

# “Columbia Express”

## Columbia Chapter MOAA Newsletter

VOLUME I, ISSUE 2

DECEMBER 2025

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

**DEC 12: Chapter mtg**

1130,

**JAN 16, 2026: Chapter mtg**



MG Jones speaks to members at the October 3rd MOAA Chapter Meeting

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For our final 2025 December meeting, our distinguished guest speaker will be Gail Joyce, MOAA National's Surviving Spouse representative and spokesperson. Gail has a very impactful story to share

**NEW! Online Chapter Dues 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>**



# President's Prologue

## 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.

Greetings and Happy Holidays to all who shall be reading our second edition of the Columbia Express.

Our editor-in-chief, and 2nd Vice President for Membership, Katie Hanna, has done an outstanding job compiling our budding Newsletter. We shall always be looking for interesting "columns" to pass along for you. So, if you have anything of interest, please send it to Katie or myself, and we shall do our best to include it in our next edition.

As always, please feel free to pass this on to friends and neighbors, especially those who could be interested in joining our great Chapter.

We are all certainly relieved... at least for the time being... that the government shut down is over. Let's all pray that our political leadership at every level has the strength and wisdom to compromise and work out their differences for the benefit of all Americans... especially our uniformed services and families. We owe it to them... to you! Let's continue to use MOAA's Legislative Action Center (LAC) on line to contact our federal senators and representatives to take positive action on bills that support our services. On that note, **CONGRATULATIONS!!!** I recently learned at the State Council Biennial Conference in Greenwood on 8 November that our Great Chapter practically eclipsed our nine great sister Chapters in the number of members who accessed the LAC. This is the type of friendly competition that makes a positive difference and is a key ingredient to supporting our mission. The number was about 49. That's about 1/3 of our active membership. Let's see if we can **continue to lead the way** and have more of you sign up. It's a very easy way to get involved and help "motivate" our leaders, and it only takes a few minutes! All the work is done for you. Just put that on your

## President's Prologue

calendar to do once a month or just every quarter. It's "fire and forget" until your next quick mission. To access MOAA's legislative action center go to:

**[https://moaa.quorum.us/active\\_campaigns/](https://moaa.quorum.us/active_campaigns/)**

I wish to thank you, our Chapter family, for your generosity and compassion for those less fortunate. I know the vast majority of you continue to make a positive difference by donating to myriad charitable organizations. Our Columbia Chapter continues, through your membership, to do likewise. We have focused our philanthropy locally to The Fisher House and Wreaths Across America, the latter which helps pay tribute to our past military service members and families buried at our Ft. Jackson National Cemetery. In addition, our own Sam Boone conducts and assists in numerous burials of veterans with no known families and have sadly died alone. Sam, with many of you, has taken time out to honor their lives of service to our country. You can be sure their own hearts would be filled with peace and joy, and thanks for this last .... and maybe only... final salute to them.

On a more festive note, this year has marked the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United States Army and the United States Marines. Congratulations to each on this most significant milestone. Both of these branches of our great military were forged out of existential necessity during the nascent years of our nation, and, today, remain with our other Services the key to America's vitality...with Peace Through Strength. We shall endeavor to do our part in keeping our Armed, and all Uniformed Services, strong as stated in our preamble above.

All of us have so much for which to be thankful...not the least of which is to be citizens and patriots of this, our great, country. Let us never take our freedoms for granted and continue to do our part, no matter how large or small, to help take care of all our service members and families past, present, and future.

We hope to see you at our 12 December buffet luncheon meeting at the Ft. Jackson 1917 Club where we shall have the honor and privilege to hear from distinguished guest speaker, Ms. Gail, Joyce, MOAA National's Surviving Spouse Representative, who will share with us her very moving and inspiring personal experiences centered around her son and the 1993 Task Force Ranger operation in Mogadishu. As you may recall, this was the inspiration for the movie "Blackhawk Down". Please come and listen to her very stirring testimony.

## President's Prologue

**ATTENTION:** On Line payment options for your lunches, annual dues, and or donations are available thru MOAA National's Cheddar Up.

On a final note, I wish to recognize and thank our dedicated members of your Executive Committee (a.k.a., Board) who are listed here in the Columbia Express. They work continuously behind the scenes supporting our Great Columbia Chapter without fanfare and with many other competing responsibilities. When you see them, please extend your appreciation to Ceasar, Katie, Tom, Jimmie, John, Sharron, and Sam. Thank you!

If you are interested in serving on our Board, please contact any of us. We meet six times a year, and, yes, pastries and coffee are the norm!

