



# Virtual Council Newsletter

February 2025

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"Virtual Council Newsletter" is published quarterly by the MOAA Council and Chapters Virtual Council. We are an independent, nonprofit, politically nonpartisan organization, an affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA).

## COUNCIL UPDATE MESSAGE

The importance, influence, outreach, and success of our virtual chapters on MOAA's overall mission is recognized and growing through our contributions. This has been possible by the leadership and commitments made by you and our other volunteer chapter leaders. We need to continue our efforts to establish and grow the virtual chapter concept.

We will be forming a 'working group' to produce a strategic/operational plan for developing and forming new virtual chapters. This will have a short suspense date and thus require a brief commitment of time. With the extreme knowledge and experience of the members, it will be a success!

Query your members for anyone interested in joining this group (not limited to Board members) and let us know. Further information will follow. National MOAA is incredibly supportive and will be a participant. The goal is to have the working group established and meet right after Advocacy in Action, in April.

We thank each of our Chapters' leadership and members for their continued support and commitment to Never Stop Serving!

## COUNCIL BOARD MEMBERS

PRESIDENT: COL JERI GRAHAM, USA (RET)

VICE PRESIDENT: LTC JOE GOLLASCH, USA (RET)

SECRETARY:

TREASURER: COL ED BAISDEN, USA (RET)

MEMBERSHIP: COL ED BAISDEN, USA (RET)

LEGISLATION:

SURVIVING SPOUSE: PAT GREEN, MSSVC

VC01: LTC JOE GOLLASCH, USA (RET)

VC02: PAT GREEN, MOAA SSAC

VC03: CDR MATTHEW WALTERS, USPHS

VC04: MAJ LAMAR REECE, USAF

VC05: MAJ BROOKS ROSE, USAFR

VC06: COL ROJAN ROBOTHAM, USAF (RET)

VC07: CDR LINCOLN SMITH, USN (RET)

## CONTACT INFORMATION

[virtualcouncil2022@gmail.com](mailto:virtualcouncil2022@gmail.com)

mail: 8670 Ashbury Dr.  
Hudson, FL 39667



Virtual Council meetings are held quarterly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday at 7 pm (eastern). [ Feb, May, August, November]

## GET READY FOR ADVOCACY IN ACTION 2025



MOAA is preparing for Advocacy in Action 2025 and our Council is taking part of the in-person event 7-10 April 2025. We have 5 members from our chapters who will be attending the event in Washington, DC. Additional information will be coming as to how our chapters may have all our members support this major annual campaign.

The following are the issue areas for our Tier One priorities in brief.

- **Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement Act:** Advocate for legislation to support veteran caregivers through education, employment, and retirement opportunities.
- **Ending the Wait Report Priorities:** Urge Congress to expedite toxic exposure benefits for veterans by addressing decades-long delays in the presumptive process by strengthening legal frameworks.
- **Improve Military Health System (MHS) Access to Care:** Call for a digital platform to help military families navigate the MHS to improve access and accountability.
- **Unaccompanied Housing Improvements:** Advocate for transparency and funding accountability to address substandard living conditions in military barracks and improve safety and health standards.
- **Military Spouse Hiring Act:** Add military spouses to the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) to reduce unemployment and improve financial stability for military families.

## Legislation



MOAA's greatest mission is to improve the lives of those who serve and their families, which is achieved largely through the tireless advocacy efforts taking place in our nation's capital. MOAA's experts in Washington are there to support legislation that benefits the military community and are equally vigilant when fighting to stop legislation that threatens our livelihood. The larger our numbers, the greater our voice.

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

As the legislative slate resets for the 119th Congress, MOAA member engagement will become even more vital to achieving our advocacy objectives. [Here](#) are the priorities and goals.

### Advocacy

At the core of MOAA Virtual Chapters is supporting the Legislative Advocacy issues which influence all our beneficiaries. As our virtual chapters grow and we bring new members into our Chapters, it is important to realize that advocacy may be new to some. We may need to provide basic guidelines and 'tools' to help them be successful, competent, and comfortable in these efforts. Download and share this basic Tool Kit to share as appropriate.



[Click toolbox to download](#)

We will update these tools soon

### Legislative Action Center

We encourage each of our members to register on the MOAA website. Consider including this [link](#) and instructions for completing this in your welcome letter to each new member. There is also a YouTube video available that you may want to include and post on your website showing members exactly how to register.



