



Member Spotlight

Robert “Bob” Tyler has just retired for the fourth time, which means his calendar is freer than it once was. But don’t expect it to be entirely clear for the foreseeable future – or maybe ever.

Tyler, a retired Marine Corps colonel, has served as MOAA’s Illinois Council of Chapters president since 2017. He chairs the Illinois Veterans’ Advisory Council, serves on the board of the Macon County Veterans Assistance Commission, and is on the veterans advisory group for two U.S. lawmakers. He leads the Illinois State Fair’s multifaceted day for veterans, volunteers with the Toys for Tots program, and speaks at veteran and community events.

His 30-plus-year Marine Corps career started after dropping out of college in 1967. He visited a recruiter who showed him a photo of pilots in front of an F-4. Tyler had wanted to fly for as long as he could remember.

The recruiter didn’t tell Tyler the program he was promised had been defunded six months before. Still, it all worked out. He trained as an aviation electrician before receiving a commission and went on to fly the CH-46 Sea Knight over southern Vietnam.

“I ended up flying helicopters, jets, carriers, and multi-engine transports around the world,” he said.

Along the way, he finished college and earned a doctorate in cognitive psychology. When he returned to Illinois in 2009, he worked as an instructor at a community college and then as a university professor. He also got involved in MOAA. Two years later, Tyler was his chapter’s president. His role with MOAA has allowed him to advocate for veterans and show how the majority of those who wear the uniform go on to contribute to the nation they helped defend.

“I’m trying to send the message that veterans are an important segment of our society even though only about 7% [of society historically] has ever put on a uniform,” Tyler said. ■■■

— By Kristin Davis, a writer in Virginia

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**Col. Robert
“Bob” Tyler,
USMC (Ret),
Life member**