

Aiken Chapter MOAA
THE COURIER *May 2025*

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All newsletters are sent by email.



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President's Message

Spring has sprung and summer is just around the corner. May is going to be a busy month for our Aiken MOAA chapter.

May 7, 2025 is our JROTC dinner which Tom Tilghman, with the help of Linda Mann, has done a great job of organizing. We have invited all those that have received the JROTC MEDAL to our May dinner with many parents/mentors and instructors attending. We hope to have a large turnout to honor our young people who are going to lead us into the future. Be on the lookout for the email from Linda Caldwell to participate in this wonderful event. Our guest speaker for the evening will be Paul Howell, Senator Lindsey Graham's Constituent Services Aide for Veterans and Military Affairs, who will give a short presentation on applying to the military service academies.

The ROTC unit at USC AIKEN will be graduating 4 students in May and we will be presenting a set of gold bars to each of them on Tuesday, May 6. Thank you to Tom Tilghman for all your efforts in organizing our part of this event.

Also, on May 21 we will be participating in Our Community Salutes where we will see approximately 30 young people in Aiken County raise their right hand to take The Oath of Enlistment in the military.

Then May 24th is the Aiken Memorial Day Parade, one of a handful in the State of South Carolina. Our own COL David Lobb will be honored for his service as the Grand Marshal. Our chapter will also have a car in the parade as well as managing the reviewing stand. We hope to get as many out as possible to proudly represent MOAA.

If you missed the April meeting, you missed a great night of fun as we played TRIVIA!! Everyone had a wonderful time and I was told we should do it again next year.

I cannot thank our Board Members enough for all the work they put into keeping our chapter viable and active! We are in search of a few members to join our Board next January. PLEASE reach out to Dick Dewar if you know of someone that would be a great candidate or if you are interested in volunteering. This Chapter needs everyone's help to grow and prosper.

Grateful and honored to be your President,

Barbara McKnight



MEMBER SPOT LIGHT

ED PETHAN

LTC Ed Pethan, USA (Ret) grew up on a dairy farm in New Holstein, Wisconsin and is a retired Soldier for Life, having served 26 years on active duty with the US Army in field artillery and airborne units. He spent most of his time as a paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne Division at Ft. Bragg, NC. Over the span of his career, Ed served in various command and staff positions around the world, including multiple combat and peace keeping missions.

Ed earned his bachelor's degree from Campbell University in Buies Creek, NC and a master's degree in HR Development from Webster University.

He and his wife Linda are both retired, reside in Aiken, and have two grown children. They both enjoy spending time with family along with keeping up with chores around their home. Ed is an avid golf fan and a self-described "go getter," and we are lucky he decided to join our Aiken MOAA Chapter in April 2021.



UPCOMING EVENTS



- ♦ **MAY 7th: JROTC RECOGNITION DINNER**
Sponsorship: \$100 or share with another member
Military attire or blazer with mini-medals encouraged
Details on pages 6 & 7
- ♦ **MAY 16th through May 18th: FORT JACKSON 2025**
RETIREE APPRECIATION DAY Details on page 9
- ♦ **MAY 24th: MEMORIAL DAY PARADE 10:00 AM**
Starts at Aiken Train Station
Reviewing stand at the corner of Laurens and Richland
Grand Marshal is our member COL David Lobb
Details on page 10
- ♦ **JUNE 4th: FINAL MOAA MEETING**