## House and Senate Committees



Key legislative attention, at times, requires contacting and knowing just which representatives are on a specific committee. Below you will find some 'key' committees and members listed for the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress.

[House Armed Services Committee](#)

[Senate Armed Services Committee](#)

[House Defense Appropriations Committee](#)

[Senate Appropriations Committee](#)

[House Veterans Affairs Committee](#)

[Senate Veterans Affairs Committee](#)



Additional legislative information on specific bills, committees, and activities can be found [HERE](#).

We urge you to keep your membership informed, involved and to Never Stop Serving!

## State Level Legislative Advocacy



There are many legislative issues that are at the individual State level which effect all veterans, active duty and beneficiaries. Our virtual chapters have members in each State and thus creates a challenge on where we should focus attention and efforts.

MOAA Council and Independent Chapters have been working on State level issues for years and have been very successful in advocating to achieve State legislation benefiting all. Our Virtual Council has a plan to implement a collaborative initiative to join the geographic chapters and councils on their State level efforts.

Pending the approval of our Board, when the States have an established outreach for their geographic membership, they will include the virtual council in the contact list. Our Council will in turn forward the information to our members residing in that State. MUSNAVC (VC01) has a pilot program with Florida, North Carolina, and Tennessee.

Tax exemptions, spouse employment, veteran homelessness, nursing homes, and many other issues are being considered. More to follow on this new proposed initiative.

## Membership

### Benefits of Virtual Chapters

A virtual chapter is bound together by a shared affinity and/or mission. They include a highly dispersed membership, such as those living in remote or overseas locations, may not otherwise have the ability to connect with peers on a regular basis and may enjoy the camaraderie and inclusion.

Members participate in advocacy efforts to further the legislative and other objectives of MOAA. We are focused on legislation that affects all ranks of all services, to include currently serving, Reserve and National Guard and their families and survivors.

We provide easy access to current research, share experiences and expand our reach by sharing with other service corps associations and other team members.

In this time of major transformation of the military and the VA system, members strive to keep engaged and provide input to key leaders through the MOAA Government Relations team.

Members share community involvement experiences and are encouraged to also participate in local MOAA chapters.

If you move, change duty stations, or even deploy, your membership follows.



### Recruiting and Outreach

As you look at growing your chapter, don't overlook other social media avenues. Consider starting an account and advertise your presence on various sites. You can find other affinity groups with interest in joining your chapter.

Using your website to attract and gain members is extremely useful and beneficial. Remember to keep your website up to date and informative. Social media sites should also be current and maintained to attract new members.

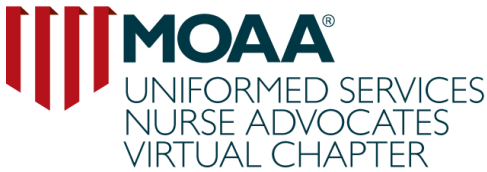
**Here is a sample from VC01 which is periodically posted on other nursing facebook pages.**

If you are a current or former member of a Uniformed Service Nurse Corps (Army, Navy, Air Force, Public Health Service) and are interested in military healthcare issues that affect active duty, Reserve and Guard, Retirees, Veterans, and their families, you are invited to join the Military Officers Association of America Uniformed Services Nurse Advocates Virtual Chapter (MUSNAVC). Membership is free and we will assist you with joining the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) at no cost (if not already a member).

Our 525+ members, who are in all fifty states, have had interesting and diverse careers and are interested in advocating for healthcare legislation for all who serve(d) our Nation.

Nurses have always been patient advocates, and this is an extension of that service. Joining is as simple as going to <https://www.musnavc.org/>

## Chapter News



Web site: [musnavc.org](http://musnavc.org)  
Email: [musnavc@gmail.com](mailto:musnavc@gmail.com)  
President: LTC Joe Gollasch, USA (Ret)

Join us: [HERE](#)



Wreaths Across America participation at 5 locations

Virtual Chapters are independent MOAA affiliates with representation on the Virtual Council.

MUSNAVC committees and teams are off to a good start following the election swearing in of our Board of Directors in January.

