copies](#) of what was discussed and request a copy of the exam report by sending a request letter to your [Regional Office](#).

March Distinguished Speaker—Jim Albert



Our distinguished guest speaker for March 2026, **Lt Col (AF, Ret.) Jim Albert, President of our South Carolina Chapters of MOAA**, speaking about MOAA State and National initiatives, membership, and updates. We appreciate the visit and information.



MOAA Snapshot



- Founded 23 Feb 1929 in Los Angeles as The Retired Officers Assoc.
- Priority is lobbying Congress for military/veterans pay and benefits (See Legislative Action Center for all military-related legislation)
- Growing focus on Chapters as revenue and membership declines
- Awards Chapters, Councils and Individual Leaders for Service
- Conducts training webinars, meetings, newsletters, magazine....
- Provides grants and stipends through new "MOAA Charities"
- 350,000+ members supported by about 80 staff (Alexandria, VA)
- Over 400 Chapters and Councils (both geographic and virtual)



Chapter Membership



Aiken	152	Charleston	253
Columbia	135	Daniel Morgan	39
Grand Strand	127	Greenville	11
Hilton Head	140	Low Country	66
Piedmont	103	Star Fort	56

Approx. Total Statewide: **1,082**

Most Chapters are non-profit 501c(3) or 501c(19)

ATTENTION: MOAA National, SC Council of Chapters, and the Columbia Chapter are non-partisan organizations!

"C O L U M B I A E X P R E S S"

Council & Chapter Leaders:

On behalf of MOAA President and CEO, Lt Gen Brian "BK" Kelly, I am thrilled to announce the 2025 MOAA Levels of Excellence and Col. Marvin J Harris Communication Award winners. This year, our judges considered 158 LOE award and 259 Communications award nominations, with a record number of new submissions. This was a highly competitive process reflective of the extraordinary level of grass roots engagement and dedication of our affiliates across the country and virtually.

We will take advantage of the opportunity with gathered council and independent chapter leaders in Washington, DC for Advocacy in Action week to host an awards ceremony on Thursday, April 16 as part of our Council President/Independent Chapter President Meeting agenda. Leaders will have the opportunity to receive all awards on behalf of their council or have awards mailed to chapters. We will coordinate separately with those council and independent leaders not in attendance. Please consider that presentation options include opportunities during national visits or state-wide meetings and conventions.

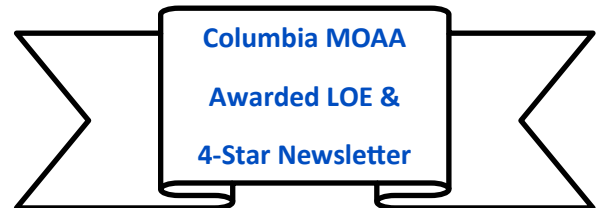
Special thanks to Affiliated Councils and Chapters Committee Chair, Lelia Jackson and all committee members who served as LOE judges, MOAA Communications professionals Blair Drake and Kevin Lilly for their review of communication awards, and Dena Kilgore for her exceptional coordination of all affiliates annual awards.

Congratulations to all for a great annual recognition year for both award categories. In the coming weeks, we will be sending out specific feedback from judges to all award applicants. We ask that the recipients of this feedback please share this information with your fellow leaders involved in these efforts and consider how the feedback can bolster future efforts.

Please use these links to see a full listing of awardees:

[2025 Levels of Excellence Awardees](#)

[2025 Harris Communication Awardees](#)



Thanks for all that you do daily to support MOAA's mission!

Membership News:

Current Paid Members: 109 (2026 and beyond)

Surviving Spouses: 20

We added 5 new members last month. Please continue to invite new members or prospective members. Anyone who invites a new member that joins, will receive their next lunch free. We are trying to reach our goal of exceeding last years

active paid members of 115.

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Member Spotlight

COL (Ret.) Art Coogler—Columbia Chapter MOAA Surviving Spouses Liaison



Columbia Express – Member Spotlight

Dr. Arthur Coogler, DMD
Colonel, US Army, Retired

Art has been a Chapter Officer for the past 7 years. He is a Life Member of MOAA, VFW, VVA, 173d Airborne Brigade Assoc., West Point Assoc. of Graduates and the MUSC Alumni Assoc. He is an active member of Greenlawn Baptist Church.

Art was commissioned 2LT of Armor after graduation from West Point in 1968. He was an M-60 tank platoon leader at Ft. Riley and an M-551 Sheridan tank platoon leader with the 82nd Airborne Div. at Ft. Bragg, before joining the 173d Airborne Brigade in Vietnam in 1970.

After Vietnam, Art attended the Medical Univ. of South Carolina, College of Dental Medicine, graduating in 1974. The next 24 years as an Army dentist were occupied with running both small and large dental clinics, being Director of a dental residency and DENTAC commands. He completed dental specialty dental training in 1980 at Walter Reed and was board certified in 1985 as a periodontist. He commanded the Augsburg, Germany, Dental Activity from 1989-1992.

