



# Bridge View



Charleston Chapter, Military Officers Association of America

February - Issue 2 2025

Published monthly, except July

Web site: [www.charlestonmoaa.com](http://www.charlestonmoaa.com)

## Enjoy lunch and learn about the MUSC Air Ambulance Program, MEDUCARE1, operated by Med Trans Corp.

Place: O'Charley's Restaurant & Bar  
2126 Henry Tecklenburg Dr.  
Charleston, SC 29414  
(843) 763-29414



Date: Friday, February 28, 2025

Time: Social Hour 11AM accompanied by a cash bar

Lunch: 12 Noon

Menu: Plated lunch served with choice of Water or Tea

*Choose between three entrees - each includes two sides:*

Atlantic Salmon - 6 oz. herb-seasoned filet

OR

Meat Loaf - Traditional Southern-style meatloaf topped with tomato sauce

OR

Grilled Chicken Dinner - two grilled chicken breasts with herb seasoning

Dessert will be provided

Cost: \$25.00 per person. Makes checks payable to Charleston MOAA.

Dress: Casual

RSVP: Check to arrive NLT Monday, February 24<sup>th</sup> 2025 - or use our new Venmo capability!

Mail to: CAPT Bud Schneeweis, 6 Wappoo Creek Pl, Charleston SC 29412

For additional information: - call: or text :703.300.0811, or email: [wshneeweis@verizon.net](mailto:wshneeweis@verizon.net)



# Legislative Summary

Submitted by: Bud Schneeweis



CAPT, USCG (Ret)

Special, Check Out: MOAA's [Take Action Center](#)

By the time you read this, the inauguration of the 47<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, Donald J. Trump, likely will have taken place. The 119<sup>th</sup> Congress will be in session, and the Senate will be deep into hearings to determine who will populate the new President's Cabinet and other positions at cabinet or lower levels. The President has promised several important executive actions within his first 100 days. There could be rough waters ahead so stay alert.

## MOAA's Legislative Priorities for the 119th Congress

*(This article originally appeared in the January 2025 issue of Military Officer, and in the MOAA Newsletter, but is worth reprinting here.)*

As the legislative slate resets for the 119th Congress, MOAA member engagement will become even more vital to achieving our advocacy objectives.

Your advocacy ensures that MOAA and the broader community of military and veteran service organizations (MSOs/VSOs) maintain momentum for existing priorities such as the Major Richard Star Act, which would benefit tens of thousands of combat-injured veterans.

MOAA also needs your help to build support for new objectives and emerging issues, often via immediate action, to respond to the sporadic nature of the legislative process.

First step: Register as an advocate in our Legislative Action Center. If you're already registered, send the link to a family member or friend. Remember, the Legislative Action Center is open to all who support the uniformed services community.

While our advocacy team remains active on many issues not listed here, our priorities are shaped throughout the year depending on policy developments or emerging issues that necessitate an all-hands approach. Additionally, we share many interests with The Military Coalition and other stakeholders. MOAA leverages those relationships to expand our reach on Capitol Hill.

These are among MOAA's priorities for this year:

### Currently Serving

**Military housing:** Recent reporting from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) reveals the myriad challenges servicemembers in unaccompanied housing are facing. The health, safety, and privacy concerns outlined by GAO show the need for action.

MOAA seeks to improve funding and condition transparency for unaccompanied housing by requiring an annual, publicly available report, which will highlight areas that require the most attention from both DoD and Congress.

Continued on page 5.

## Thank You

*The following have renewed their membership for Five or More Years:*

**CAPT Alice A. Cagnina, USN (Ret)**  
**Mrs. Teddie Stalb, SurSp**  
**Maj Willis (Bill) W. Clark, USAF (Ret)**



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*For every referred Client I donate \$100 to the MOAA Scholarship Fund!*

## This month's interesting biographical sketch

Unfortunately, we have no new members to highlight this month.

## Service Academy Nominations Boards

Your Charleston Chapter was well represented last Saturday at Senator Lindsey Graham's Service Academy Nominations Board held at the Citadel.

Panels of three former or retired officers interviewed 5-6 candidates for USMA, USNA, USAFA or USMMA appointments. COL Phil Bernstein, USA; LTC John Falkenbury, USA; Lt Col Paul Lassanske, USAF; CAPT Bud Schneeweis, USCG; COL Renata Sierzega, USAF and CPT Drew Wise, USA, all lent a hand.

