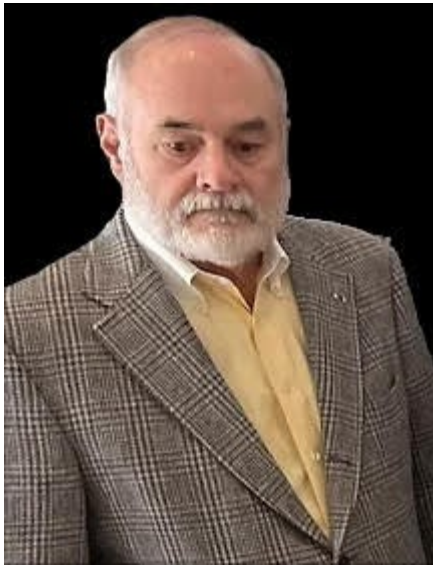


IN MEMORIAM

Lieutenant Colonel Daniel E. Karnes, USAR Retired
2 June 1946 - 7 June 2024



Dan grew up and attended schools in the Roanoke area. He joined the United States Army when he was 17. After serving two tours in Vietnam, Dan returned to the Roanoke area.

He graduated from Radford University and received graduate degrees from Virginia Commonwealth University and Virginia Tech. Dan was employed by the Department of Veterans Affairs as a Clinical Social Worker. His last position was as Manager of the Vet Center, a counseling center in Roanoke for com-

bat veterans. Dan also retired from the U.S. Army as a Lieutenant Colonel.

In retirement, Dan was involved in many volunteer and public service activities. He had a strong commitment to veterans, to mental health issues, and to his community. He served on the State Board of Mental Health, the Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority, Blue Ridge Behavioral Health Care, and the Board of Goodwill Industries of The Roanoke Valley. He was a member of the Downtown Kiwanis Club, Rotary Club of Roanoke, the Salem Research Institute, the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, AmVets, and Military Officers Association of America.

Dan is survived by his wife of 50 years, Nancy Walters Karnes; a niece, Kathy Dewey and her husband, John; and a nephew, Bill Draper and his wife, DeeDee. He is also survived by a cousin, Rachel Lawhorn and a number of grand-nieces and nephews.

President's Corner

OPERATION OUTREACH ALL AHEAD FULL SPEED

I hope everyone had the opportunity



for some relaxing and enjoyable summer months. It was great seeing so many of you and reconnecting at

our first meeting in September. Program Chair **COL Tom Dalzell** continues to organize some great programs and excellent speakers for our meetings. We can expect busy months ahead with autumn activities and the holiday season. Thanks to Tom's diligent efforts along with that of many other chapter members, MOAA National has once again recognized our chapter as a **Five Star Chapter for 2023**. Thanks to all of you who work to make this recognition possible and your dedication to the Chapter. Additionally our Chapter Newsletter and website were once again recognized for their level of excellence. **BRAVO ZULU!**

Our efforts with Operation Outreach are again underway after our first successful period with many accomplishments to highlight.

OUTREACH WITHIN MOAA SWVA Our membership continues to grow as we have recruited 7 new members since January and several

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Presidents Corner Cont'd from page 1

former members have become active once again attending our gatherings. Membership Chair, **COL Bob Brown** and Secretary, **LTC Steve Jamison** stayed busy during the summer sending out membership renewals and bringing our membership roster up to date. Another great recruiting tool is inviting a friend to our program meetings. So at our next program - bring a friend! We are also exploring the interest level of forming a Spouses Group within the Chapter. More details to come.

OUTREACH IN COMMUNITY We will once again be participating in the Virginia Veterans Day Parade on November 9 in downtown Roanoke. There is an opportunity before the parade for us to meet and greet with the public and the media in the Market Building. Membership Chair, **COL Bob Brown** faithfully mans the MOAA SWVA Chapter information table. Why not come out and assist with that effort. There is free coffee and donuts, too! We will also be participating in the annual Wreath Laying Ceremony at the SW Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Dublin on December 14. This is another opportunity to engage with the public while honoring our veterans in a moving ceremony.

OUTREACH IN STATE AND NATIONAL LEVEL Thanks again to all who attended our picnic in May and engaged with our State and National legislators. They know about our priorities and we should continue our communications with them. You can accomplish your part by remaining aware of the issues and use the MOAA Legislative Action Center at www.moaa.org/takeaction to send pre-formatted messages to your legislators.

So the watch word for today is **“Full Speed Ahead”** as we resume our efforts to grow our chapter and engage our members.

Remember, if you're not getting anything out of the organization, it means you're not putting anything into it.

Thanks for your hard work and 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.



KNOWING HISTORY AND KNOWING WHO WE ARE

David McCullough, Historian

Harry Truman once said the only new thing in the world is the history you don't know. Lord Bolingbroke, who was an 18th century political philosopher, said that history is philosophy taught with examples. An old friend, the late Daniel Boorstin, who was a very good historian and Librarian of Congress, said that trying to plan for the future without a sense of the past is like trying to plant cut flowers. We're raising a lot of cut flowers and trying to plant them, and that's much of what I want to talk about tonight.

The task of teaching and writing history is infinitely complex and infinitely seductive and rewarding. And it seems to me that one of the truths about history that needs to be portrayed—needs to be made clear to a student or to a reader—is that nothing ever had to happen the way it happened. History could have gone off in any number of different directions in any number of different ways at any point along the way, just as your own life can. You never know. One thing leads to another. Nothing happens in a vacuum. Actions have consequences. These all sound self-evident. But they're not self-evident—particularly to a young person trying to understand life.