Blessings and many thanks to you and yours this Holiday Season.

R,

Carl

### **"EVERYONE A RECRUITER!"**

#### **Columbia Chapter 2026 Meeting Dates:**

(Mark your calendars now!)

Friday, 16 January

Friday, 13 March

Friday, 15 May

Friday, 21 August

Friday, 11 December

# 2025 State Conference



**(8 November 2025, Greenwood)**

Our MOAA State Council conducted its biennial conference in Greenwood, SC, which was hosted by our sister Star Fort Chapter. The theme this year was **Chapter Health & Effectiveness: Building Blocks to Achieve Excellence** with our keynote speaker from MOAA National, Dena Kilgore. Here are just a few highlights of MOAA National's presentation:

Dena (Program Director, Affiliated Councils & Chapters at MOAA) was perfect for presenting and reinforcing the key tenets for Great Chapters such as ours. While we are not perfect, we strive to continually improve and to do so as a **Healthy and Effective Chapter**. As presented by Dena:

**A healthy chapter or council is an organization that is able to sustain itself over time.**

**An effective chapter or council is one that positively impacts MOAA's mission.**

...and MOAA's Mission is:

**To preserve and protect earned benefits for our uniformed services, veterans, their families, and surviving spouses through advocacy, leadership, education, and service.**

As you see, our Columbia Chapter (et al's) mission as expressed in our Preamble supports that of National's. While we are not legally an entity of MOAA, we are considered affiliates whom MOAA supports in many ways... "united we stand".

Dena continued to articulate that the following components help make a chapter **EFFECTIVE**:

# 2025 State Council Biennial Conference

- Have a clearly stated chapter purpose/mission statement
- Focus on leadership pipeline and best practices
- Impact legislation through advocacy and engagement
- Engage in impactful community service
- Promote membership growth through recruitment and retention
- Demonstrated through Levels of Excellence award criteria

Do these sound familiar to you? I hope so. If not, I need to do a better job communicating with you, our membership, who are the foundation and ROCK of our Great Columbia Chapter! We shall continue to strive to maintain and improve in these critical areas...and, to you, our continued, sincere thanks for the diverse roles each of you play in support of those.

Here is the overall **State of Councils and Chapters:**

- **Current numbers:**

- 32 councils
- 321 geographic chapters
- 7 virtual chapters
- 10 satellite chapters
- 60 chapters are classified “ailing”

Unfortunately, **several chapters have closed** due to:

- Lack of leadership
- Stagnant or declining membership
- Aging demographics

On a positive note, South Carolina has actually added a new chapter, Star Fort. We have a very patriotic state!

MOAA has been working diligently to **Update its Privacy Policy:**

– 251,000+ emails have been sent to MOAA national members advising them of our updated policy to include them in chapter communications and we have entered the required 30-day window for these members to “opt-out” of these communications. To date, only about 1,500 have opted out!

– Affiliate leaders can expect these next steps:

Mid Nov: Affiliated Council and Chapter guidance on contacting new members and safeguarding Personal Identifiable Information (PII)

Late Nov – Mid Dec: Secure transmission of new prospective member information

FYI, here are the 7 current **Virtual Chapters**...which are free to join:

Military Nurses  
Surviving Spouses  
Chaplains  
Military Lawyers



## Total Force Plus Conference: *A Transformative Experience*

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### Introduction

Throughout my professional career, I have attended hundreds of conferences, but none have come close to the synergistic and engaging **Total Force Plus** experience. This event transformed the Gaylord Convention Center into a vibrant *“Total Force City,”* displaying the future of MOAA. This new brand of Total Force Plus represents the reinvention of MOAA, positioning it as the leading military advocacy organization well into the 21st century and for future generations of the military community.

### Brand Excellence and Seamless Execution

The sleek new brand identity of Total Force Plus was evident throughout the conference, which operated with the proficiency of a well-established event. Remarkably, this was the inaugural conference, yet it ran smoothly thanks to MOAA’s outstanding professional staff and committed partners.

## A New Era for MOAA

The atmosphere of *Total Force City* was filled with excitement and hope, embodying an advocacy powerhouse dedicated to fiercely championing military community rights and entitlements. The conference felt like a “*TED Talk on steroids*,” fueled by the passion of MOAA and its partners. Every aspect of the event was strategically designed to highlight a new world defined by social media engagement, artificial intelligence, and innovative learning labs.

## Diverse Support from Vendors

MOAA’s supporting vendors represented a wide spectrum of industries, including health care, governmental agencies, artificial intelligence leaders, and social media experts. The sheer variety of activities meant that attendees could hardly experience everything on one visit—there was more to see and do than one person could fully absorb.