The effort is expanding within the South Carolina delegation. If you are interested in participating next year, let a Charleston Chapter Officer know. Solicitation for volunteers usually is made around October each year. Volunteers serve for about four hours on a Saturday morning; compensation consists of coffee and donut holes!

Speaking with these young men and women will help reinforce your faith in America future - we will be in good hands.

## Survivors Who Lost Benefits to Scams Will Be Reimbursed Under MOAA-Backed Law

By: Kevin Lilley  
December 30, 2024

A bipartisan bill signed by the president last month will ensure survivors don't lose VA benefits if a veteran passes away before a fraud case is resolved.

The MOAA-supported Restoring Benefits to De-frauded Veterans Act (H.R. 4190) requires the VA to reimburse a veterans' estate for benefits mis-used by a fiduciary should a veteran die before such payments are processed. A VA report from 2021 found more than 100 such cases from Jan. 1,

2018, through Sept. 30, 2019, and under previous law, survivors lost out on these repayments.

Veterans Benefits Administration personnel fielded more than 12,000 "allegations of misuse" during that period, per the report. The reimbursement process is prone to delays; the report highlighted one case where a beneficiary recouped more than \$20,000 in misused funds after a 19-month wait.

"Today, countless families will be able to claim the money they're due," said Rep. David Trone (D-Md.), who co-sponsored the House legislation alongside Rep. Juan Ciscomani (R-Ariz.). "The passage of this bill into law is a reaffirmation of our commitment to protecting and honoring our veterans."

[UPDATED MONTHLY: MOAA's Surviving Spouse  
Corner]

Sens. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) and Tommy Tuberville (R-Ala.) sponsored their chamber's version of the legislation.

The new law represents one of many ways MOAA seeks to protect members of the wider uniformed services committee from financial fraud. This includes work to combat VA "Claims Sharks" as well as frequent MOAA.org articles, a web series on scam avoidance, and recorded webinars (available to Premium and Life members):

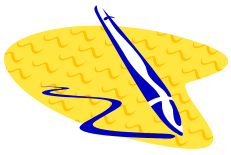
An Overview of Scams and Frauds  
Outsmart the Scammers: How to Spot and Avoid  
Financial Fraud  
Protecting Yourself From Cybercrime and Scams



## Rest in Peace

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

*Thankfully, nothing to report this  
month.*



# President's Pen

*Happy Valentines Day!!!*

*Please do not forget!*

I would like to thank each of our Chapter Officers and Directors for their support and work throughout 2024 and continuing with the 2025 - 2026 term. I would also like to thank our Chapter members for their support for our luncheons and our programs for the ROTC and JROTC units and our Future Military Officers Scholarship. All of you have done an outstanding job and I look forward to working with you during the coming year.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce our new Charleston MOAA Chapter Chaplain to you this month. Col Elwood M. (Mark) Barnes, USAF (Ret) has agreed to serve as our Chapter Chaplain. Should we have a member or member's spouse loss, Chaplain Barnes will provide comfort to the family during this time of loss from our Chapter.

Col Barnes is a retired USAF Chaplain as well as a practicing minister. His experience includes a tour with the Chief of Air Force Chaplains at the Pentagon as well as numerous deployments to hostile environments. Please join me in welcoming him as our Chaplain. Yes, he is a member of the Charleston MOAA Chapter as well.

Unfortunately, the Charleston MOAA Chapter, the Ralph H. Johnson Veterans Hospital, the Charleston Fisher House, local Veterans Service Officers and local veterans have lost a tremen-

dous source of knowledge and assistance. LTC Larry Dandridge, USA (Ret) and his wife Judi have moved to North Carolina to be close to family there. Larry has been a source of information to veterans seeking assistance in determining what benefits they were entitled to as well as how to apply for those benefits. He was very instrumental in bringing the Charleston Fisher House to Charleston. This organization provides a veteran's family a place to stay while they are in the RHJ Veterans Hospital at no cost - tremendous assistance to the family. He also writes articles of veteran's issues for area newspapers to ensure veterans are aware of all the benefits that are available and how to ensure they will be received. A huge "thank you" to Larry for all he did to assist the Charleston Chapter as well as local veterans. Our loss is North Carolina's gain!

A special "thank you" to the South Carolina Council president, CPT (Fmr) Linda Caldwell, USA Nurse and Vietnam Veteran, for installing our Charleston MOAA Chapter officers and Board members on 31 January. Linda is doing an outstanding job leading the S. C. Council and our ten (10) Chapters across the state.

