

August 2025

ILCouncilMOAA.org

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Never Stop Serving!!!

***“NEVER
STOP
SERVING”***



President's Column

We had a good meeting earlier this month.

Thanks for your participation (and your travel time).

Little has changed since the 7th – Congress is still working on their spending bills and folks in MOAA are anxiously watching how Congress “makes the sausage”!

MOAA’s priorities have been repeatedly stated in our magazine, the e-newsletters, and posted on MOAA’s various social media sites. Our continuing task is to encourage our members to monitor what is happening in DC and Springfield and to “nudge” them to engage on issues that protect the earned benefits of America’s veterans.

Even in the shadow of a successful Iranian strike, we continue to see the divisiveness throughout our nation. As such, our focus regardless of political alignment remains the protection of the earned benefits that past, current, and future uniformed service members “earned” when we put on the colors of our nation. If you get a chance over the summer congressional break (in August), meet with your elected officials to remind them of their promises to veterans.

We will “show the flag” at both of the Illinois state fairs in August – Springfield on the 10th and DuQuoin on the 24th. I would gladly share both days with any volunteers who want to “share the experience.” Let me know if you are interested in coming to the Springfield fair so I can get a parking pass for you.

Quoting from my last newsletter missive: “I am honored to stand with each of you as we strive to keep MOAA a viable voice for veterans in Illinois.” Here’s to “*Never Stop(ping) Serving!*”

Semper Fi – Bob

Legislative Column

COL (USAF, Ret) Richard Smith

Du Quoin State Fair

The Illinois State Fair in Du Quoin was held on August 24, 2025. Illinois Council of Chapters of MOAA was represented by Col Robert Tyler, Council President, Col Richard Smith, Council Director of Legislation, and Lt. Col James Foreman, Council Secretary.

The Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) sponsored the Veterans Day event that was held in the Expo Hall at the Du Quoin fairgrounds. The Master of Ceremonies was Freddie Buckingham, Illinois Department of Employment Security.

This event was also a celebration of the 250 years of service of the U.S Army, Navy, and Marine Corps. Veterans Day started with entertainment provided by Jonah Winter from 11:00 - 1:30. Lunch was served to the veterans and their families from 12:00 – 1:30.

After lunch, the formal portion of the program started with the presentation of colors, national anthems, and the pledge of allegiance. Welcome remarks were provided by Josh Downs, Mayor of Du Quoin, and Jerry Costello, Director, Illinois Department of Agriculture and previous member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Illinois Congressional District 12.

Speaker comments were provided by Terry Prince, Director of the IDVA, and Tara Worley, Lt Col (Ret), USAF. There were so many veteran service organizations represented in the Expo Hall readily available to provide help to all the veterans that attended the event.

And this year, there appeared to be a larger crowd of veterans than in previous years. Finally, this was a very successful event.

Never Stop Serving!!!



2025 Illinois State Fair



Sunday 10 August 2025 was Veterans Day at the Illinois State Fair. Three JROTC units participated in the drill competition: Waukegan High School, Zion High School, and Prosser Career Academy.



The Zion-Benton Zee-Bees, a Navy JROTC detachment, Chief Vincent Nelson instructor.



The Prosser Academy Falcons, an Army JROTC detachment, SSgt Erika Luster instructor.



Judges for the event: Sgt Maxwell, Sgt Johnson, SSgt Clark. Illinois Army National Guard

MOAA STANDS READY TO:

PROTECT the value of service-earned health benefits from new TRICARE fees, disproportionate TRICARE cost-share increases, or barriers to accessing care in the military health system or through the VA.

PRESERVE the pay earned by those in uniform, to include scheduled pay increases, and established concurrent receipt provisions and eligibility.

PREVENT burdensome delays in VA claims processing and/or reduction of earned VA benefits.

DEFEND the veterans and military spouses who continue their service in the federal government — and other federal employees who serve veterans.



Chaplain's Comments

Kindest Greetings to all as we travel through another Illinois Summer Season, predictably, Hot and Humid.

In this season we gladly observe another State Fair in Springfield. It is an occasion to see a sampling of the crops, technologies and entertainment produced in the past year. If this year's fair is typical of many fairs, it will be remarkable.

