

REPUBLIC OR DEMOCRACY? A DISTINCTION WITH A DIFFERENCE TO THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION



People often use the term “**democracy**” when referring to the United States. The distinction between a republic, which is technically what we are, and a democracy seems lost on those who intermingle the terms as if they were synonyms. If you note that we are not a democracy, but a republic, you risk being mocked as strict constructionists overly wedded to technical definitions and unwilling to acknowledge the importance of popular sovereignty and the will of the people in our system.

This is unfortunate, as the question of whether we are a democracy or a republic is an important one, complex, and reliant on clear definitions of words and their use. **Strictly speaking, the United States is a representative Republic, not a democracy.** The distinction has a difference. It greatly influenced the American Revolution, and arguably saved the future Republic from ruin in its darkest days.

First, some definitions. Merriam-Webster (MW) defines democracy, a noun, as “a government by the people” characterized by “rule of the majority,” and as “a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections”. This, of course, does a pretty good job of describing what most of us believe our government is. We the People are sovereign, and we exercise that power through elections. So far so good.

As for “**republic**” the definition is similar, but with several important additional elements. Republic is also a noun, meaning (according to MW), “a government having a chief of state who is not a monarch and who in modern times is usually a president,” and “a government in which supreme power resides in a body of citizens entitled to vote and is exercised by elected officers and representatives responsible to

Cont. on Page 3 “**Republic or Democracy?**”

President’s Corner

OPERATION OUTREACH - STEADY AS SHE GOES

Now that we are into our summer



vacation months, we are taking some much deserved R&R and a break from our monthly meetings.

Congratulations are due to all chapter members, we are well underway with ‘**Operation Outreach**’ as we are making progress in all three of our Outreach areas.

OUTREACH WITHIN MOAA

The SWVA in seeking to grow our membership. We have recruited 6 new members since January and 2 former members have become active once again attending our gatherings. Our Membership Chair, **COL Bob Brown** and Secretary, **LTC Steve Jamison** are doing an incredible job of reaching out to existing and potential new members. We have also made efforts to recognize members and their efforts with individual awards from MOAA National. We are continuing to seek ways to increase member participation in numerous chapter activities.

OUTREACH IN COMMUNITY

We have just concluded another successful awards evolution under the leadership of **LTC Bob Habermann**. We successfully recognized the rising leaders and distinguished Junior Reserve Officer Training

Presidents Corner Cont’d on page 2

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Presidents Corner Cont'd from page 1

Corps cadets at sixteen local high schools and three Civil Air Patrol Squadrons in our area. We also presented MOAA ROTC and SWVC Scholarship awards to distinguished cadets in the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets. Thanks to all of you who volunteered in the recognition and presentations to these future leaders. Earlier this year, our Chapter voted to begin support of another organization known as “**Vittles For Vets**” whose mission is providing food and other essential items to qualified veterans in the area. Thanks to the efforts of **CDR Lee Ensley**, working with MOAA’s Community Outreach Program, the chapter secured a \$2000 grant to be awarded to Vittles For Vets. Also our most recent participation in numerous veterans events, including Memorial Day Ceremonies are worth mentioning.

OUTREACH IN STATE AND NATIONAL LEVEL

Our successful engagement with our State and National legislators was evident at our May chapter barbecue where we heard their commitment to support our efforts. They know who we are and what our priorities are when we contact them. They are also now recipients of our quarterly newsletter. Likewise, **CAPT Matt Haag** remains in constant contact with the Virginia Council of Chapters. However, our OUTREACH efforts should continue. Most notably, our legislative efforts should remain a priority. You can accomplish your part by remaining aware of the issues. At the barbecue, you heard our representatives encourage our comments through their websites, blogs and U.S. mail. We also have the MOAA Legislative Action Center at www.moaa.org/takeaction to send pre-formatted messages to your legislators. You can also contact them via MOAA’s toll-free Capitol Hill hotline at (866) 272-MOAA (6222). In your social and professional conversations, look for potential new members and pass the word by inviting them to one of our meetings starting in September. **COL Tom Dalzell** does an incredible job of organizing engaging programs and has more interesting programs in store starting in September.

So even though the watch word today is “**Steady As She Goes**”, the order from the bridge will resume to “**Full Speed Ahead**” this fall as we continue to grow the chapter.

Remember that we are all ambassadors of our organization. Your ideas, comments and suggestions are always encouraged. Thanks for your hard work and remember to **NEVER STOP SERVING.**

OUR MISSION

As the community face of the Military Officers Association of America, the Southwest Virginia Chapter’s mission is to advocate for a strong national defense, be an influential provider and supporter of programs, benefits and services for our military community, and a source of social fellowship for our members.

OUR VISION

To Be An Influential Military Organization in Southwest Virginia.



Continued from Page 1 "Republic or Democracy?"

them and governing according to law." From these definitions it is clear why there might be some confusion. A representative republic uses "democratic means" to manifest the consent of the governed. We vote for representatives, who vote on measures. Voting is democracy in action, but that does not make the United States a democracy. The measures that our representatives vote on are constrained by law and the Constitution. We do not have pure democracy or "rule by the majority" because we have constitutionally protected rights that cannot be voted away, operate under rule of law, and have, till recently, limited government with limited powers. We also have, however, an expanded voting population that is not limited by aristocracy, wealth, property ownership, or gender. Any citizen, over 18 years of age, can vote. One could say, therefore, that the United States is a democratic representative Republic.

While some might wish to believe so, the founders did not invent the concept of consent of the governed, nor was America the first democracy or republic. Discussion of such concepts had been going on for centuries and republics existed prior to the American Revolution. What the American founders did do was expand the definition of a republic so that it gave more power to the popular will of the people. They were merging, more completely, the idea of a law-based government with the concept of consent of the governed. While in retrospect we see their efforts as woefully incomplete, for the time it was a revolutionary step towards popular sovereignty. Many doubted such an expansion of representation could work over such a large population or territory.

The original text of the United States Constitution never mentions the word democracy, and only mentions republic as a form of government once in Article IV, Section 4 ("The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government..."). Interestingly, that clause refers to the states, and not the federal government itself. Throughout the text the founders refer to the United States as the "union" or as the "United States" but never a republic or a democracy. The Declaration of Independence does not use either term at all.

That said, the structure laid down in the Constitution contains the elements that MW described, including a "chief of state," and that power lies with a body of "elected officers and representatives" who vote on the laws that govern the nation. All these officials govern according to law. That is a Republic, no doubt.

When asked by "Mrs. Powel" upon the passage of the Constitution in 1787 what we had created, Benjamin Franklin famously replied, **"a Republic, if you can keep it."** -

It is in the phrase "if you can keep it," however, where we find the true impact of the distinction between republic and democracy. As Richard R. Beeman, Ph.D. writes "we find ample evidence that democratic revolutions do not inevitably lead to national harmony.... We see that the expression of the 'popular will' can create a cacophony of discordant voices... In far too many places around the world today, the expression of the 'popular will' is nothing more than the unleashing of primordial forces of tribal and religious identity which further confound the goal of building stable and consensual governments."

What Franklin was concerned about, what he was so prescient about was the difficulty in preserving the union. That concern was not an idle one, as the Revolution had proven. To keep the union together required a structure that limited conflict and cooled the passions of the mob yet provided ample enough rights and liberties to both the citizen and the to the former colonies to make them support and adhere to the union. Again, quoting Beeman, **"the question that has plagued all nations aspiring to democratic government ever since: how to implement principles of popular majority rule while at the same time preserving stable governments that protect the rights and liberties of all citizens..."**

In 1776 a stable union did not exist. What did exist was a loose confederation of militia forces and citizens from the thirteen colonies, operating under an ill-defined structure to which their commitment continually wavered. Support for the revolution was not, by any means, universal within these colonies, and the debate between revolution and compromise with Britain raged. To preserve the effort, the founders knew they had to promise both protections from mob rule and protections for popular sovereignty. That was not a trivial endeavor. Alexander Hamilton wrote of the challenge in a letter to John Jay in November 1775. In that letter he addressed the **"passions of men" which provided for a "great danger of fatal extremes." Hamilton wrote: When the minds of these are loosened from their attachment to ancient establishments and courses, they seem to grow giddy and are apt more or less to run into anarchy** . . . Cont'd. on Page 4 "Republic or Democracy?"

Continued from Page 3 "Republic or Democracy?"

In such tempestuous times, it requires the greatest skill in the political pilots to keep men steady and within proper bounds. Hamilton was concerned about conflict between New York and New England, which threatened a united stance vis-à-vis England. To control intra-colonial conflict, he argued against too much popular sovereignty, i.e., too much democracy. He recognized the need to hold the passions of men at bay, and the skill needed to do that while continuing to keep the support of the colonies.

As the American Revolutionary War against Britain intensified, George Washington was plagued by irregular support from both the colonies and the Continental Congress. His ability to avoid catastrophic defeat is legendary. What perhaps was his greater brilliance was the ability to hold the forces together, keep the states from fighting each other, and channeling the passions of his fighting forces away from each other and towards the enemy. As his letter to the colonies from Valley Forge attests, the distributed nature of the revolutionary coalition put the future of the war in great jeopardy. "In a word, the United and respective exertions of the States cannot be too great, too vigorous in this interesting work, and we shall never have a fair and just prospect for success till our Troops (Officers & Men) are better appointed and provided than they are or have been."