As officers and board members, we still need your support and assistance to fill some vacant positions on the board. Our Personal Affairs and Editor positions remain open. Please consider contacting Bud, Dave Farley or Bob McKay, our nominating committee, to offer your services.

One more thing, please note that our luncheon in February is at a new location we have not used before— we will be at O'Charley's Restaurant and Bar which is in West Ashley. Look forward to seeing you there!

Thank you again for your continued support to the Charleston Chapter!!

*Ernie*

## Thank You

**Lt Col Edward D. Knowles Toys for Tots Benefits Program**  
**29th Year**

*Current Toys for Tots Fund*

**\$ 428.28**

## Notable Days in February

Groundhog Day— 02 February  
Full Moon—12 February  
Valentine's Day—14 February  
Presidents' Day—17 February

## Retirees/Veterans

**Toxic exposure:** MOAA will focus on capitalizing on our recently released report, *Ending the Wait for Toxic-Exposed Veterans*, to advocate for veterans exposed to toxic materials during their service.

While the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson, Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act, has made major improvements to how toxic exposures are treated by the VA, additional measures are required. In cooperation with other VSOs, MOAA will advocate for Congress to pass legislation that shortens the time veterans must wait before their toxic exposures are acknowledged and conceded by the VA.

## Family/Survivors

**Spouse employment:** Rates of unemployment for military spouses continue to be four to five times higher than the national average. This persistent challenge requires not only providing education and employment resources for spouses but also incentivizing businesses to hire someone who will likely move in two to three years.

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit program was established to support populations who face significant barriers to employment, and adding a military spouse target group is long overdue. Passing the Military Spouse Hiring Act will provide another important lever needed to address the critical issue of spouse unemployment.

## DoD Health Care

**Access to care:** DoD has acknowledged that congressionally directed reforms to the Military Health System (MHS), together with U.S. medical workforce volatility, exacerbated long-standing access challenges and led to a destabilized MHS that does not consistently deliver timely care to beneficiaries.

Current patient resources for reporting access problems and getting assistance navigating the MHS are inadequate. Also, it is unclear if there are

## Rest in Peace Spouses

*For Your Support to our Military  
Brothers and Sisters. Your Service is  
Recorded and Honored.*

Thankfully, nothing to report.

mechanisms for reporting up to the Defense Health Agency so systemic access challenges can be identified and addressed.

MOAA seeks a digital MHS assistance platform allowing beneficiaries to report access-to-care challenges and receive help navigating the MHS, including reporting requirements to increase visibility on barriers to access so fixable issues can be addressed.

## VA Health Care

**Support for caregivers:** MOAA has long advocated for legislation that would improve caregiving support for veterans' families. This includes enhancements to the VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) and expansion of home health and long-term care services to meet current and future needs of veterans, their caregivers, and families.

This year, MOAA strongly supports the reintroduction and enactment of the Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement Act. This legislation acknowledges caregivers' invaluable contributions while addressing the significant economic and emotional burdens they face. By offering education, employment, and retirement opportunities, the legislation empowers caregivers to achieve financial security while potentially reducing the federal government's long-term economic burden.

## Persistent Efforts

There are certain issues that MOAA will always advocate for until they are passed. Among these are concurrent receipt for combat wounded (Major Richard Star Act), Arlington National Cemetery access, and cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs).

MOAA will also continually monitor certain issues and will immediately mobilize the entire association, our membership, and VSO/MSO allies to ensure these issues are not negatively impacted. These issues include:

- Decrements to scheduled pay increases.
- New TRICARE or TRICARE Pharmacy Program fees.
- TRICARE cost-sharing increases that exceed military retired pay COLA or TRICARE Pharmacy Program cost sharing that exceeds common industry practice.
- Unequal decrements of compensation and benefits based on rank, age, family composition, retirement status, or disability benefits.

As the work of the 119th Congress gets underway, MOAA will continue its efforts to advocate on behalf of our members and the entire uniformed services community. We will leverage our experience

and our relationships on Capitol Hill and with our partners to navigate an increasingly partisan environment.

Through our efforts, MOAA will seek to ensure that servicemembers, veterans, and retirees and their families – who have sacrificed so much – continue to receive benefits earned through their service.

### **TRICARE For Life Enrollment Fees, Cost Shares Part of New Budget Report**

This item is certainly worth watching. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has once again targeted TRICARE For Life (TFL) in its biennial report outlining options for reducing the deficit.

The December 2024 report highlights savings that could be achieved by introducing a TFL enrollment fee or minimum out-of-pocket cost requirements. Similar concepts have been presented in past CBO reports, which are issued every two years to provide information to lawmakers confronting budgetary challenges.