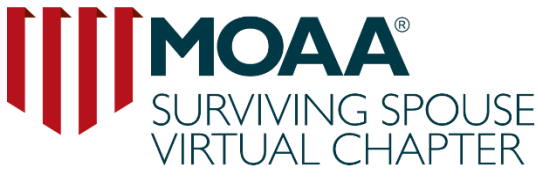
We have focused on lining up exciting, informative, and experienced guest speakers for our membership meetings. We are looking into newly introduced legislation for inclusion on our Legislative Early Push program that is an adjunct to MOAA's legislative action center. We are looking at ways to expand and create a more efficient We Care program.

We have included additional members to work on our Women's Healthcare team which focuses on education and legislation involving women's health. Our Healthcare Liaison team is exploring their outreach to identify potential issues with access to care, pharmacy, and other healthcare concerns.

MUSNAVC has started a new collaborative initiative with MOAA Councils and Independent Chapters to include virtual chapters in State level legislation advocacy. Our members will now be informed of their State legislation issues and support the efforts of the State councils. We have begun with Florida, North Carolina, and Tennessee with plans to expand to each State.

Exciting initiatives and opportunities are instore for 2025.

We are Nurses with a Mission and will Never Stop Serving!



Website: Pending

Email: [mssvc02@gmail.com](mailto:mssvc02@gmail.com)

President: Pat Green, Surviving Spouse Advisory Council

The 2025 session of the Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter began with the January 19 meeting. Current and new officers, Pat Green, Gail Joyce, Roy Yenchsky, Nora Durham, Susan Collins, Vivianne Wersel, and Cheryl Toland were introduced to the membership. A tribute was given to retiring officers, Nancy Mullen, Renee Brunelle Mathews, and past president, Barbara Smith. Our new Liaison at MOAA National, Jennifer Goodale, Frank Michaels from the Council and Chapters leadership, and 57 members attended. The main speaker was Gail Joyce, a member of the MOAA National Board of Directors and Chair of the Surviving Spouse Advisory Council. She reviewed the issues contributions and responsibilities of the Surviving Spouse Liaison at the Chapter level and set the tone for a very active year.

The next meeting, February 18, will be a informal discussion meeting where members will exchange ideas and share issues that affect Surviving Spouses.

On our March 18 meeting, April Vogel from National MOAA will have a workshop with our members in using the Advocacy settings of the MOAA.org website. This tutorial is in anticipation of our membership and its vast network of family and friends who will contribute to the awareness of Advocacy in Action. Email correspondence from all will reassert our interest in supporting the recommendation of MOAA in Legislative action.

SSVC membership is free if you are a MOAA MEMBER, a Surviving Spouse or a Chapter or Council Surviving Spouse Liaison. To join, send your request for a membership application to [mssvc02@gmail.com](mailto:mssvc02@gmail.com). Once your application is completed and returned, you will receive invitations to our meetings.

I look forward to sharing more information about our Chapter and its activities in future editions of this Newsletter.



Website: [mphsvc.org](http://mphsvc.org) Join us [HERE](#)  
Email: [MOAAPHSGmail.com](mailto:MOAAPHSGmail.com)  
President: CDR Matthew Walters , USPHS



Newly elected BoD. Chapter updates and more will be provided in the next edition.



Website: Pending Join us  
Email: [moaa.vc04@gmail.com](mailto:moaa.vc04@gmail.com)  
President: Maj Lamar Reece, USAF

We are excited to announce the election of new officers for the Virtual Chaplains Chapter. With the completion of our officer elections, we are proud to have filled all leadership positions, ensuring a strong foundation for our chapter's work in the coming year. The newly elected officers are as follows:

**President:** Lamar Reece

**Vice President of Communication & Membership Chair:**  
Michael Ireland

**Vice President of Programs:** John Ellis

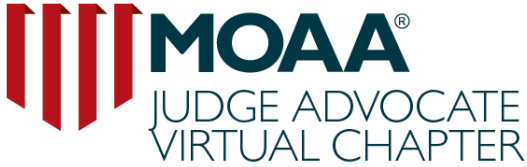
**Treasurer:** Ted Edwards

**Secretary:** Diane Reece

This dedicated team brings a wealth of experience and energy to their respective roles. We are confident that under their leadership, our chapter will continue to grow and make a meaningful impact in the chaplaincy community.