APRIL—MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD

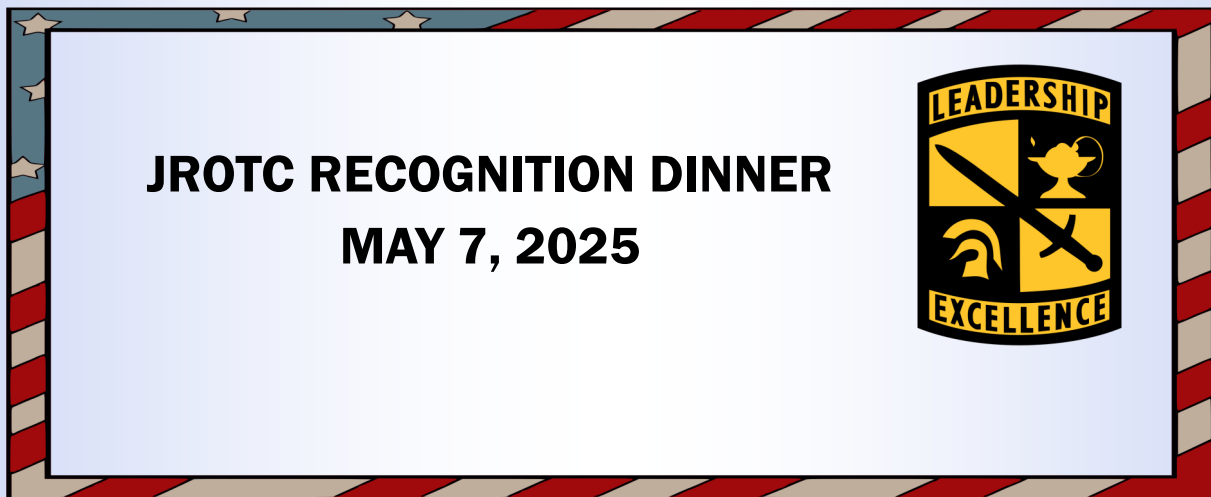


L-R: Aiken Elementary School students

Gavin Judy, Cobe Dunbar, Sam Duque, Leilani Brown

At the request of Ms. Sondra Thomas, Military Liaison for the Aiken County Public School District, the Aiken Chapter worked with Ms. Keisha Uhle, M.Ed., School Counselor at Aiken Elementary School, to provide t-shirts for the military children enrolled there. The shirt design was chosen by the students and as you can see, they proudly are wearing them on Fridays during the month of April.

To learn more about the Month of the Military Child click here: [military child](#)



For those of you who are new to the Aike Chapter, our May meeting is the annual JROTC cadet recognition banquet where we honor the top cadet from each of 10 area high school JROTC programs with the MOAA medal and certificate. The cadet who receives the medal is chosen by their military science instructor and is also recognized at their high school awards assembly. If you are interested and/or willing to visit one of the high schools to present the medal, please contact Tom Tilghman (803-646-2615 or tenchers@aol.com) and he will be happy to provide the details. No uniform is necessary so please consider helping with this recognition event. If you haven't been to a high school recently, it can be an interesting and informative experience.

The May meeting also offers the opportunity to "[sponsor a table](#)" at the meeting to help defray the cost of the four meals we provide for the cadet, 2 family members, and the instructor. The MOAA member who sponsors the table sits with the group and introduces the instructor to the audience. Please contact Linda Caldwell if you are interested: (803-226-0546 or Lscaldwell@gmail.com)

Meeting attire: Military uniform or business dress with mini-medals

JROTC Recognition Dinner

Happy Half-Hour at 1800 hours

Dinner at 1830 hours

Buffet Style Dinner Menu

Dinner rolls and butter

Preset salad with house made dressing

Roasted carrots, cauliflower and broccoli

Oven roasted new potatoes w/ garlic and carrots

Carving station of herb-crusted roast beef

Horseradish and au jus

Preset New York style cheesecake w/Melba topping

Water, iced tea and coffee

Speaker: Paul Howell

Constituent Services Aide for Veterans &
Military Affairs - Senator Lindsey Graham

Honored Guests:

JROTC cadets, family members, and
military science instructors



AIKEN MOAA CHAPTER IS A WINNER!

The Aiken Chapter Board of Directors proudly announces the following awards have been received from MOAA National for 2024:

5-Star Level of Excellence Award

4-Start Harris Communications Award for both our print newsletter and our website

Levels of Excellence Awards

What: LOE awards are MOAA's most prestigious affiliate awards, honoring councils and chapters for their efforts across the full scope of our association's mission.