Last year, nearly 200 MOAA members and staff took this issue to Capitol Hill as part of our Advocacy in Action campaign, ensuring elected officials understand the intense opposition to TFL fees. Retirees already have fulfilled all the requirements to earn their health care benefit, and MOAA will fight any attempts to cut it, including fee increases designed to shift costs from DoD to seniors who rely on TFL.

While no current legislation proposes TRICARE fee increases, MOAA takes these threats seriously given pressures on the DoD budget and precedent for such proposals. From FY 2013 to FY 2017, MOAA's efforts helped to block five consecutive administration budget request proposals for TFL enrollment fees.

Some details on the options included in the CBO report:

#### **TFL Enrollment Fee**

TFL enrollment is automatic once a beneficiary starts paying Medicare Part B premiums. There is no enrollment fee or monthly premium for TFL coverage.

A CBO proposal would require Medicare-eligible beneficiaries who choose to enroll in TFL to pay ***an annual enrollment fee of \$610 for individual coverage or \$1,220 for family coverage.***

The enrollment fees would be indexed to grow at the same rate as average Medicare costs in later years.

#### **TFL Cost Sharing**

The other CBO measure affecting TFL would introduce minimum out-of-pocket requirements, including an \$850 deductible - TFL would not cover any of the first \$850 of a beneficiary's Medicare cost-sharing. For the first \$4,250 in total medical expenses each year, Medicare would pay its 80% (or \$3,400) while the TFL beneficiary would be responsible for the full \$850 not covered by Medicare.

After the deductible was satisfied, TFL would cover only 50% of the next \$7,650 in Medicare cost-sharing. This means TFL beneficiaries could face ***up to \$4,675 in cost-sharing per year.*** Similar to the enrollment fee proposal, cost-sharing requirements would increase annually at the rate of Medicare cost increases.

#### **Protecting Your Earned Benefit**

The options outlined in the CBO report come from various sources including past proposed legislation or budget proposals, congressional offices, federal agencies, and the private sector. "As a collection, the options are intended to reflect a range of possibilities, not a ranking of priorities or an exhaustive list," the report states. "Inclusion or exclusion of any particular option does not imply approval or disapproval by CBO, and the report makes no recommendations."

MOAA appreciates the importance of addressing the deficit, but our nation must fulfill obligations to those who serve a full career in uniform. We will fight any proposal that increases costs to seniors who rely on TFL for their health care. The TFL benefit was a key component of the compensation and benefits package that sustained the all-volunteer force throughout two decades of war - MOAA will also protect the future of TFL for current working-age retirees and career servicemembers who are counting on TFL as a critical part of their future retirement plans.

We will be monitoring for any signs that CBO's concepts have gotten traction. The administration budget request, due in February but sometimes delayed during the first year of a new administration, will likely give us our first glimpse at any potential proposals to increase TRICARE fees. Look for updates on these and other legislative issues in *The MOAA Newsletter* and at MOAA.org, and register at our Legislative Action Center so you can take part in upcoming grassroots efforts designed to preserve service-earned benefits.

Charleston Chapter MOAA ( ) Membership Application ( ) Renewal ( ) Change of Address. Chapter Dues: \$10.00 a year for Regular membership. Surviving Spouse membership \$5.00 per year. Multiple year dues are encouraged in order to reduce paperwork. Make check payable to "Charleston MOAA". Mail to: Charleston MOAA, P.O. Box 70421, Charleston SC 29415-0421.

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_ MI \_\_\_\_\_

DOB \_\_\_\_\_ Rank \_\_\_\_\_ Service \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Member of National MOAA? Please provide your membership number \_\_\_\_\_

Your status : ( ) Retired ( ) Active Duty ( ) Reserve ( ) National Guard ( ) Former Officer ( ) Surviving Spouse Dues for Year (s) \_\_\_\_\_

How do you want to receive your newsletter ( ) US Mail (B&W) or ( ) E Mail (Full color)

## VENMO PAYMENTS

Venmo payments can be made to the Charleston Chapter, Military Officers Association of America, by scanning the QR code below or by using the user name: @CharlestonMOAA.

Please indicate the purpose of the payment in the app's notes section:

- Chapter membership dues
- Lunch - provide names and menu choices
- Toys for Tots Fund
- Scholarship fund

Please email questions to our treasurer, Ron Kennedy, at charlestonmoaa@gmail.com.