Washington knew very well that a citizen force of volunteer militiamen, responding only to popular will, while appealing to the revolutionary impulse, was no substitute for a centrally commanded, resourced, trained, and managed force of professional soldiers. Once launched, support to the war had to be controlled by a chief executive and protected by a Congress of representatives whose laws mattered and lasted. Counter to popular legend, it was not the minutemen who won the war. Washington could never have achieved victory had he remained subject to the democratic vagaries of thirteen colonial assemblies guided only by majority rule. **"Military necessity required American leaders to change their perceptions of standing armies and challenged their republican ideals of volunteer, part-time military service...ultimately it was the Continental soldiers that would secure victory..."**

That the colonies agreed to the creation of the Continental Army is a critical component of the success of the revolution. It is also remarkable given the antipathy they held against standing armies. James Madison, years later during the debates over the Constitution, exposed that antipathy, stating that a **"standing military force, with an overgrown Executive will not long be safe companions to liberty,"** and that the "means of defense against foreign danger, have been always the instruments of tyranny at home.... armies kept up under the pretext of defending, have enslaved the people." Yet, despite that view, such a force was authorized by the fledgling republic, saving the effort and leading to victory. Today, when a riot or mass protest occurs, people in the crowd can often be heard chanting, "this is what democracy looks like." In a way they are correct, which is why we are a representative Republic.

John Adams famously wrote, in a letter to John Taylor in 1814, **"...Democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts and murders itself. There never was a Democracy Yet, that did not commit suicide."** In that same letter, he wrote, "the Athenians grew more and more Warlike in proportion as the Commonwealth became more democratic." The founders, students of history and great thinkers including those of ancient and classical history, knew the distinction. That they did, saved the new nation.

Our founding was saved by the skill of our **"political pilots"** to craft a compromise between popular will and the rule of law. We are democratic, but we are not a democracy. We the People are those whose consent is required, but the Constitution is the Supreme Law of the Land.

We would have never made it otherwise.

Essay by Jay McConville, Constituting America, 9 May 2024



THE VIRGINIA TECH TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE (VTTI)

On Thursday 18 April 2024 Dr. Miguel A. Perez, Associate Professor and lead of the Data Applications Group at the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI), Ms. Christine Link-Owens, Volunteer Coordination Group Manager VTTI and Mrs. Julie Hodge Volunteer Coordinator VTTI presented a program on **“The Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (The Smart Road) and its many Divisions that engage to improve all types of transportation.”**

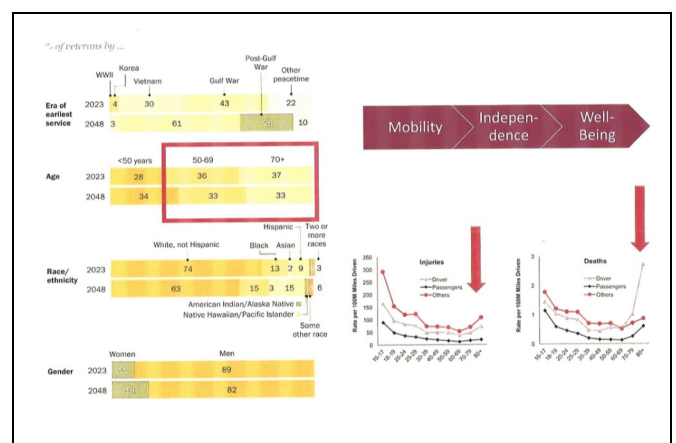
The Virginia Smart Roads are state-of-the-art, closed test-bed research facilities managed by VTTI in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). In partnership with VDOT, VTTI opened the original Virginia Smart Road – the highway section – in 2000. This became one of the world's most advanced testing facilities for transportation technology and safety research. More than 37,000 hours of research have been conducted on the road since its opening. In November 2017, VTTI launched the Virginia Smart Roads, a suite of test tracks that enable advanced-vehicle testing in an interconnected and comprehensive cross section of roadways: including highway, surface, rural, and unimproved. With over seven miles of roadbed, these research facilities feature weather-making, lighting capabilities, advanced sensors, traffic intersections, and varying pavement types, enabling VTTI to conduct vehicle evaluations and driver safety testing for its partners in a secure location. Collectively, the Virginia Smart Roads – which include a highly modular and reconfigurable surface street environment – are an ideal facility for advanced-vehicle testing. The Smart Roads play a critical role in the overall success of VTTI and its research mission: to save lives, time, and money, and protect the environment. The Virginia Smart Roads are FAA-approved testing facilities for unmanned aerial systems. The VTTI accomplishes its mission as follows: (1) We advance transportation through innovation ; (2) We are one the research institutes created by Virginia Tech to answer national challenges; (3) We affect technology and policy on national and international levels for drivers, passengers, and pedestrian safety as well as creating sustainable mobility and infrastructure. The slide below left shows the



The slide below left shows the

VTTI'S RESEARCH DIVISIONS

- Vehicle, Driver & System Safety** (Image: People in a car interior)
- Freight, Transit & Heavy Vehicle Safety** (Image: A white truck)
- Technology Implementation** (Image: A street scene with cars)
- Technology Development & Deployment** (Image: A control room with multiple monitors)
- Data & Analytics** (Image: A street scene with data overlays)



VTTI Research Divisions and the chart on the right show how research on % of veterans in various categories are affected in their mobility, independence and well-being as drivers/passengers or others. VTTI houses the Smart Roads from a “Control Room” through which on-site research is scheduled and overseen. Controllers monitor the Smart Roads from a computer-equipped control center. Researchers can observe traffic and driver performance via multiple video monitors and engineers can manipulate the lighting and the weather on the Highway section from the Smart Roads Control Room.

Continued from Page 5 "VTTI"

The following chart (L) show the risk categories verses "model" driving and demonstrates how many everyday behaviors are risky. The chart (R) and the two below them address some solutions to mitigate risky driving.

HOW RISKY IS...?

Category	OR	95% CI	Prevalence
Drugs/Alcohol	35.9	17.0/75.8	0.08%
Drowsiness/Fatigue	3.4	2.3/5.1	1.57%
Emotion (e.g., anger)	9.8	5.0/19.0	0.22%
Driver Performance Error	18.2	14.8/22.3	4.81%
Driver Judgment Error	11.1	9.0/13.8	4.22%
Distraction (Overall)	2.0	1.8/2.4	51.93%
In-vehicle radio	1.9	1.2/3.0	2.21%
Cell talk (handheld)	2.2	1.6/3.1	3.24%
Cell dial (handheld)	12.2	5.6/26.4	0.14%
Cell text (handheld)	6.1	4.5/8.2	1.91%
Interaction with passenger	1.4	1.1/1.8	14.58%
Child in rear seat	0.5	0.1/1.9	0.80%

- Risk established against "model" driving (i.e., alert, sober, attentive)
- Shows many everyday behaviors as risky
 - Some prevalence measures are very high

SOLUTION SPACE...

- Training and Education
 - Cognitive, Physical, or Driver (e.g., AARP)
- Driving Restrictions (self- or other-imposed, but mobility ↓)
 - Night
 - Distance from home / unknown destination
 - Unprotected turns across path (UTAP)
 - High speed roads
- Fitness to Drive Screening
 - F(x)al limitations → prescribed restrictions
 - E.g., contrast sensitivity or night vision problems → reduce/eliminate night driving
 - Cessation (last resort)
- Technology...



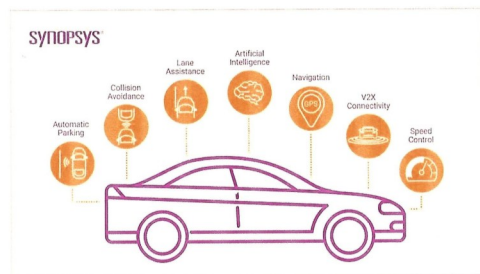
TECHNOLOGY SOLUTION SPACE

- Technology
 - Low tech assistive devices – SW grip, pedal extenders, etc.