Col. Marvin J. Harris Communications Awards

What: MOAA's annual program identifying councils and chapters that do an outstanding job communicating with their members. The award honors Col. Marvin J. Harris, USAF (Ret), MOAA's director of public relations from 1996 until 2011. Colonel Harris delivered effective communications to both military and civilian audiences.

COL David Lobb receiving our LOE and Harris Award during the April 10, 2025 Advocacy in Action meeting in Washington, DC.

Pictured L-R: Gen Thomas Waldhauser, USMC (Ret), Chairman of the Board, MOAA National; COL David Lobb, USA (Ret), VP of Legislative Affairs, SC Council of MOAA Chapters; Lt Gen Brian Kelly, USAF (Ret), President & CEO, Military Officers Association of America



FORT JACKSON 2025 RETIREE APPRECIATION DAYS

Thursday, May 1, 2025

- 7:30 am Join us online at <https://www.facebook.com/USArmyGarrisonFortJackson> to hear the Garrison Commander's Message to the retirees. 7:30 am Continental Breakfast at the Club 1917; meal cost \$8
- 9:00 am **Basic Training Graduation Ceremony and Salute to Retirees.** Guest Speaker: Command Sergeant Major David S. Davenport, (Ret). Reserved seating under the covered bleachers. Enter Hilton Field with VIP parking with pass at the 4th Division Road entrance. Arrive not later than 0830 to be escorted to the reserved seating
- To obtain VIP parking pass contact (520) 671-8431 or (520) 671-8436

Friday, May 2, 2025

- **The 21st Annual Retiree Appreciation Day Golf Tournament** kicks off with a welcome from a Fort Jackson Retiree Council member. Tournament will be played on the Wildcat Course with a 9:00 am shotgun start. Format is Captain's Choice, Gross and Net Scoring. Cost is \$45-FJGC member; \$50 authorized Patrons, and \$60 Civilians. Entry fee includes all golf fees, prizes, and a post tournament meal. Register your team today or sign up as a single and the FJGC PGA Professional will pair you with a group. Register your team by signing up at Gold Club or by calling the FJGC golf shop at (803) 562-4437.

Saturday, May 3, 2025

- **Retiree Health and Benefits Expo** at the Solomon Center, 6520 Strom Thurmond Blvd, Fort Jackson from 9:00-12 noon. This year's speaker: Ms. Alethea Harry, Veteran's Readiness & Employment (VRE) Officer, Veterans Affairs Regional Office, Columbia. Ms. Harry will provide updates and a Q&A session at 10:00 am. VA claims technicians on site. Moncrief Army Health & Dental Clinics will provide health screenings and counseling booths. There will be a host of other agencies represented
- 9:00 am—12:00 noon. ID Card Services in Bldg 5450, Strom Thurmond Blvd
- AAFES in store sales at the Main PX starting at 9:30 am
- Commissary in store sales starting at 9:30 am





Memorial Day Parade – Reviewing Stand

May 24 – Downtown Aiken

As has been our custom for the past many years, the Chapter will staff and conduct the reviewing stand for the annual Aiken Memorial Day Parade. This year's parade takes place on Saturday, May 24 with kick off at 10 AM from the historic Aiken Train Station on Park Avenue.

The reviewing stand will be located at the Laurens Street-Richland Avenue intersection with tent and chairs provided by Shellhouse Funeral Home.

Any chapter member who wishes to participate should be at the tent by 10:15, preferably in uniform or parade attire and miniature medals.

For questions please contact parade committee member Linda Caldwell at (803) 226-0546.