During the Persian Gulf War, he deployed from Augsburg to command the 122nd Medical Detachment (Dental Service) in Saudi Arabia from Dec. '90 to Sep. '91. With HQ in Khobar

Towers, Dhahran, he had dental personnel from Kuwait City in the north to Riyadh in the west. His unit was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation for its Desert Shield/Desert Storm service.

After returning from Germany, Art commanded the Fort Jackson Dental Activity 1992-95 and stayed as a staff periodontist until retiring in 1998 in the rank of Colonel, after 30 years

of active duty. He worked as a civil service dentist at Fort Jackson until late 2009.

In addition to his individual and unit awards, Art is a recipient of the Order of Military Medical Merit and is a Distinguished Member of the Army Medical Department Regiment.

In 1987, Art married Pat Mogel of Reading, PA, whom he had met while working at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. She was a Certified Dental Assistant for 40 years and a proud Army wife. Pat died of cancer in 2015 and was interred at Ft. Jackson National Cemetery.

Art established endowed scholarships for dental hygienists and dental assistants at Midlands Technical College in her memory.

Art has done considerable work on his family genealogy and is a strong proponent of animal welfare. He has 14 grandchildren and 7 great grands.

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MOAA's New Year's Resolutions for Congress

CURRENTLY SERVING:

Shutdown Fairness Act
(S. 3168)

FAMILIES & SURVIVORS:

Improve and Enhance the Work Opportunity Tax Credit
(H.R. 6231 / S. 3265)

VETERANS & RETIREES:

Governing Unaccredited Representatives
Defrauding (GUARD) VA Benefits Act
(H.R. 1732)

MILITARY HEALTH SYSTEM:

Military CARE Act
(H.R. 6796)

VA HEALTH CARE:

Veteran Caregiver Reeducation,
Reemployment, and Retirement Act
(H.R. 2148 / S. 879)



Moaa.org

Headlines:

MOAA Again Recognized as a 'Top Lobbyist' by The Hill

MOAA Shares Legislative Priorities at Congressional Reception

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"C O L U M B I A E X P R E S S"

2026 MOAA Board of Directors

President - Carl Horn

cwhorn1954@gmail.com

Vice President - Ceasar Leysath

Vice President - Membership Katie Hanna, Newsletter Editor

Treasurer-Tom Yarborough

Secretary- Sharron Mackey

Legislative Affairs - Jimmy Foley

Chaplain - Sam Boone

Surviving Spouses - Art Coogler

JROTC Laision- John Marcucci

JROTC Laision—Chris Cox (**Welcome to our newest board member!**)



Rest in Peace

Military Brothers and Sisters. Your Service to Our Country is Recorded and Honored.

CH(COL) Mack Branham



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COLUMBIA CHAPTER
Post Office Box 10121
Columbia, SC 29207

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL

DATE: _____

Instructions:

- Dues are **\$20** – 1 year (26) ... **\$40** – 2 year (26-27) ... or **\$50** – 3 years (26-28) **(Circle One)**

Select 3 years and save \$10!!!

-Surviving Spouse dues are **\$0** ... please update and mail-in this form.

-Please make check payable to “**Columbia MOAA**”

-Mail check and this form to: (or bring to any meeting!)

- **Online Payments:** Use Cheddarup link and pay with CC. <https://my.cheddarup.com/me/studetom-1240>

Columbia Chapter MOAA, PO Box 10121, Columbia, SC 29207

_____ Initial Application _____ Renewal ... Check # _____ or Cash Amount _____

Name: _____

Rank: _____ Service: _____

Check One: Active _____ Retired _____ Former Officer _____ Surviving Spouse _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: Home _____ Mobile _____

Spouse's Name: _____

National MOAA ID: _____ Basic – Premium – Life **(Circle One)**

This number is found on the upper left of the MOAA Magazine Mailing Label ... usually 8 digits

Questions: Carl Horn (803) 364-9200 or Katie Hanna (580) 583-6485.

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Welcome New Members:

- COL (Ret.) Rosen Lawsins, USA
- Jim Jarvis, USN
- CPT (Fmr) Larry Russell, USA
- 1LT (Ret.) Tony Stephenson, USA
- CPT (Fmr) Leslie Sully, USA



Congrats Columbia Chapter
on winning the
**2026 LOE Award and 2026 4-Star
Newsletter Award**
from MOAA National

Scholarships for 2026-27

Application info coming soon....

Two \$1000 scholarships to the university or
trade school of student's choice



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Surviving Spouse Corner

Many marriages will end with one spouse dying and the other trying to put their life back together. It is critical that couples get their estate planning documents in order because death may strike with no warning. I know from experience. It is always best to get information directly from the agencies who administer the various issues. Here are some useful contacts in Columbia.

Casualty Assistance Office, Strom Thurmond Bldg., Rm. 206.

803-751-5763/4519/7820 Call in advance.

Retirement Services Office, Strom Thurmond Bldg., Rm. 211.

803-751-5523/6715/5495 Call in advance.