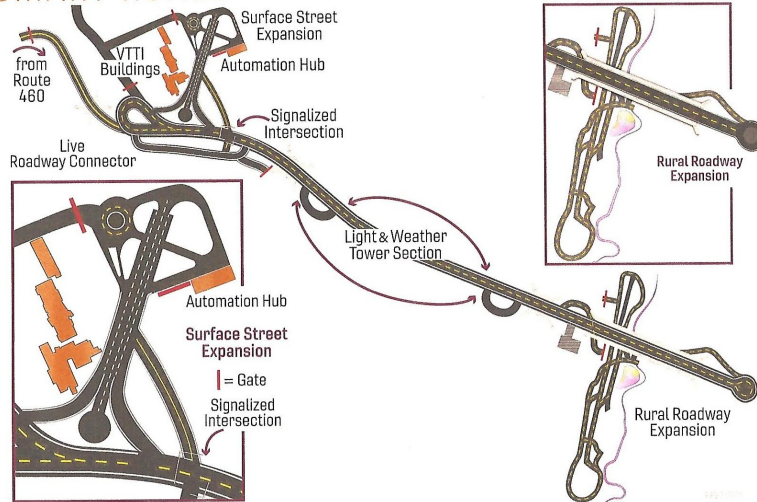


TECHNOLOGY SOLUTION SPACE

- Technology
 - Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) and Automated Driving Systems (ADS)



VIRGINIA SMART ROADS



VIRGINIA SMART ROADS

HIGHWAY SECTION The Highway section was the first installment of the Virginia Smart Roads and is outfitted with roadside equipment units and lighting and weather controls in addition to other features.

SURFACE STREET The Surface Street facilitates advanced/automated vehicle testing in highly reconfigurable environments such as suburban neighborhoods and city intersections.

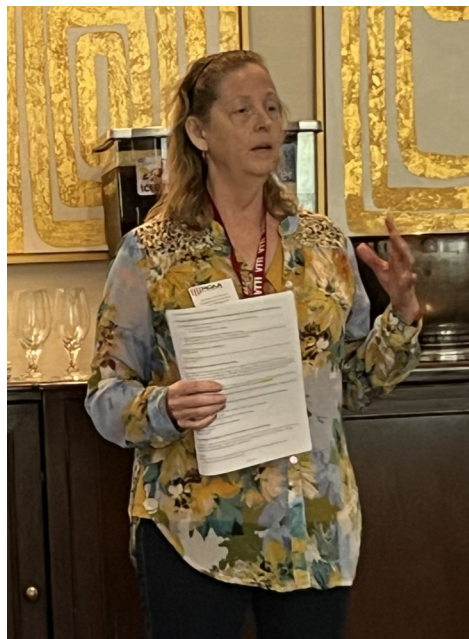
LIVE ROADWAY CONNECTOR The Live Roadway Connector is equipped with traffic control devices and protocols. This allows VTTI to seamlessly route test vehicles between its closed test tracks and a live traffic environment.

RURAL ROADWAY The first test bed of its kind, the Rural Roadway was designed to recreate the challenges of rural environments.

Continued from Page 6 "VTTI."

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Christine Link-Owens, Volunteer Coordination Group Manager, spoke to the group on how volunteer participants are critical and needed to the advancements in transportation research and how to become involved. All types of volunteers are needed pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists, cars, trucks, heavy vehicle drivers and more. They are looking for various experience levels, new drivers, experienced drivers, professional drivers, none or no longer driving and more. Interested persons should visit the VTTI website www.vtti.vt.edu for more information.



VTTI Current Research Study List 04/08/24

VIRGINIA TECH TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE

Volunteer Participants are Needed for Transportation Research

Volunteers are critical to advancements in transportation, and they're people just like you!

Users of all types of transportation are needed:

- pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists, cars, trucks, heavy vehicle drivers, and more
- experience levels: new driver, experienced, professional, none or no longer driving, and more

Please visit our website, www.vtti.vt.edu, for more information and a full list of all active studies. Still have questions? Contact us via phone, 540-231-1583, or email VTTIStudy@vti.vt.edu.

Sample List of Active Research Studies at VTTI:

➤ **Want to Drive a New Vehicle Instead of Your Own?**

VTTI is seeking individuals in the New River Valley and Roanoke Valley area to participate in a research study. This project will involve driving one of VTTI's research vehicles for four weeks. In addition, participants will be asked to complete surveys and drive the study vehicle along a planned route on I-81 several times during their participation.

To qualify, volunteers must have valid U.S. licenses, live, work, or drive in the New River Valley or Roanoke area, and be aged 18-25, 35-55 or 70+.

The research vehicles in this project are newer models with advanced technology and volunteers will be compensated up to \$450 for full participation. All data will be kept strictly confidential.

To learn more, please contact us at:

- Call or Text: 540-231-0258 (texting excludes T-Mobile users, calls are ok)
- email: horizonstudy@vti.vt.edu

Please reference the "Horizon Study" in the message, along with your name and contact information. All inquiries welcome! -IRB #20-309-

➤ **Experience Automation and a Rideshare Service on a Virginia Smart Roads' Track**

VTTI is seeking individuals ages 18 and up with smartphone app experience to participate in a research study lasting approximately 1.5 to 2 hours during daylight hours.

This study is interested in evaluating a rideshare app and the rideshare experience in automated or manually-driven vehicles. Participants will be asked to use a rideshare app using a cell phone provided by VTTI. Participants will order and engage in multiple rides on a VTTI closed-to-the-public test track, traveling at speeds up to 20mph. Other participants will participate in each test ride with you. Each ride will involve a new vehicle; some vehicles will be driven by a researcher, and some will be equipped with automated technology and an human driver. There is equipment that allows participants to stop the session at any time if they don't want to continue. After each ride, participants will be asked to complete a survey evaluating the rideshare app.

Upon completion of all on-road activities, participants will be asked to answer a brief questionnaire about their experience in the study. This project provides compensation of \$60 for full participation.

To learn more, call or text 540-231-0988 or VTTIStudy@vti.vt.edu and reference "the Carpool Study" in the message. -IRB #20-641- (texting excludes T-Mobile users, calls are ok)

Page 1 of 2

VTTI Current Research Study List 04/08/24

➤ **Drivers Aged 60 and up Needed for a Parking Study on a Virginia Smart Roads Track**

The Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI) is seeking individuals who:

- are aged 60 and up
- have a valid U.S. driver's license

-Total participation time is one visit, lasting about 1.5 hours.
-Drive a research vehicle, and perform various parking tasks, on a closed course at the VTTI facility.
-This project provides compensation of \$50 for full participation.

Your data will be kept strictly confidential.
-IRB #18-1098-

The Parking project recently wrapped up. Please reach out to us if you would like to be in future projects similar to this.

➤ **Smartphone Users Needed for Driving Study**

The Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI) is seeking individuals in the New River Valley and Roanoke Valley area to participate in a research study. This project will involve having your personal vehicle instrumented with sensors and cameras for 10 weeks. Participants will drive as they normally do. Participants will try cell phone technologies that aim to reduce distracted driving. In addition, participants will also complete surveys.

To qualify, volunteers must have valid U.S. licenses, live, work, or drive in the New River Valley or Roanoke area, sometimes use an iPhone or Android cell phone while driving and be [aged 18-24](http://www.vtti.vt.edu).

Full details of what is expected of participants will be provided before any appointments are scheduled and all questions will be answered.

Volunteers will be compensated \$300 for full participation. All data will be kept strictly confidential.

To learn more, please contact us:
Call/text: 540-231-0988 (texting excludes T-Mobile users, calls are ok)
Email: drivers@vti.vt.edu
**Be sure to provide your name and contact information.

Reference "Countermeasures" in your message.
All inquiries welcome!
-IRB #23-1136-

➤ **Truck Drivers Needed to Drive in a Simulator for a Research Study**

Do you hold a license with a Class A or B endorsement (CDL-A, CDL-B)? VTTI is looking for truck drivers to participate in a research study. Study involves 'driving' in a simulator at VTTI for two separate sessions. Compensation is \$500 for full participation. -IRB #21-827-

Interested?
Call or Text 540-231-0319 or cdl@vti.vt.edu and mention the "Automated Truck" study.
(texting excludes T-Mobile users, calls are ok)

Page 2 of 2

Overview

Virginia Tech Transportation Institute

For 35 years, VTTI has been conducting research to save lives, time, and money and protect the environment. In our world-class facilities, we investigate, invent, design, develop, refine and test transportation systems of the future. As one of seven premier research institutes created by Virginia Tech to answer national challenges, VTTI is continually advancing transportation through innovation and has affected public policy on national and international levels.

VTTI is known for robust transportation studies, both with public partners, as well as with private partners, original equipment manufacturers, and suppliers on proprietary research. Established in 1988 as the University Center for Transportation Research, VTTI is now the second largest university-level transportation institute in the U.S. and is home to the largest group of driving safety researchers in the world.

RESEARCH AREAS

The Institute is divided into nine divisions and centers that all strive to achieve a vision of ubiquitously safe and effective mobility through our mission and cover all aspects of transportation research.

- Division of Data & Analytics
- Division of Freight, Transit, & Heavy Vehicle Safety
- Division of Technology Development & Deployment
- Division of Technology Implementation
- Division of Vehicle, Driver, & System Safety
- Center for Injury Biomechanics
- Center for Sustainable & Resilient Infrastructure
- Center for Sustainable Mobility
- Global Center for Automotive Performance Simulations (affiliated company)

WORLD-CLASS FACILITIES AND CAPABILITIES

Our facilities provide a research- and automation-friendly environment that government agencies, original equipment manufacturers, and suppliers can use to test and certify their systems, providing a path from test-track to real-world deployment.