NEWS FROM NATIONAL



This year's Advocacy in Action focused on the following issues. To learn more about each item, and to find out how you can still amplify MOAA's voice by writing to your legislators on these topics, visit our [Advocacy in Action page](#), or register at our [Legislative Action Center](#):

Unaccompanied Housing Improvements: MOAA seeks to improve funding and condition transparency by requiring an annual, publicly available report, which will highlight areas that need the most attention from DoD and Congress. [Learn More](#) / [Make Your Voice Heard](#)

Ending the Wait Report: MOAA will proactively partner with other veterans service organizations to advance legislation that will lessen the time that veterans must wait before their toxic exposures are acknowledged by the VA. [Learn More](#) / [Make Your Voice Heard](#)

Military Spouse Hiring Act: Passage of this bill will allow businesses that hire military spouses to claim a tax credit, incentivizing them to hire more military spouses. [Learn More](#) / [Make Your Voice Heard](#)

Military Health System Access to Care: MOAA seeks legislation for a digital access assistance platform that would allow beneficiaries to report challenges accessing care. [Learn More](#) / [Tell MOAA Your Story](#)

Veterans Caregiving Support Improvements Legislation: This bill includes enhancements to the VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers and expansion of home health and long-term care services. [Learn More](#) / [Make Your Voice Heard](#)

In advance of our MOAA's Hill Day, MOAA members received briefs on these priorities via MOAA's Government Relations staff. Members then met with lawmakers and their staffs, recording notes and identifying action items for MOAA's advocacy team in the days and weeks to come.

These meetings often yield positive outcomes such as new legislation, additional cosponsors on important bills, and inclusions in the next National Defense Authorization Act that supports MOAA's legislative agenda.



New Accounting Program Coming Soon!

We will soon be introducing a new program called CHEDDAR UP, which will make it easier to pay your yearly dues and to process any monetary donations to the chapter, possibly to include paying for your monthly meeting dinners.

The voluntary program is a service of MOAA national and the associated processing costs will be borne by them. Several advantages to using this program are:

- Dues and donations can be paid by credit card, thus eliminating the need to mail a check AND to spend the new USPS stamp cost - \$0.78
- Funds are processed electronically and sent directly to our chapter's bank account
- We can use the system to send electronic reminders
- Will make the duties of our secretary and treasurer easier and eliminate some trips to the bank to deposit checks

However, we will still accept checks if you prefer to use that method of payment.

Some national organizations that use CHEDDAR UP include the Red Cross and Girl Scouts of America.

More information will be forthcoming as we run the system through a shake-down phase; it is being tailored to meet the Aiken Chapter's needs.

Brent Caldwell
Secretary





In an effort to increase our charity account funds, which are donated to veteran causes in Aiken County, and to help our fellow veterans who own businesses in the Aiken area, we will start including their advertisements (for a fee) in the monthly *Courier* starting in September.

If you know of and/or patronize businesses that are owned by veterans, please contact Barbara McKnight, Aiken Chapter President with the business contact information:

bjmcknight51@gmail.com or call her at 315-723-6185.

With grateful thanks to our sponsor AMBA.





VETERAN ASSISTANCE

Aiken County Veterans Affairs Director: Major Dwight Bradham

He and his team can be reached at (803) 642- 1545 . If you have any veteran issues, please contact the office. Located in the Aiken County Government building, 1930 University Parkway.

US Congressman Joe Wilson -

His team can be reached at (803) 642-6416. His local office is located in the Aiken County Government building, 1930 University Parkway. His Washington D.C. contact is (202) 225-2452.

US Senator Lindsey Graham-

His team can be reached at (803) 933-0112. This is his Midlands office located at 2142 Boyce Street, Suite 400 Columbia, SC 29201. His Washington D.C. contact is (202) 224-5972.

USC Joseph F. Rice School of Law Veterans Clinic

The Veterans Legal Clinic is dedicated to lifting barriers to benefits access for former service-members and their families across South Carolina.

To find out if your legal problem is one that can be solved by the clinic, you may call 803-777-3398 to make an appointment and speak to someone in-person. After gathering some basic information from you and completing the screening process, the Clinic will assess whether we will offer to represent you in your case. The Clinic takes on only the number of clients its staff and students can vigorously represent.