Charleston Chapter, Military...  
@CharlestonMOAA



### OFFICERS and BOARD OF DIRECTORS

<b>PRESIDENT</b>	BG Ernest D. Brockman, Jr., USA (thru 2026)	843-875-4465	ebrockman@att.net
<b>1st VP PROGRAMS</b>	CAPT Bud Schneeweis, USCG (thru 2026)	703-300-0811	wschneeweis@verizon.net
<b>2nd VP MEMBERSHIP</b>	COL Beverly R. Brockman, USA (thru 2026)	843-875-4465	brockman1982@att.net
<b>PAST PRESIDENT</b>	Col. Rudy Smart, (USAF) (thru 2026)	843-834-0474	r2smart1@gmail.com
<b>SECRETARY</b>	CDR David E. Farley, USN (thru 2026)	843-881-9452	defarley45@gmail.com
<b>TREASURER</b>	Col Ronald J. Kennedy, USAF (thru 2026)	843-568-7406	ron.j.kennedy@gmail.com
<b>DIR. HOSPITALITY</b>	Mrs. Diane Kennedy, (thru 2027)	843-568-7406	
<b>DIR AWARDS</b>	1LT Robert C. McKay, USA (thru 2025)	843-810-2526	mckaybob@att.net
<b>DIR PERSONAL AFFAIRS</b>			
<b>DIR. LEGISLATIVE</b>	CAPT Bud Schneeweis, USCG (thru 2025)	703-300-0811	wschneeweis@verizon.net
<b>DIR. T.O.P.S/PUBLICITY</b>	Col Ronald J. Kennedy, USAF (thru 2025)	843-568-7406	ron.j.kennedy@gmail.com
<b>ASST AWARDS DIR</b>	COL Steve Rowe, USA (thru 2025)	843-303-7438	srowe@carolinaone.com

#### REPRESENTATIVES TO THE BOARD (Appointed by the President)

<b>CHAPLAIN</b>	Col Mark Barnes, USAF	843-327-8138	emarkbarnes@me.com
<b>EDITOR</b>			
<b>SCHOLARSHIP/Web Site</b>	Col Rudy Smart, USAF	843-834-0474	r2smart1@gmail.com

**Prospective Chapter Members:** If you are not a member of the Charleston Chapter, MOAA, you have received this copy as a courtesy invitation to contact any Officer or Director for information about joining our Chapter. News and Views herein are not necessarily those of any Government Department or another Chapter, or a Member's Chapter and non-partisan.

# Membership News

## LATEST INFORMATION

Total Members - 225  
Regular Members—176  
Honorary Members - 4  
Surviving Spouse Members - 43  
Special Members—1  
Members receiving the newsletter by email 137

CHARLESTON MOAA MEMBERS: We are continuing our recruiting drive for new members. If you are uncertain of your status, just e-mail me at [brockman1982@att.net](mailto:brockman1982@att.net) and I will verify if you are current for another year or more or if you need to pay dues for 2025. My home number is 843-875-4465, but an e-mail is usually the best and most efficient. We value your membership and appreciate your support of our chapter.

We are continuing to keep our dues at \$10 for Regular Members and no additional charge for spouses of Regular Members. The dues are \$5 for Surviving Spouses—defined as widows or widowers of Regular Members. Please make checks payable to "Charleston MOAA" and mail to Charleston MOAA, PO BOX 70421, Charleston, SC 29415-0421.

RECRUITING UPDATE - I respectfully ask everyone to think of our Chapter when you are meeting new folks in your community, neighborhood, church or other organizations. If they are interested in joining our Chapter, and meet the criteria, I will be glad to follow-up and share more information with them. Just provide my name, number and e-mail to them or send me an e-mail with their information and I will reach out to them.

ADDRESS/EMAIL CHANGES-Please keep me advised if you have a change to your address, phone or e-mail and I will update our records. When you have requested a newsletter to be mailed to you and your address has changed or you are on vacation, the Chapter must pay a fee to the Post Office for the newsletter to have the mail released. We will be glad to use your email during your time of travel only if you prefer.

We very much appreciate everyone's support of our Chapter and should you have any questions at any time, feel free to call me at 843-875-4465 or e-mail me at [brockman1982@att.net](mailto:brockman1982@att.net). I will be happy to answer your questions.

Thank you!  
Beverly Brockman Col, USA (Ret)  
Membership 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President

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Chapter and MOAA  
information?**

**Or you need to update your  
contact information?**

**Visit our Web Site**

*<http://www.charlestonmoaa.com>*

**Many improvements were recently made,  
and the work continues.**