- Virginia Smart Roads test tracks providing highway, urban, and rural roadway environments, weather-making and lighting configurations
- VTTI-designed data acquisition systems, capturing rich data from crash vehicles and infrastructure at scale
- Labs for driver interface development, data reduction, lighting research, crash analysis, pavement research, and traffic simulation
- Fleet of instrumented vehicles that can be tailored to project specifications
- High-performance computing and data warehousing to unleash the potential of data analytics using cutting edge data processing pipelines
- GCAPS state of the art indoor test facility
- Engineering labs to rapidly prototype novel technologies for tests and evaluation

Our Impact

Virginia Tech Transportation Institute

NATURALISTIC DRIVING

VTTI is the pioneer of Naturalistic Driving Studies, a research method that involves equipping vehicles to record real-world driver behavior and performance. This data helps researchers and policymakers to address important issues related to driver risks such as distraction, fatigue, inattention, and impairment, as well as to develop crash countermeasures.

- 20+ years of experience in advanced analytics of driving data
- 90% of the world's naturalistic driving data is housed at VTTI
- Data encompasses light-vehicle and heavy-vehicle drivers as well as motorcyclists; from teens to aging drivers; U.S. and international studies

STUDENT PROGRAMS

We are educating the next generation of transportation leaders.

- VTTI's InternHUB gives students the opportunity to work on industry projects while completing their degrees.
- The Human Factors of Transportation Safety Graduate Certificate Program provides students with in-depth understanding and hands-on experience in transportation safety.

OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

VTTI is committed to collaborative efforts in all areas of transportation.

- Engage Virginia Tech faculty from 30 departments
- Produce more than 300 publications each year
- Translate our research into meaningful outreach efforts that impact all users of the road
- Provide webinars where researchers discuss their project results
- Provide opportunities for students and the community to visit our world-class facilities and learn from our researchers

To learn more about our work and get more involved, please contact us at:
• 540-231-1500 • inquiries@vti.vt.edu • www.vtti.vt.edu

Virginia Tech Transportation Institute
3500 Transportation Research Plaza
Blacksburg, VA 24061

Continued from Page 7- “VTTI”

Student Opportunities: At VTTI, we are training the next generation of transportation professionals. As experiential learning becomes a more formal part of the Virginia Tech experience, VTTI offers practical and applied opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to engage in real-world projects and leadership experiences with researchers and partner organizations. We also offer internships for students in various disciplines. Student engagement has been an important part of the VTTI culture since the very beginning. Over the past 35 years, thousands of students have benefited from their involvement with VTTI, through research experience, internships, and service learning.

VIRGINIA TECH
TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE

ABOUT RESEARCH FACILITIES OPPORTUNITIES PARTICIPATE DIRECTORY CONTACT GIVE

PARTICIPATE IN A STUDY

VTTI frequently seeks volunteers to participate in its various transportation-related research studies. Volunteers are selected based on whether they meet the requirements for the objectives specific to the study. All participation is voluntary, and participants may withdraw at any time.

WHAT DOES VOLUNTEERING INVOLVE?

VTTI conducts studies in various locations across the country, and most studies provide modest compensation. All participation is voluntary and participants may withdraw at any time.

To learn more about participation in our research studies, please call 540-231-1583 and leave a message or complete [this form](#).



Southwest Virginia Chapter members attending the membership meeting and listening to the presentation on the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI) i.e. **“The Smart Road.”**

Chapter President CAPT Gary Powers, USN (Ret) in center presenting the Southwest Virginia Chapter “Cup” to Christine Link-Owens on the left and Dr. Miguel A. Perez on the right in appreciation for the outstanding presentation on the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI)

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA CHAPTER FROM THE MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

Membership Emphasis

by Col Bob Brown, USA (Ret)

Tel (H) 540-904-2810, (C) 540-204-3624 or email: rfbrown68@gmail.com

In the last several years I have been able to attend two MOAA National training sessions where a key area of emphasis was membership growth. At National MOAA the desire continues to be increasing overall membership as well as encouraging members to upgrade from Basic to Premium or Life membership. Local chapters also have great potential for growth as only a small percentage of National members are currently affiliated with a local chapter. In our area alone there are over 400 retired, former officers, or surviving spouses who are MOAA National members but who are not in our chapter. I have been able to contact many of these when they notify National MOAA of a change of address and some have joined. But there is still much more we must do. To continue as an effective and influential organization we need to continue to grow our membership as older members are sometimes unable to be as active as they once were. Growth, to a great extent, depends on your personal contact with other active, retired, former officers, or surviving spouses you know in our community who may or may not be MOAA members or even know about MOAA. I have listed below some of the key reasons to join our chapter that you can share as you encounter potential members. Please let me know the name and email of potential members you identify so I can follow-up with them and share more detail regarding chapter membership. Don't forget to refer them to our chapter web site: moaaswva.org which contains excellent information about all the activities of our chapter.

Reasons to Join the Southwest Virginia Chapter of MOAA

1. **Make yourself heard.** We provide critical grassroots support for MOAA's national legislative agenda. With our benefits under attack, MOAA is in the fight to preserve them. Chapter members let their legislators know what's on their minds and open doors for MOAA's legislative team in Washington, D.C. In these difficult times, MOAA members need to stick together, and our local chapter is the best way we know to do that.
2. **Give back to the community.** Our chapter is an ambassador in our local community, supporting countless programs that make a difference in the lives of others. Our members continue their "officership" service and are giving back in the truest sense.
3. **Value added to chapter members' lives.** Our monthly chapter meetings offer interesting programs and opportunities to interact with civic, political, military, and business leaders on issues important to members.
4. **Networking with fellow officers.** Our chapter includes second-career members in the work force and retired service members who have contacts in our community that can be valuable to transitioning officers.
5. **Stay informed.** Chapter newsletters, websites, and meetings provide you with the latest information on local, state, and national issues and changes to military benefits.
6. **Influencing state legislation.** We are active in the Virginia Council of Chapters that unites chapters in the state. Through this Council we lobby for and help pass state level legislation that affects military members and their families.
7. **Camaraderie with a purpose.** Our chapter is composed of active duty, former, and retired officers from every branch of service, including National Guard and Reserve, as well as surviving spouses. The camaraderie we share not only gives each of us a chance to connect with other members with similar backgrounds and interest, but to also develop close and lasting friendships.

Check out our website at www.moaaswvc.org.

WELCOME

David C MacNamee, LTC USAF (Ret). I moved to Salem 4 months ago after living on the beach in Clearwater Florida for 30 years. My niece is the southernmost of my relatives, so she has the honor. I grew up in Milford, CT and graduated from Salem College in WV with a BA in English in 1967, faced the draft and joined the Air Force. Commissioned through OTS and then



Navigator School at Mather AFB, CA. Graduated from there and almost became an F-4 back seater but ended up in KC-135 tankers instead. I spent the next few years navigating around the world using 3-star fixes and a lot of guessing. While TDY at U-Tapao, Thailand, I received orders to the 361st Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron in Vietnam. After I finished all the survival schools, I arrived at Tan Son Nhut AB to find the squadron had moved to Nakhon Phanom RTAB (or Naked Fanny), so back to Thailand where I and flew 127 combat missions over Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia in planes older than I. I was awarded the DFC. Now that I was a rather good navigator, off to Defense Information School I went to become a public information officer. Fortunately, I spent all my time as a PIO at command level: 8th Air Force HQ, Strategic Air Command HQ and U.S. Air Forces in Europe HQ in Germany. I guess the Air Force didn't

want me too close to the public. Loaned out to DoD, my last assignment was with the Armed Forces Radio and Television Service in Alexandria, VA. While there I visited Saudi Arabia during Desert Shield and with the help of local engineers set up radio service for the U.S. forces in the country. I retired in 1993 as a Lieutenant Colonel and was awarded the Defense Superior Service Medal. After retiring, I got a job with a defense contractor doing radio and TV spots for AFRTS. After a couple of years in Miami, FL we moved to Clearwater Beach, FL and I tried again to retire but ended up as deputy director of emergency management for Pinellas County. I learned a lot and, after turning 70 decided 12-hour shifts were no longer my forte. I now live in Salem with Susanne, my wife of 56 years and my cat Thomas O'Malley (Toby) and fiddle with my 1955 MG TF 1500.

WELCOME



Chris Obenshain was born in Virginia and lives in Blacksburg. Chris graduated from Cave Spring High School. He served in the U.S. Army Reserve, first as an enlisted soldier, and then as a Major in the U.S. Army Reserve JAG Corps. He was recently promoted to LTCOL. Chris earned a B.A. in political science from Bridgewater College in 2000 and a J.D. from the University of Virginia School of Law in 2006. His professional experience includes working as an attorney. Chris Obenshain (R) is a member of the Virginia House of Delegates, representing District 41. He assumed office on January 10, 2024. His current term ends on January 14, 2026. He is the son of current long time SWVA MOAA member, Joe Obenshain.