As we begin this new chapter, we ask for God's guidance and wisdom for our new president and government officials. We pray that they may lead with discernment, compassion, and strength. We also lift up our nation, asking for unity amidst the varied emotions of excitement, disappointment, fear, and uncertainty that many are feeling.





Website: [moajavc.org](http://moajavc.org)

Join us [HERE](#)

Email:

President: MAJ Brooks Rose, USAFR

Our January General Meeting we welcomed Mr. Gerald R. Lefler, Director of the Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery to discuss the National Cemetery system and his responsibility for all burials, maintenance, and administration of one of our largest national cemeteries and two large satellite cemeteries.

ZOOM LINK INFO:

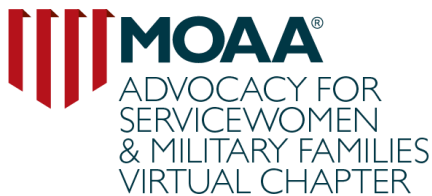
Join Zoom Meeting <https://lnkd.in/e9ywnKU6>

Meeting ID: 839 1376 9859

Passcode: 406808

Also as a reminder, if you know a deserving current or former judge advocate doing great work, nominate them for the Maj Gen Joseph Lynch Annual Award for career field achievement. If you know a member of MOAA JAVC that is doing great work for the Chapter, nominate them for the CAPT Erin Stone Chapter Member of the Year Award.

Each award takes only a short written nomination (2-3 paragraphs) telling us who the nominee is, where they work and a narrative of the work done over the last year. Email nominations to the chapter email account. Deadline for nominations was 31 January. Awardees will be recognized at February's Chapter Meeting.



Website: [women-family-virtual-chapter](http://women-family-virtual-chapter)

Join us [HERE](#)

Email:

President: Col Rojan Robotham, USAF (Ret)

VC06 closed out 2024 completing its second year as a virtual chapter. We had a wide variety of discussions covering issues that impact servicewomen and military families at our monthly meetings. We learned about the current women's health care initiatives being tracked by the VA, information about how to be better prepared for life as a surviving spouse, and about the Hello Girls who were the first female soldiers in WW1.

We are excited about our 2025 programming which will include a mix of talks and calls for action. Don't hesitate to get in touch with us if you have an idea for a topic that our chapter should learn.

Additionally, we welcome anyone interested in Servicewomen and Military Family issues to join our chapter. We meet monthly through Zoom on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month at 8pm ET.



Website: Pending Join us  
Email: mvng288@aol.com  
President: CDR Lincoln Snith, USN (Ret)



Zack Baddorf – Founder  
MVJ website: <https://www.mvi.network/>



The MOAA Public Affairs and Communication Professional Virtual Chapter (MPACOMVC) held one of its first chapter meetings on January 23, 2025.

The chapter was recently chartered by MOAA National in October 2024 and 16 of its current 26 members were in attendance for this virtual meeting.

The meeting was highlighted with a presentation by Zach Baddorf, the President and Co-Founder of an organization known as the *Military Veterans in Journalism*.

*Military Veterans in Journalism* aims to increase the number of veterans in American newsrooms. Veterans bring perspective, nuanced understanding and on-the-ground experience about the military and veteran affairs that ultimately benefits newsrooms and news consumers.

As MOAA’s newest virtual chapter MPACOMVC continues to develop and provide support to its projects. Its mission is to provide public affairs and communication support among MOAA affiliates across all media platforms.



DAV and MOAA’s groundbreaking report, *Ending the Wait for Toxic-Exposed Veterans*, reveals that on average, toxic-exposed veterans—many of them suffering life-threatening diseases—have to wait 34.1 years to receive access to the full range of health care and benefits they earned and urgently need. Tragically, some die before that ever happens. [click photo for video].



## Military Officers Association of America

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is the country's leading organization protecting the rights of uniformed servicemembers and their families. MOAA is the nation's largest and most influential association of uniformed service officers and their surviving spouses. We are an independent, nonprofit, politically nonpartisan organization. MOAA's constituents proudly hail from every branch of the uniformed services. To them, we have made the same promise that they have made to their country: Never Stop Serving.