Richland County Veterans Affairs Office (Kenneth Brown), WJB Dorn VA Campus.

803-576-1908; Brown.Kenneth@RichlandCountySC.gov

Social Security Administration, 1835 Assembly St.

866-964-7594 or 800-772-1213

MOAA has numerous archived articles, a Surviving Spouse Corner and a virtual chapter for Surviving Spouses. Basic membership is free for National MOAA and Columbia Chapter Surviving Spouses do not pay annual dues.

MOAA Member Services Center: msc@moaa.org; 800-234-6622 or 703-549-2311

MOAA website: moaa.org

Surviving Spouse Corner: sscomm@moaa.org

Virtual Chapter: mssvc02@gmail.com

Art Coogler

COL, USA (Ret.)

Columbia Chapter Liaison

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The death of a military spouse reshapes emotional well-being in ways that reach far beyond grief itself. It is a loss that touches identity, daily rhythm, and the quiet sense of safety that comes from sharing life with someone who understood both the burdens and the pride of service.

For many, the brain responds to this kind of profound disruption with a mix of numbness, hypervigilance, and deep fatigue — natural reactions to a heart trying to make sense of a world suddenly changed. Yet within that upheaval, emotional well-being becomes not just a hope but a necessity: a steadying force that helps the mind process sorrow, rebuild resilience, and slowly rediscover moments of connection, purpose, and peace. This journey is neither quick nor linear, but it reflects the same courage and endurance that military families have always carried.

Emotional well-being and brain health are deeply interconnected, shaping how we think, cope, and experience daily life. Strong emotional balance supports healthier brain function, while a well-nourished brain strengthens our ability to manage stress, build relationships, and maintain resilience.

[HEALTHY LIVING: [Healthy Living: Beat Back Pain With a Strong Core](#)]

Research shows that chronic stress can harm key brain regions involved in emotional control, memory, and decision-making, including the prefrontal cortex, amygdala, and hippocampus. When these areas are disrupted, people might experience anxiety, irritability, or difficulty concentrating.

How Emotions Shape the Brain

Positive emotional states — such as purpose, connection, and calm — help regulate stress hormones and support cognitive performance. People who report higher emotional stability and life satisfaction tend to support stronger memory and decision-making abilities as they age.

Conversely, chronic stress elevates cortisol, which can shrink the hippocampus and ~~overactivate~~ the amygdala, making emotional regulation more difficult and increasing vulnerability to depression or anxiety.

The Brain–Body Connection

The brain communicates constantly with the body through neural pathways and chemical messengers. Neurotransmitters like serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine influence mood, motivation, and focus. When these systems are imbalanced, emotional well-being can suffer.

Physical factors such as sleep, inflammation, and fatigue also affect how the brain processes emotions, reinforcing the need for whole-body care.

Strengthening Emotional and Brain Health

Several habits support both emotional balance and neurological resilience:

- **Regular physical activity** boosts serotonin and dopamine, improving mood and cognitive flexibility.
- **Quality sleep** helps the brain detoxify and consolidate memories.
- **Social connection** reduces stress responses and protects cognitive health.
- **Mindfulness and gratitude practices** calm the nervous system and enhance emotional regulation.
- **Balanced nutrition**, especially omega-3s and antioxidants, supports neural communication.

Together, these practices create a reinforcing cycle: A healthier brain supports stronger emotional well-being, and emotional well-being protects the brain. Suggested reading: [Dial Down: Holistic Strategies to Move from Chaos to Calm](#) by Lt. Col. Raquel Durden, USA (Ret), a transformative guide offering simple, actionable wellness practices, interwoven with real-life stories. (Note: MOAA is an Amazon Associate and earns money from qualifying purchases, with the revenue supporting [The MOAA Foundation](#).)

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SAVE THE DATE



Fort Jackson Retiree Appreciation Days

14-16 May 2026

Things to look for:

Garrison Commander's Virtual Welcome 14 May @ 0730 (Facebook)
Retiree Breakfast Q&A with Garrison Commander 14 May @ 0730 (1917 Club)
Basic Combat Training Graduation 14 May @ 0900 (Hilton Field)
22nd Annual Golf Tournament 15 May (Fort Jackson Golf Course)
RAD EXPO 16 May from 0900-1200 (Solomon Center)
ID Cards 16 May from 0900-1200 (Strom Thurmond Bldg, Rm 109)
AAFES & Commissary Sales

Thank you for your service and see you there!

Retirement Services Office: (803) 751-6715/5495



Columbia MOAA Chapter Members talk to Veterans at the VEAC March 19-21.

"COLUMBIA EXPRESS"

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Health Corner

New Health Care Corner – Preventive Health as we thrive in the golden years.



[Why Am I So Tired All the Time? | Lexington Medical Center Blog | LexWell](#)

[Superfood of the Month: Asparagus | Lexington Medical Center Blog | LexWell](#)

[Allergies: Types, Symptoms, Treatment & Management](#)



Members take the Hill for Advocacy in Action 2026, including our own Sharron Mackey!

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