WELCOME



Garrett "Gary" Sayre Joined the Navy on the delayed entry program in December of 1975 and became a naval aviation crash rescue firefighter. He was a 20 year old E-5 with 3 years of active duty When he was accepted into aviation officer candidate school in Pensacola. He was offered both an opportunity to be a naval flight officer and also to be a naval intelligence officer. This was not an easy decision. He became a naval intelligence officer and was assigned to VF-84. Due to injuries he was transferred to the replacement air group VF 171 and also spent time at the Fighter Wing. He had intended to make the Navy a career, but injuries to his spine precluded this. He got out as an O-3 at age 25 after an additional five years of service as a commissioned officer. He has masters degrees in English, Humanities, and Criminal Justice. He writes articles for Naval Intelligence and for Wings of Gold. He is happy to be in the MOAA with all the great people, events, and opportunities to do good for the country.

MOAA SWVC JROTC-ROTC-ARCHER-AWARD CEREMONIES 2024

Each year the Southwest Virginia Chapter solicits nominations for the MOAA JROTC/ROTC Medal Awards and the Major James Milton Archer, Jr. USA Award from 15 local high school JROTC units, 3 ROTC units, 3 CAP units and 1 Sea Cadet unit. Chapter Awards Chair LTC Robert Habermann prepares the award packages and presentation folders, forwards them to the respective school and arranges for chapter members to attend the awards ceremonies and present the awards to the recipients.



SWVC Chapter President CAPT Gary Powers, USN (Ret) presents the Major James Milton Archer, Jr., USA Award to CMSGT Blake R. Shaner of the Roanoke Composite Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol at the Blue Ridge Autism and Achievement Center on 1 April 2024.

SWVC Chapter President CAPT Gary Powers, USN (Ret) with the Major James Milton Archer, Jr., USA Award recipient CMSGT Blake R. Shaner of the Roanoke Composite Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol and his mother Mrs. Kelly Shaner at the Blue Ridge Autism and Achievement Center on 1 April 2024.



On 8 May 2024 at the Christiansburg High School Awards ceremony Mr. Paul Litteau, Captain, USAF (Former) representing the Southwest Virginia Chapter presented the MOAA JROTC Medal Award to Cadet 1LT Kraven L. Stever and the MAJ James Milton Archer, Jr., USA Award to Cadet CPT Kaylee O. Luu. Christiansburg High School is a NDCC (National Defense Cadet Corps) organization headed by LTC Curtis Armstrong, USA (Ret)

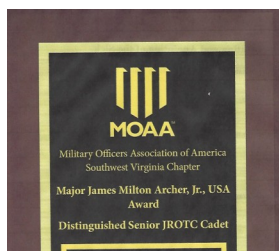
MOAA SWVC JROTC-ROTC-ARCHER-AWARD CEREMONIES 2024

On 2 May 2024, CDR Lee Ensley, USN (Ret) past president and representing the Southwest Virginia Chapter of MOAA attended the Patrick Henry High School annual Air Force JROTC awards ceremony. Several hundred parents, teachers, and friends were in attendance. The Southwest Virginia Chapter of MOAA presented two awards.



CDR Lee Ensley, USN (Ret) presents the Southwest Virginia Chapter Major James Milton Archer, Jr. USA Award to Distinguished Senior Air Force JROTC Cadet LTC Eion McKernan. The award recognizes a distinguished cadet completing their senior year of high school and who has demonstrated superior leadership during their time in the program. The award includes an 8”x 10” walnut plaque, a \$50 gift certificate and certificate folder. Upon graduation, Cadet McKernan will be enlisting in the Navy’s nuclear submarine program.

CDR Lee Ensley, USN (Ret) presents the MOAA JROTC Medal Award to Cadet Major Erick Jimenez-Quiroz. This award is presented to recognize an outstanding JROTC cadet who shows exceptional potential for military leadership and has demonstrated outstanding academic achievement. The award consists of a red, white, and blue ribbon with a bronze disc pendant, and a presentation certificate with folder.



VIRGINIA TECH CORPS OF CADETS MILITARY AWARDS CEREMONY

On Thursday 18 April 2024 Southwest Virginia Chapter members attended the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets Academic Year 2023-2024 Military Awards Ceremony. Numerous Service Awards, VPI Awards, Joint Awards, Olmsted Foundation Scholar Awards, University Honors and Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets Awards were presented to selected Cadets in front of the entire Corps of Cadets. The Southwest Virginia Chapter was honored to participate in the awarding of the MOAA ROTC Medal Awards and the Southwest Virginia Chapter Leadership Awards.



The Military Officers Association (MOAA) Medal Awards were presented to (L to R), Junior Navy Cadet Cade Cesmat, Junior Army Cadet Shannon Hutchens and Senior Air Force Cadet Carter Kinkead by chapter member COL Thomas Dalzell, USMC (Ret) at the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets Military Awards Ceremony 18 April 2024.

The Southwest Virginia Chapter General William B. Rosson Leadership Award was presented to (R), Senior Navy Cadet Branden M. Nauman and the Major General Lloyd B. Ramsey Leadership Award was presented to Senior Navy Cadet Sarthak Gupta by chapter member COL Thomas Dalzell, USMC (Ret) at the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets Military Awards Ceremony 18 April 2024.



The US Army Outstanding Ranger Award was presented to Senior Army Cadet John Maddock by (R) Chapter Member Major General Jim Archer, USA (Ret) and (L) US Army COL James Cogbill.

Chapter member COL Donald Sowder USA (Ret) presents the MOAA Outstanding Service Award to MGEN Randal Fullhart USAF, (Ret) for his unfailing support of MOAA and the Southwest Virginia Chapter. LTC David King, USA (Ret) looks on during the presentation.

16 MAY 2024 MEMBERSHIP BBQ PICNIC MEETING

On Thursday 16 May 2024 the Southwest Virginia Chapter gathered at the American Legion Post 3 shelter facility in Salem, Virginia for a BBQ picnic catered by Mission BBQ in Roanoke. As part of the chapter emphasis on Legislative Action, invitations were sent to local and state legislators to meet with them in a relaxing and social setting and to let them know where we stand on the issues affecting the military and veterans. Each representative was given time to address the members on what they are doing to further veterans goals and objectives. Chapter President CAPT Gary Powers, USN (Ret) was Master of Ceremonies and welcomed all to the gathering and introduced all guests present. Musical entertainment was provided by Mr. Marc Baskind, a local musician raised in the heart of the Mississippi Delta (Greenville) and influenced by jazz, blues, and the classics. Marc plays some country but his forte is variety: Billy Joel, James Taylor, oldies, etc.



L to R: Virginia Delegate Joseph McNamara; Ms. Kaitlyn Binck, Representative for US Congressman Morgan Griffith; Jonathan Hartsock, Director of Special Projects for US Congressman Ben Cline; Virginia Delegate Christopher Obenshain; Virginia Senator David Sutterlein; Kendall L. Bailey, Chief of Staff for Virginia Senator Christopher Head. Attending but not pictured was Mr. Dominique Hardin, Representative for Virginia Delegate Sam Rasoul)



Chapter President CAPT Gary Powers, USN (Ret) welcomes members and guests to the chapter membership meeting and BBQ picnic



Musician Marc Baskind entertains guests at the 16 May 2024 membership BBQ picnic.

Continued from Page 13 "Chapter BBQ Picnic"



Virginia Delegate Joseph McNamara

Virginia Delegate Christopher Obenshain and CAPT Gary Powers

Chapter Secretary LTC Steve Jamison, USA (Ret) on Mess Duty.

Cont'd. on Page 15 "Chapter BBQ Picnic"

Continued from Page 14 "Chapter BBQ Picnic"



Nancy and Gary Powers



Tom Dalzell and Mary Lou Summers



Bob and Linda Habermann



Peggy and Larry Johnson

New DoD Malpractice Rule Could Mean More Money for Service Members, Vets

MAY 15, 2024 *Editor's note: This article by Patricia Kime originally appeared on [Military.com](https://www.military.com), a leading source of news for the military and veteran community.*



The Pentagon is tweaking its formula for calculating payments to U.S. service members for medical malpractice claims, a move that could put more money in the pockets of affected troops and veterans. The Defense Department currently reduces the amount it pays for medical malpractice settlements by the amount of DoD pay or Department of Veterans Affairs disability compensation the service member receives. The practice is known as an offset. Under the new rule, the offset would apply only to the estimated amount of a service member's lost wages or future income and not to the amount awarded for other damages such as pain and suffering, disfigurement or other harms.

[RELATED: [TRICARE Lowers Age for Colon Cancer Screenings to 45](#)]

Pentagon officials said in the final rule that, until now, claimants who had little or no economic damages would be unable to recover any money if the pay or disability compensation they receive exceeds the total amount of potential and noneconomic damages. Now, affected troops will be able to completely recover noneconomic damages. "The amendments to the regulation will allow some service members to receive compensation for noneconomic damages that they would not have been able to receive under the current regulation," DoD officials wrote in the rule. "The amendments afford some service members additional compensation." In October, the Pentagon [raised the amount of money troops could receive](#) for noneconomic damages from \$600,000 to \$750,000. Economic damages, such as loss of wages as a result of malpractice, remain uncapped. According to the Defense Department, offsets were applied to just four claims that were decided in 2021 and 2022. (The DoD based its rule only on the information available early in the creation of the program.) In half of the claims, the economic damages were larger than the offsets so the new rule would not have changed the payout. But it would have affected the remaining two, with \$200,000 more being allotted in one case and \$100,000 more to the other.