### MOAA RESOURCES

[MOAA WEBSITE](#)

[LEGISLATIVE ACTION CENTER](#)

[COUNCIL AND CHAPTER NEWS](#)

[POLICIES AND PROCEDURES GUIDE](#)

[COUNCIL AND CHAPTER LEADERS RESOURCE MANUAL](#)

[WEBINARS AND VIDEO ARCHIVE](#)

[JOIN MOAA](#)



MOAA produces regular updates on MOAA's advocacy and legislative efforts from MOAA's government relations staff weekly. These short YouTube videos are easily linked to your newsletters and/or websites. We highly recommend that you explore and use them. Members enjoy viewing them. (Click photo to see listing.)

MOAA Councils and Chapters hold monthly **Virtual Roundtable** discussions, usually on the last Thursday of the month. These discussions are open to all Chapter and Council leaders and cover issues which are important and pertinent for success and health of the Chapters. It is useful to hear what other chapter leaders are doing for best practice initiatives. The sessions are recorded, and you may view them using the webinar and video archive link [HERE](#).

### Council and Chapter Leaders Workshops –

Whether you are a new or experienced chapter leader, the MOAA Leaders workshop is a valuable source to learn what is going on with MOAA and to provide information and resources for your chapter. We urge you to attend an in-person workshop when available, but you may view the latest virtual workshop from the link [HERE](#). If you have any questions or would like to discuss any topic presented, let us know.

#### 2025 Leader Training Workshops



## MOAA Hosts Total Force Convention

TotalForce+, MOAA's inaugural conference, dedicated to advancing solutions for the military and veteran communities. This event will address critical issues such as pay and benefits, health care, military recruiting, and more.

The purpose of TotalForce+ is to unite key decision-makers and stakeholders to tackle the toughest people challenges facing the military and veteran communities. By focusing on these critical areas, the conference aims to ensure that our military remains the world's best fighting force while improving the lives of those who serve.



## MOAA's Military State Report Card and Tax Guide



MOAA has consolidated the annual State Report Card and State Tax Guide. Consult state authorities for additional/more current information. See the report card and Defense State Liaison Office (DSLO) issues [HERE](#).

## Up Coming Training and Events

### FEBRUARY 2025

- **FEB. 27:** MONTHLY CHAPTER LEADER VIRTUAL ROUNDTABLE, 7 P.M. EASTERN: COMMITTEE MODULE/NRT. [JOIN HERE](#) AT THE TIME OF THE MEETING. (MEETING ID: 925 4890 0894)

### MARCH 2025

- **MARCH 5:** VIRTUAL LEADER TRAINING WORKSHOP (NEW LEADERS)
- **MARCH 27:** MONTHLY CHAPTER LEADER VIRTUAL ROUNDTABLE, 7 P.M. EASTERN: CHAPTER VISIT AND AWARDS PROGRAM. [JOIN HERE](#) AT THE TIME OF THE MEETING. (MEETING ID: 966 1480 1229)

### APRIL 2025

- **APRIL 24:** MONTHLY CHAPTER LEADER VIRTUAL ROUNDTABLE, 7 P.M. EASTERN: CHAPTER DUES PAY PORTAL. [JOIN HERE](#) AT THE TIME OF THE MEETING. (MEETING ID: 947 4145 8946)

## Community Involvement

Our Virtual Community spans all 50 States. We encourage all to be involved with local community activities and support the MOAA community outreach. Here are a few of the Community programs to consider getting involved with.



**Serving Veterans By Bringing New Friends to Veterans in Hospice.**



The Military Order of the World Wars (MOWW) is a patriotic, nonpartisan, Veterans Service Organization (VSO) dedicated to promoting patriotism, civic responsibility, public service, and leadership in our nation's communities.



**Honoring and supporting our nation's newest and youngest service members**



119 U. S. FLAGS EACH MOVING IN 25 MILE SEGMENTS HANDED-OFF IN 1-MILE INCREMENTS OVER 2,814 MILES TOTAL



For their service, sacrifice, and selflessness. Join us as we proudly celebrate America's Veterans with a day of honor in our nation's capital.

*The Military Officers Association of America is the Nation's largest and most influential association of military officers. It is an independent, nonprofit, politically nonpartisan organization.*

*The MOAA Council of Virtual Chapters is an affiliate of MOAA and is dedicated to the goals of MOAA. It serves as a virtual advocate on issues throughout the United States.*