## Insights from Military Leadership

One particularly memorable session featured perspectives from senior enlisted leaders—“super Chiefs”—who shared their views on the present and future of the military. Their insights were especially impactful, considering that 83% of those MOAA advocates are enlisted members and veterans. The conference’s “*People First*” theme resonated strongly as these leaders emphasized listening to and guiding today’s soldiers in a world increasingly shaped by social media and

artificial intelligence. This dialogue underscored the enduring importance of personal connection, leaving a lasting impression on all who attended.

## **Total Force Brand on the March**

With the inaugural conference complete, the Total Force brand begins its journey as a new revolution for MOAA. It is exciting to see the organization embrace 21st-century social media, artificial intelligence, and innovative tactics—to recruit younger officers and carry forward the MOAA legacy. I look forward to the outcomes of this new brand as we grow stronger with more dedicated membership and continued outstanding support from chapters nationwide. In 2026, MOAA will host many events to sustain the momentum of Total Force, leading toward the next conference in 2027.

## **Gratitude**

I extend my deepest gratitude to Lt. General Kelly and the phenomenal MOAA staff, whose vision and dedication created Total Force Plus to secure the future of our advocacy for the next one hundred years.

### **Public Service Announcement:**

### **Fort Jackson Back-to-back graduations**

**DEC 15: Family Day**

**DEC 16: Graduation**

**DEC 17: Graduation**

**Ft. Jackson will be busy!!**

# Member Spotlight

**'We claimed them as our family': Unclaimed veterans given ceremonial burial at**

## **Fort Jackson National**



COLUMBIA, S.C. (WIS) - Five previously unclaimed veterans were laid to rest Friday morning by Chapin's American Legion Chapter 193, and dozens of other supporters at Fort Jackson National Cemetery.

The emotional ceremony brought together people who may not have known those veterans personally, but felt the responsibility to thank them.

"They have no family to have claimed them, so today we claimed them as our family," said Tom Yeoman of American Legion Post 193. "It gives you good closure for their life because at one point in their life, they wrote a check to Uncle Sam payable up to their life, so this is something they have earned."

The procession for the five veterans, four who served in the Army and one from the Air Force, included a send-off that volunteers said has been due for decades.

"We don't know, we don't care why they were in the situation they were in when we discovered them, we were determined to give them a dignified program," said Richard Mullinax, a Chaplain at American Legion Post 193.

It's an effort members of the American Legion said they make four times a year to remember their brothers and sisters who earned their spot in the Fort Jackson National Cemetery.

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# 2025 MOAA Board of Directors

President - Carl Horn cwhorn1954@gmail.com

Vice President - Ceasar Leysath

Vice President for Membership - Katie Hanna

Treasurer - Tom Yarborough

Secretary - Sharron Mackey

Legislative Affairs - Jimmy Foley

Chaplain - Sam Boone

Surviving Spouses - Art Coogler

JROTC Liaison - John Marcucci

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**LTC (Retired) Chris  
Hanna was honored  
on the field as the  
“Veteran of the  
Game” during the  
University of Iowa  
Hawkeyes Football  
game on November  
8th.**



THE MILITARY COALITION



COLUMBIA CHAPTER  
Post Office Box 10121  
Columbia, SC 29207

### **MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL**

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:**

- Dues are **\$20** – 1 year (25) ... **\$40** – 2 year (25-26) ... or **\$50** – 3 years (25-27)     (Circle One)

Select 3 years and save \$10!!!

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

- Please make check payable to "**Columbia MOAA**"

-Mail check and this form to: (or bring to any meeting!)     **NOTE NEW ADDRESS**

***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



Friends,

Yesterday at our Veterans Day Observance at The Wall, VVMF announced the creation of a new "[Service Beyond Service Award](#)" to recognize the accomplishments of living Vietnam veterans who served in the U.S. military honorably and then continued to serve their communities through volunteerism, advocacy, professional distinction, public service and philanthropy.

Now, those who died in Vietnam are listed on The Wall. Those who died after they returned home are inducted into our *In Memory* program. This "Service Beyond Service Award" is meant for those who are still living and have spent a lifetime serving our communities. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) wants to collect the stories of their Vietnam service AND award them for their efforts beyond their military service.

## **NOMINATE A VETERAN**

Nominations are now open and will close on January 31, 2026. Awardees will be announced on March 29, 2026, National Vietnam War Veterans Day.

**Nominate your Vietnam veteran today!**

Sincerely,

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF)



**"COLUMBIA EXPRESS"**