[RELATED: [DoD's New Electronic Health Records System Gets Low Scores From Providers](#)]

In October, Pentagon spokesman Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder said that currently pending claims affected by the rule will be adjudicated once the rule is published. Until 2021, service members were not allowed to file claims for medical malpractice or sue the Defense Department over injuries or illnesses that occur while on active duty. Troops still aren't allowed to file lawsuits over medical malpractice under the Feres Doctrine, set by a 1950 Supreme Court decision that protected the military and its officials from liability for combat-related injuries, although family members may file claims and lawsuits in civil court under the Federal Tort Claims Act. Legislation passed in 2019 allowed service members to file claims for injuries over malpractice at military treatment facilities. Army Master Sgt. Richard Stayskal, for whom the legislation was named, was denied the claim he filed against Womack Army Medical Center at Fort Liberty, North Carolina -- then Fort Bragg -- which did not follow up on a suspicious lump. He was later diagnosed with terminal lung cancer.

[RELATED: [Military Pharmacies Resume Regular Operations After Cyberattack](#)]

Stayskal and his wife filed claims for \$20 million for pain and suffering. His subsequent appeal also was denied. His attorney, Natalie Khawam of Whistleblower Law Firm in Tampa, said Thursday that her client was told that the Army had "breached standard of care" but did not commit malpractice. Stayskal currently has no recourse to appeal his ruling. Rep. Darrell Issa, R-Calif., introduced a bill last year that would allow service members to take their medical malpractice claims to federal court. The bill has 27 sponsors but has not been considered by the House Judiciary Committee. "People have the right to sue if they are victims of malpractice, except for service members. It's time to stop treating them like second-class citizens. It's got to stop," Khawam said during an interview Thursday.

Comprehensive VA Health Care, Benefits Bill Finally Introduced in House

By Rene' Compos 14 May 2024

A bipartisan package of veterans legislation introduced May 14 in the House will expand VA assisted living programs, improve caregiver support, remove unfair penalties from surviving spouses, and address a host of other MOAA legislative priorities. The Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act (H.R. 8371) is the result of months of negotiations and engagement with House and Senate Veterans' Committee leadership and staff by MOAA and other veterans organizations, which have worked nonstop to keep pressure on lawmakers to ensure the package becomes law.

[TAKE ACTION: [Support This Wide-Ranging Plan to Improve Veterans' Care](#)]

The bill "will improve VA's ability to deliver critical benefits and services more expeditiously and effectively," MOAA President and CEO Lt. Gen. Brian T. Kelly, USAF (Ret), said. "We appreciate the leadership and engagement of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees to get this important legislation on a path to becoming law, and MOAA urges House and Senate leaders to expedite passage. Doing so conveys a strong message of support and solidarity to our veterans, servicemembers, retirees, surviving family members and caregivers in and out of uniform." Both House and Senate lawmakers have been part of the negotiations; MOAA recognizes the difficulty inherent in a bipartisan, bicameral agreement. This legislation reflects congressional intent to represent in the broadest way possible the interests of the entire veteran community.

[RELATED: [State of VA Health Care: Reports Highlight Historic Firsts](#)]

Among the MOAA-supported provisions in the omnibus bill:

- The Expanding Veterans' Options for Long Term Care Act (H.R. 1815/S. 495) would allow the VA to carry out a pilot program to provide assisted living services to eligible veterans.
- The Elizabeth Dole Home and Community Based Services for Veterans and Caregivers Act (H.R. 542/S. 141) would improve VA home- and community-based services for veterans, as well as support to family caregivers.
- The Veteran Caregiver Application and Appeals Reform (CARE) Act (H.R. 4518/S. 1792) would modify the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) to improve transparency and access to services for caregivers of veterans, and aid in navigating Veterans Health Administration (VHA) health care programs and services.
- The Improving Whole Health for Veterans with Chronic Conditions Act (H.R. 4150/S. 1954) would improve health care services, including dental care for veterans with heart disease.
- The Love Lives On Act (H.R. 3651/S. 1266) would reverse penalties faced by surviving military spouses who remarry prior to age 55.

[RELATED: [What Does the Largest VA Budget Request Ever REALLY Mean for Veterans?](#)]

MOAA commends lawmakers for including the above provisions, but the 315-page legislation goes further, addressing other important health care and benefit programs:

- Improvements to mental health, rehabilitation, and suicide prevention programs.
- Authorities to flexibly compensate medical staff.
- Expansion of outreach and promotion of basic eligibility and benefits information to veterans.
- Expansion of mobile mammography services.
- Educational and financial protections for veterans.
- Enforcement improvements to protect reemployment rights of armed forces members.
- Improvements to the disability claims and examination processes.
- Oversight of VA's electronic health record modernization program.
- Authorization of grants and services to support the homeless and tribal

Make Your Voice Heard. While the introduction of this legislation represents a pivotal point in MOAA's work to improve the lives of veterans and their families, there is more work to be done and our members can help. Grassroots involvement will be critical as MOAA works to keep this legislation at the top of lawmakers' to-do lists. Click here to contact your legislators to ask them to pass the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act.

MOAA's Work Continues to Preserve Earned Burial Benefits

Many military retirees face a significant threat to their eligibility for interment with military honors at Arlington National Cemetery – and legislation is required for a long-term solution. MOAA and others in our veteran and military advocacy community have long supported H.R. 1413, the Expanding America's National Cemetery Act. This election year, your messages to lawmakers about this legislation matter more than ever.++

[TAKE ACTION: [Ask Your House Member to Support the Expanding America's National Cemetery Act](#)]

Why This Bill Matters The proposed federal rule for Arlington National Cemetery eligibility reduction still looms, and defense officials are looking for options to prevent a reduction in benefits directed by Congress in the FY 2019 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The reduction would be felt by many 20-year retirees, women veterans whose service came before many roles were open to all, and the most troubling of the exclusions – older veterans with plans in place for Arlington who could face agonizing and unexpected decisions in the coming months or years. The proposed criteria focus on maintaining eligibility for those who received close-combat awards, limiting interment to those with a Purple Heart or Silver Star and above. Not only is the criteria unfair to veterans who served bravely in positions where close combat was not part of their duty, there is no “grandfathering” statute to these proposals: Veterans of World War II, Korea, and Vietnam eras who have planned on this benefit for decades would be subject to the new criteria.

[HEAR FROM THESE VETERANS: [Closing the Gates? Why Congress Must Act on Arlington National Cemetery](#)]

The Expanding America's National Cemetery Act – championed by Rep. Lisa McClain (R-Mich.) and Rep. Chrissy Houlahan (D-Pa.), both members of the House Armed Services Committee – offers a long-term solution, authorizing DoD and the VA to transform an existing VA-run national cemetery into the next location that will afford interment with equivalent military honors as Arlington National Cemetery reaches capacity. This expansion would eliminate the need for reduced eligibility. A Senate companion bill is required; outreach to your senators could make the difference by making this legislation bicameral and bipartisan. Only 86 House members had co-sponsored the bill as of May 21. If your representative is not yet in support, please reach out via our Legislative Action Center or call their local office and ask them to co-sponsor H.R. 1413. They will not know what you need if you don't ask this election year.

[RELATED: [Air Force Colonel's Family Reacts After She's Denied Burial at Arlington National Cemetery](#)]

How You Can Make a Difference Just as the Grand Army of the Republic – an association of Civil War veterans – championed the cause of Decoration Day, MOAA continues its work alongside The Military Coalition as Memorial Day approaches in the fight to preserve honors that matter intensely to those who serve and have served, their families, and their survivors. You can support these efforts by taking one or more of the steps below to amplify MOAA's request for lawmakers to co-sponsor this bill:

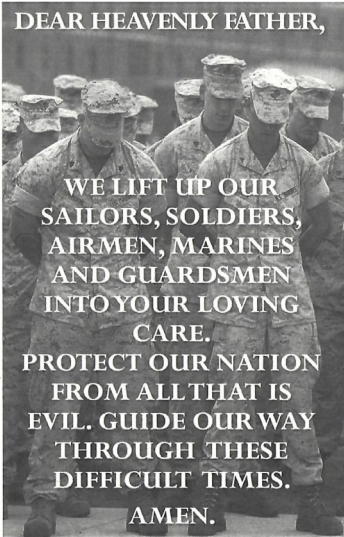
- Download the information paper here and share it with your elected officials.
- Activate your network to write and call your representatives and ask them to co-sponsor H.R. 1413. Ask your senators to introduce a Senate version of the same legislation. Friends, family members, and others in your network can call 866-272-MOAA (6622) – a toll-free line to the U.S. Capitol switchboard – to connect with their legislators' offices.
- Share this link to MOAA's Legislative Action Center on social media. It will allow all who see it to generate a message to their lawmakers in support of the bill.
- Ask other local military and veterans service organizations, such as local posts, to call and engage on this issue.