State Fair Attendance throughout the United States is not impressive.

Illinois attendance is at 4 %, Texas, .93 %, New Mexico at 24%, with Iowa, Alaska ,Arizona and Minnesota topping the list at 36%,40%,58 % and 38% respectively. This hardly reflects the attitude of a grateful Nation for the Bounty a Gracious God has showered upon us.

My own memories of the Illinois State Fair go back to the mid 1970's when I as a Seminarian living in Springfield would play many concerts at the Fair as a member of the Springfield Municipal Band,

dance events with the Late Gus Pflugmacher's Three Tenors Band, whose book I have had control of since Gus's Death,the Lutheran Church Services held every year on Sundays at 0900 in the Illinois Building ,and of course the spontaneous meetings of friends and acquaintances who have come from all over the State, and, not to forget the Illinois Army Guard Members there to preserve order and to get much needed bottles of water from many of us. I'm sure this year's experiences will be much the same for Cindy and I.

But let us return to our attitude toward the God who made and preserves all things, causing a bountiful harvest to appear everywhere.

The only God which exists and which Muslims, Jews and Chrisitans recognize is the one who is absolutely united in thought, word and purpose yet who is very understandable as far as human wisdom is able to, does not change due to time, place or anything else. If that isn't enough,

He is everywhere, has neither beginning nor end, has complete knowledge of everything ,possesses the most accurate of Judgement and one who will always keep His promises.

These are things I believe we should think about as we observe another bountiful display at Year 2025 Illinois State Fair. God is responsible for every bit of it.

My hope for all is that having attended the Fair, we are moved to go out the Gate thinking or maybe even singing " Now Thank we all Our God.... who has blessed us on our way, with countless Gifts of Love and and still is our's Today.

In Your Service,

Ralph Woehrmann,

Ch Major USA Retired.

Illinois Council of Chapter Presidents, Chaplain.

Survivor Outreach Services Coordinator



Survivor Outreach Services

Many choose new goals for the beginning of the Year.

Organization is a great place to start. DFAS, BENEFEDS, MILCONNECT and the VA are all great online resources and a great place to start.

As a reminder the Survivor Benefit Plan

Marital Status Update form (Formally Certification of Eligibility) is due annually

on the Annuitants' birthday. If you have questions, contact Michelle Rutherford at

michelle.r.rutherford3.ctr@army.mil or 217-720-9574.

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Military Officers Association of America



PROVIDING CRISIS RELIEF TO OUR NATION'S HEROES

Together, we can offer support and stability to the uniformed services and veteran communities during a crisis.



OUR GOAL

Our goal is to raise \$1 million to endow The MOAA Foundation's Crisis Relief Fund and continue our great work.



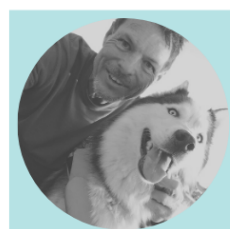
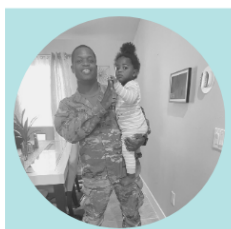
WHY CRISIS RELIEF?

More than 12 million veterans without a VA disability rating have virtually no support when disaster strikes.



CAN YOU HELP?

Our hope is your generous contribution will help us reach our goal to fund this program in perpetuity.



READY TO ASSIST

In April 2020, The MOAA Foundation launched an emergency COVID-19 Relief Fund to support uniformed services families impacted by the pandemic.

As the pandemic has ebbed, we know crisis-related needs of uniformed services families and veterans still exist.

To answer the call for help, we established The MOAA Foundation Crisis Relief Fund — an enduring emergency relief fund to assist uniformed services personnel, veterans, and their families (including caregivers and survivors) in the midst of crisis.

WHAT SETS US APART



Our streamlined application takes less than 20 minutes to complete, saving applicants the time they need to address other urgent priorities.



Funds reach an approved applicant's bank account within days of approval — timely relief when it can have the most impact.



Financial grants are awarded to qualifying applicants to help with housing costs, utilities, medical and insurance bills, groceries, and more.