[THE FINAL CHAPTER: [Preparing for a Military Sponsor's Death, and What to Do When It Happens](#)] Unsure what to say to your network, or to your legislators? Consider these talking points: (1) Long-Term Fix Needed: No matter the eligibility changes, Arlington National Cemetery eventually will run out of room. An enduring solution is required to maintain an equivalent level of benefits. (2) Partnership Makes Sense: The VA runs 155 national cemeteries. DoD runs only Arlington and the United States Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery. While DoD's primary focus for resources is national security, partnering with the VA will provide an integrative approach. (3) Honoring Service: Put simply, transforming a VA national cemetery to afford military honors would sustain service-earned benefits.

[Make your voice heard](#) this Memorial Day and join the grassroots effort to protect these earned honors. You can follow updates on this and other MOAA advocacy campaigns at [MOAA's Advocacy News page](#).

MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY - ROANOKE

On Monday 27 May 2024 the Roanoke Valley Veterans Council conducted a Memorial Day Ceremony at 9:30 AM at the Roanoke War Memorial in Freedom Plaza, Roanoke, Virginia. Due to inclement weather the ceremony was moved into the sanctuary of Green Memorial Methodist Church. Several Southwest Virginia Chapter members were in attendance.



The Roanoke Valley Veterans Council



Roanoke Valley War Memorial dedicated to the memory of WWI, WWII, Korea and Vietnam War Dead. Freedom Plaza, Downtown Roanoke, Virginia

Memorial Day Ceremony



The Roanoke Valley Veterans Council was founded in 1962 to bring together area veterans from all veterans service and military service organizations to serve a common purpose...to better the lives of our veterans causes, through the recognition of veterans needs individually and in groups and to maintain and enhance public awareness and knowledge of veterans contributions to our Nation, to the Commonwealth of Virginia, to their communities and their families.

The Roanoke Valley Veterans Council proudly represents Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, The 40th, 80th & 29th Division Association, Fleet Reserve Association, Association of the United States Army, AMVETS, American Ex-POWs, Vietnam Veterans of America, Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, Air Force Association, Military Officers Association of America, Reserve Officers Association, Marine Corps League, Military Order of the Purple Heart, 82nd Airborne Association, WAVE, Military Order of the World Wars, and Career Armed Forces Reserve Association.

Memorial Day Ceremony

Monday, May 27, 2024 | 9:30 am

Roanoke War Memorial | Freedom Plaza
Roanoke, Virginia

If inclement weather, we'll move to Green Memorial Sanctuary

- Master of Ceremonies..... President Jay Kincanon
- Posting of Colors..... Honor Guard VFW Post 1264
- National Anthem..... Andre Peery
Vice Commander American Legion, Post 111
- Invocation..... Reverend Morris Bennett
Andrew Chapel UMC
- Introduction of Speaker..... President Jay Kincanon
- Memorial Day Address..... Marion Noel
World War II Veteran, US Navy
- Placing of the Memorial Day Wreath..... President Jay Kincanon
Marion Noel, World War II Veteran
The wreath is graciously donated by George's Florist
- Amazing Grace..... Brandon Davis, BSGpiper
- Taps..... Honor Guard Bugler VFW Post 1264
- Prayer for Peace..... Reverend Morris Bennett
- Retirement of Colors..... Honor Guard VFW Post 1264
- Benediction..... Reverend Morris Bennett
- Close of Ceremonies..... President Jay Kincanon

Our prayer and sincerest thanks go out to all our military forces stationed around the world.

The President of the Roanoke Valley Veterans Council Mr. Jay Kincanon was the Master of Ceremonies and welcomed all present and recognized local dignitaries including Roanoke Mayor Sherman Lee, Roanoke City Vice Mayor Mr. Joseph L. Cobb and Virginia State Senator, District 19, Senator David Suetterlein. The National Anthem was sung by Mr. Andre Peery, Vice Commander American Legion Post 111. The invocation was given by the Reverend Morris Bennett, Andrew Chapel UMC. Mr. Kincanon introduced the speaker Mr. Marion Noel a WWII Navy Veteran who was a Motor Machinist Mate 3rd Class aboard LST 779 on D-Day plus 1 at Iwo Jima unloading Marine Corps artillery pieces at the base of Mont Suribachi, Iwo Jima. Taps and the Honor Guard were members of the VFW Post 1264. **After the formal ceremony the Memorial Wreath was placed outside at the Wall of Honor, Roanoke War Memorial, Freedom Plaza.**

Marion Noel related several stories about his time aboard LST 779. After making several trips to unload material on Iwo Jima, and after the first flag raising on Mt. Suribachi, the word went out to see if there was a larger American flag that could be found. It seemed that while at Pearl Harbor the LST 779 communication officer somehow came up with a large American flag. That flag went ashore and was the flag pictured in the iconic photograph taken by photographer Joseph Rosenthal. After the Iwo Jima invasion LST 779 participated in the battle of Okinawa and was in the Tokyo Bay when the Japanese Instrument of Surrender was signed on the USS Missouri on 2 September 1945.



Marion Noel and Jay Kincanon presenting the Memorial Wreath



Larry Johnson, COL Thomas Dalzell, Mr. Gary Duerk and Mr. Jay Kincanon with the Memorial Wreath.

MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY - SW VIRGINIA VETERANS CEMETERY

On Monday 27 May 2024 the SW Virginia Veterans Day Cemetery in Dublin, Virginia held its annual Memorial Day Ceremony. The ceremony began promptly at 1100 hours with the chiming of the carillon bell tower and the playing of the ceremonial bagpipes by Andrew Shields Meeks, Bagpiper. The Civil Air Patrol, Roanoke Composite Squadron presented the Colors, the 29th Division Virginia Army National Guard Normandy Brass Bands played the National Anthem, and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by The SW Virginia Veterans Cemetery Volunteers. The Southwest Virginia Chapter of the Military Officers Association President, CAPT Gary Powers, USN (Ret) served as Master of Ceremonies.

Planning of the event was made possible by the SW Virginia Cemetery Volunteers, Southwest Virginia Chapter Surviving Spouse Representative Ms. Mary Lou Summers and the SW Virginia Veterans Cemetery Director, Ms. Judy Foster. Despite the threat of rain, the event was well attended with numerous distinguished guests, including; representatives from US Congressman Morgan Griffiths office and Senator Travis Hackworth; VA Delegate Jason Ballard; VA Delegate Chris Obenshain; Mayors of Christiansburg, Dublin, Pearisburg, Radford and Wytheville; and the Executive Director of Regional Veterans Affairs, Bruce Voigt.

The guest speaker for the ceremony was Vice Admiral Evan M. Chanik, USN (Ret). Prior to his retirement, Vice Admiral Chanik had a distinguished 35-year career whose early assignments included flying the F-14 "Tomcat" and deploying with the USS Enterprise. He attended the Naval Fighter Weapons School "TOPGUN" (call sign "Streak") and then served as an instructor in graduate level tactics at TOPGUN. His career took him through multiple Western Pacific and Indian Ocean deployments before his assignment to VF-84 at Naval Air Station Oceana in Virginia Beach, culminating as Commanding Officer of VF-84 during Operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm, and Provide Comfort. He later served as the Executive Officer of the USS Carl Vinson, Commanding Officer of the USS Camden, and Commanding Officer of the USS Enterprise.

Vice Admiral Chanik's remarks emphasized the origin and true meaning of Memorial Day and following his remarks, a moment of silence honored Gold Star Families. Vice Admiral Chanik then led the procession and placing of ceremonial red, white and blue wreaths with the visiting dignitaries following. Wreaths representing the 6 branches of the military were also placed. A 21-gun rifle salute was presented by the American Legion Post 29 followed by the playing of taps by the 29th Division Bugler. Bagpiper, Andrew Shields Meeks closed the ceremony with 'Amazing Grace'. Families and guests were invited to visit sites throughout the cemetery.



Chapter President CAPT Gary Powers, USN (Ret) poses with keynote speaker, Vice Admiral Evan M. Chanik, USN (Ret).



Shown placing the Memorial Wreaths are L to R: LTCOL Jeff Doran, USMC (Ret), Chapter President CAPT Gary Powers USN, (Ret) and Cadet Doug Kabler, Civil Air Patrol Composite Squadron, Roanoke, VA

MOAA'S LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR THE 118TH CONGRESS

As the legislative slate is wiped clean for the 118th Congress, grassroots support becomes even more vital to achieving MOAA's advocacy objectives. MOAA needs your help to keep momentum for existing priorities such as the Major Richard Star Act, which would benefit tens of thousands of combat-injured veterans and had the support of two-thirds of Congress at the end of last session. We also need your work on behalf of new objectives and emergent issues, often via immediate action to keep up with the stop-and-go pace of legislation. To keep connected, ensure you are signed up for [The MOAA Newsletter](#) and [register as an advocate](#) at our Legislative Action Center.