100% of our Crisis Relief applicants would recommend our program to others in need.



(800) 234-6622



moaa_foundation@moaa.org



charities.moaa.org/crisisrelief

Reasons to join a MOAA Chapter

Joining a MOAA chapter offers a range of benefits and opportunities for military officers and their families. Here are some of the reasons to consider joining a MOAA chapter:

Make Yourself Heard: MOAA chapters provide critical grassroots support for MOAA's national legislative agenda, helping to protect the benefits of military servicemembers and their families.

Give Back to the Community: Chapter members serve as ambassadors in their communities, supporting various programs that positively impact the lives of others.

Networking Opportunities: Chapters include second-career members in the workforce and retired servicemembers, providing valuable connections and networking opportunities.

Stay Informed: Chapter newsletters, websites, and meetings offer the latest information on local, state, and national issues and changes to military benefits.

Influencing State Legislation: MOAA chapters can lobby for and pass state-level legislation that affects military members and their families. Joining a MOAA chapter is a way to contribute to the advocacy efforts of the organization and to support the rights of military service members and their families.

Council of Chapters

Website

The Council has a website. Address is <http://www.ilcouncilmoaa.org>

If you have any items or input for the website, contact MAJ (USAF, Ret) Dave Knieriem at the following email address: dknieriem@casscomm.com

MOAA is the nation's largest and most influential association of military officers. It is an independent, nonprofit, politically nonpartisan organization.

While MOAA is permitted by law to lobby—and does so actively—its status as a tax-exempt veterans organization precludes it from participating in political activities, which are defined as intervening directly or indirectly in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office.

Stated briefly: the association may advocate issues, but it may not advocate the election or defeat of particular candidates or political parties. This newsletter follows the policies of MOAA National.



Never Stop Serving!!!

MOAA Store and ROTC/Junior ROTC Items

The MOAA store has re-opened at <https://moaa.estore.shop/>. In addition to promotional gear, you can find ROTC and Junior ROTC (JROTC) award certificates (in stock now) and medals (place orders now for backorders to be shipped when medals are in stock, expected by the end of April). Electronic certificates may be customized and downloaded [online](#) at any time. Note that medals have been updated to reflect all eight uniformed services, and JROTC certificates have been updated with language more appropriate to high school students rather than ROTC students.

The cost of medals to affiliates will remain at \$3.00 per medal due to a MOAA subsidy. Additionally, the store recently added the USPS live rate to shipping options, providing a lower-cost alternative.

Council Meetings

According to the Council By-Laws: There shall be a regular meeting of the Council during each of the first two trimesters of each calendar year. Notice of such meeting, provided by the Secretary, shall be mailed, via post or electronically, to each officer, appointive official of the Council, and each member of the Council at least 30 days before the time appointed for such meeting.

MOAA Legislative Action Center

You can help MOAA by visiting their legislative action center and contacting your elected officials regarding pending legislation MOAA is working. You can reach the Legislative Action Center at the following email address: [take action.moaa.org](mailto:takeaction.moaa.org)

Never Stop Serving



The Greatest Casualty is
Being Forgotten!

Now and Always
We'll be There.



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Exclusive Discounts: MOAA Vacations provides exclusive deals and discounts that are not available to the general public. This can lead to significant savings on cruises and vacation packages.

MOAA Exclusive Amenities: As a member, you receive additional perks and benefits on most cruises and tours including additional dollars off, free shipboard credit, cabin upgrades and more.

Book with Confidence: MOAA Vacations always guarantees the lowest price and is the only travel agency in the country that provides travel on a Satisfaction Guaranteed basis. Should you have any issue or problem before or during your trip, we guarantee to resolve the issue to your satisfaction.

Group Travel: We offer the opportunity to travel with your fellow MOAA members from your local chapter and across the country, thereby increasing the fun for your next vacation.

MOAA Support: MOAA Vacations supports MOAA National and Local Chapters. By booking through us you are also supporting MOAA's mission and initiatives, as a portion of the proceeds helps fund advocacy and support programs for the military community and their families.

If you're considering booking a trip, it's worth exploring what MOAA Vacations has to offer!

Regent All-Inclusive Luxury Cruises



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