Here is a look at MOAA's priorities, in support of the 50th anniversary of our all-volunteer force and to address the challenges facing our uniformed community. Note: Our advocacy team remains active on many other issues not listed here; our priorities will be shaped throughout the year depending on concurrent successes or emerging issues that warrant an all-hands approach. Additionally, we share many interests with The Military Coalition and other stakeholder groups, and leverage those relationships to expand our reach on Capitol Hill.

- Compensation and Service-Earned Benefits
- Military Housing
- Health Care for Currently Serving and Retirees
- Health Care and Benefits for Veterans
- Service Families
- Survivors
- Guard and Reserve

As protecting health care and service-earned benefits is a challenge, MOAA will press forward to engage Congress to shape outcomes in these vital areas. There are steep hills before us. Our nation has a rising debt of more than \$30 trillion and a deficit of more than \$3 trillion. Because of this, MOAA anticipates robust attempts to control federal budgets, reduce or eliminate unprogrammed expenditures, and reduce entitlements. MOAA needs you to be ready to reach out to your legislators and keep that engagement going as necessary to make sure your voice is heard. **Details at <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2024-news-articles/advocacy/tricare-for-life,-star-act,-housing-help-will-anchor-moaas-spring-advocacy-push/>**

VIRGINIA COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS/JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL 2024 INITIATIVES (Adopted at the September 20 and December 14, 2023 JLC meetings)

- JLC 2024-01 Expand Tax Relief for Surviving Spouses of Military Services Members "Killed in Action" to also include "Died on Active Duty".
- JLC 2024-02 Stop Unscrupulous Firms from Exploiting Veterans
- JLC 2024-03 Virginia National Guard Tuition Assistance Waiver
- JLC 2024-04 Enhanced Emergency Response Medical Protections

A summary of the approved 2024 JLC Initiatives Policy papers for each initiative can be accessed on the JLC webpage at: <https://www.dvs.virginia.gov/dvs/joint-leadership-council-veterans-service-organizations-2>



MOAA Charities

Chapter members are encouraged to consider the following MOAA Charities in your planned giving.

- Support MOAA Charities by shopping with Amazon Smile
- Consider a bequest to The MOAA Foundation
- Consider a bequest to the MOAA Scholarship Fund
- Contributing cash and securities to MOAA Charities
- Setting up a Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA)
- Establishing a Designated Scholarship
- How Charitable Gift Annuities (CGAs) can provide income for life
- Donating via an IRA Charitable Rollover/Qualified Charitable Distribution

DO YOU KNOW?

Did you know that the Southwest Virginia Chapter of MOAA undertakes annual MOAA Medal awards presented to distinguished JROTC Cadets/Midshipmen in 14 area high schools and the four ROTC Cadets/Midshipmen at Virginia Tech and Radford University? Did you know that these awards recognize the recipient's academic, community service and leadership qualities that demonstrate exceptional potential for leadership while a member of their respective JROTC/ ROTC Programs? These JROTC/ ROTC awards consist of a MOAA Medal Award and an appropriate Award Certificate. The chapter bears the cost of the MOAA Medal Awards, presentation folders and mailing costs.

Did you also know that the Southwest Virginia Chapter of MOAA has established two Leadership Awards presented to ROTC Cadets/Midshipmen at Virginia Tech and Radford University during each academic year? Recipients are to be juniors or who will be starting their final year in the coming fall of the academic year. The Leadership Awards were established to recognize the recipient's academic, community service and leadership qualities that demonstrate exceptional potential for military leadership while a member of the Virginia Tech and Radford University ROTC Programs. The two Leadership Awards each carry a \$500 monetary award and an appropriate Award Certificate. The chapter bears the cost of the two Leadership Awards, presentation folders and the two \$500 monetary awards.

The South West Virginia Chapter of MOAA was a strong supporter of the Military Family Support Center. However, the Military Family Support Center has gone out of operation. The Southwest Virginia Chapter is looking into new options to restart the mission to identify and provide for the morale, welfare, and informational needs of military families (of all branches and components) who reside outside of the established support networks. During 2024 the chapter signed a partnership agreement with Vettes For Vets (VFF) to be able to provide food assistance in the form of credit cards to needy military families.

The South West Virginia Chapter of MOAA also supports the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Dublin, Virginia each year providing a MOAA Mobile Vehicle and with the Christmas Wreath Laying Program providing and placing wreaths on veterans' grave sites. The Chapter funded and dedicated a "Memorial Bench" at the Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Dublin, Virginia in honor of LTC James "Pat" Green, USA (Ret) who was the person most responsible for getting the cemetery located at Dublin, Virginia.

These programs are extremely important for the SWVC to continue as the community face of the Military Officers Association of America, to be an advocate for a strong national defense, to be an influential provider and supporter of programs, benefits and services for our military community, and to be a source of social fellowship for our members. The chapter has no regular financial stream except for chapter dues or donations. During the coming year we will be asking for your personal and financial support of our outreach programs and our monthly membership meetings.



Chapter Website Up and Running

The Southwest Virginia Chapter website is now up and running. To access the site go to moaaswva.org. The website is one of the primary means to keep in touch with the current membership, connect with potential members and keep members advised on current issues of importance to the active duty, retired and former military, their spouse and family. The Chapter also has a Facebook page at MOAASWVA

WANT TO KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON AT MOAA?

- Legislative Accomplishments?
- Legislative TAKE ACTION Center?
- Publications and Reports?
- Military Officer Magazine?
- Newsletters?

Log on to MOAA.org

MOAA Southwest Virginia Chapter
P.O. Box 3090
Roanoke, VA 24015-1090
Email: info@moaaswva.org
Webpage: www.moaaswva.org
Facebook: MOAA SWVA

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) and the Southwest Virginia Chapter (SWVC) of MOAA are a nonprofit veterans' association dedicated to maintaining a strong national defense and ensuring our nation keeps its commitments to currently serving, retired, and former members of the uniformed services and their families and survivors. Membership is open to those who hold or have ever held a warrant or commission in any component of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Space Force, Public Health Service, or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and their surviving spouses.

UPCOMING MEMBERSHIP PROGRAMS

A REMINDER THAT A GREAT LUNCH IS PROVIDED AT EACH MEMBERSHIP MEETING

19 September 2024. Mr. John Long on the "Tragedy on Slapton Sands". On the night of 27th April 1944 during World War Two, a terrible tragedy unfolded just off Slapton Sands on the coast of Devon. **946 American servicemen died during Exercise Tiger**, the rehearsals for the D-Day landing on Utah Beach in Normandy, France.

21 October 2024. Mr. Ron Boyd, President and CEO of LOA (**Local Office on Aging**) on the many and diverse programs and services available to residents and veterans in the community. The Local Office on Aging is a non-profit, 501(c)3 organization dedicated to helping older persons remain independent for as long as possible administering over 25 community services that provide nutrition, education, advocacy and socialization.

21 November 2024

19 December 2024

1. Ms. Sara Stanford or Ms. Carly Harris on the "Sports Nutrition Program For Athletes At Virginia Tech"
2. Mr. John Ketwig a retired automotive service and parts executive and the author of "And a Hard Rain Fell: A G.I.'s True Story of the War in Vietnam", and a book titled "Vietnam Reconsidered: The War, the Times, and Why They Matter".
3. Mr. Larry Johnson, CAPT USA (former), Vietnam veteran helicopter pilot on "Helicopters In The Vietnam War—A Personal Perspective".
4. CAPT Gary Powers, USN (Ret) on "The Role of Naval Intelligence During the Cold War".



CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP
as of 30 June 2024

Regular Members 84
 Surviving Spouses 6
 Total Members 90
 Talk to a fellow officer about joining the Southwest Virginia Chapter!

JOIN THE CHAPTER

Looking to join the Southwest Virginia Chapter? Want more information on how to join and become involved? Check us out on the chapter website at **moaswva.org** or on face book at **moaswva** then Contact COL Bob Brown, USA (Ret), Chapter Membership Chair at (540) 904-2810 or email at **rfbrown68@gmail.com**.



MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA CHAPTER - ENROLLMENT/RENEWAL FORM

Name (First ,Middle, Last, Rank) _____
 Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____ Email Address _____
 Branch of Service _____ Retired _____ Active Duty _____ NG _____ Former Officer _____
 Date of Birth _____ Spouse Name _____ MOAA Membership ID No. _____

Annual Chapter Dues are \$30.00. Widows (ers) dues are \$15.00. Dues for those entering MOAA between 1 July and 31 December are \$20.00. Please mail dues payment to: **MOAA, Southwest Virginia Chapter, P.O. Box 3090, Roanoke, VA 24015-1090**

Note: The Chapter Newsletter *The Communique* is published quarterly and sent to the membership by email. Printed copies will be provided upon request. The next issue will be published at the end of September 2024.



Bring a fellow officer
and their spouse to
our next meeting.



NEVER STOP SERVING

Featured in This Issue

- Legislative Priorities
- Burial Benefits
- Comprehensive VA Health Care
- New DOD Malpractice Rule
- Chapter BBQ Picnic
- MOAA and Chapter Awards Ceremonies
- Membership Emphasis
- Virginia Transportation Institute (VTI)
- Republic or Democracy
- Presidents Corner

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