Nor was there ever anything like the past. Nobody lived in the past, if you stop to think about it. Jefferson, Adams, Washington—they didn't walk around saying, "Isn't this fascinating, living in the past?" They lived in the present just as we do. The difference was it was their present, not ours. And just as we don't know how things are going to turn out for us, they didn't either. It's very easy to stand on the mountaintop as an historian or biographer and find fault with people for why they did this or didn't do that, because we're not involved in it, we're not inside it, we're not confronting what we don't know—as everyone who preceded us always was.

Nor is there any such creature as a self-made man or woman. We love that expression, we Americans. But every one who's ever lived has been affected, changed, shaped, helped, hindered by other people. We all know, in our own lives, who those people are who've opened a window, given us an idea, given us encouragement, given us a sense of direction, self-approval, self-worth, or who have straightened us out when we were on the wrong path. Most often they have been parents. Almost as often they have been teachers. Stop and think about those teachers who changed your life, maybe with one sentence, maybe with one lecture, maybe by just taking an interest in your struggle. Family, teachers, friends, rivals, competitors—they've all shaped us. And so too have people we've never met, never known, because they lived long before us. They have shaped us too—the people who composed the symphonies that move us, the painters, the poets, those who have written the great literature in our language. We walk around everyday, everyone of us, quoting Shakespeare, Cervantes, Pope. We don't know it, but we are, all the time. We think this is our way of speaking. It isn't our way of speaking—it's what we have been given. The laws we live by, the freedoms we enjoy, the institutions that we take for granted—as we should never take for granted—are all the work of other people who went before us. And to be indifferent to that isn't just to be ignorant, it's to be rude. And ingratitude is a shabby failing. How can we not want to know about the people who have made it possible for us to live as we live, to have the freedoms we have, to be citizens of this greatest of countries in all time? It's not just a birthright, it is something that others struggled for, strived for, often suffered for, often were defeated for and died for, for us, for the next generation.

Character And Destiny

Now those who wrote the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia that fateful summer of 1776 were not superhuman by any means. Every single one had his flaws, his failings, his weaknesses. Some of them ardently disliked others of them. Every one of them did things in his life he regretted. But the fact that they could rise to the occasion as they did, these imperfect human beings, and do what they did is also, of course, a testimony to their humanity. We are not just known by our failings, by our weaknesses, by our sins. We are known by being capable of rising to the occasion and exhibiting not just a sense of direction, but strength.

The Greeks said that character is destiny, and the more I read and understand of history, the more convinced I am that they were right. You look at the great paintings by John Trumbull or Charles Willson Peale or Copley or Gilbert Stuart of those remarkable people who were present at the creation of our nation, the Founders as we call them. Those aren't just likenesses. They are delineations of character and were intended to be. And we need to understand them, and we need to understand that they knew that what they had created was no more perfect than they were. And that has been to our advantage. It has been good for us that it wasn't all just handed to us in perfect condition, all ready to run in perpetuity—that it needed to be worked at and improved and made to work better. There's a wonderful incident that took place at the Cambria Iron Company in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, in the 19th century, when they were building the first Bessemer steel machinery, adapted from what had been seen of the Bessemer process in Britain. There was a German engineer -- Cont'd. on Page 4 **"Knowing History and Knowing Who You Are?"**

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named John Fritz, and after working for months to get this machinery finished, he came into the plant one morning, and he said, **“Alright boys, let’s start her up and see why she doesn’t work.”** That’s very American. We will find out what’s not working right and we will fix it, and then maybe it will work right. That’s been our star, that’s what we’ve guided on.

I have just returned from a cruise through the Panama Canal. I think often about why the French failed at Panama and why we succeeded. One of the reasons we succeeded is that we were gifted, we were attuned to adaptation, to doing what works, whereas they were trained to do everything in a certain way. We have a gift for improvisation. We improvise in jazz; we improvise in much of our architectural breakthroughs. Improvisation is one of our traits as a nation, as a people, because it was essential, it was necessary, because we were doing again and again and again what hadn’t been done before.

Keep in mind that when we were founded by those people in the late 18th century, none of them had had any prior experience in either revolutions or nation-making. They were, as we would say, winging it. And they were idealistic and they were young. We see their faces in the old paintings done later in their lives or looking at us from the money in our wallets, and we see the awkward teeth and the powdered hair, and we think of them as elder statesmen. But George Washington, when he took command of the continental army at Cambridge in 1775, was 43 years old, and he was the oldest of them. Jefferson was 33 when he wrote the Declaration of Independence. John Adams was 40. Benjamin Rush—one of the most interesting of them all and one of the founders of the antislavery movement in Philadelphia—was 30 years old when he signed the Declaration. They were young people. They were feeling their way, improvising, trying to do what would work. They had no money, no navy, no real army. There wasn’t a bank in the entire country. There wasn’t but one bridge between New York and Boston. It was a little country of 2,500,000 people, 500,000 of whom were held in slavery, a little fringe of settlement along the east coast. What a story. What a noble beginning. And think of this: almost no nations in the world know when they were born. We know exactly when we began and why we began and who did it.

In the rotunda of the Capitol in Washington hangs John Trumbull’s great painting, **“The Declaration of Independence, Fourth of July, 1776.”** It’s been seen by more people than any other American painting. It’s our best known scene from our past. And almost nothing about it is accurate. The Declaration of Independence wasn’t signed on July 4th. They didn’t start to sign the Declaration until August 2nd, and only a part of the Congress was then present. They kept coming back in the months that followed from their distant states to take their turn signing the document. The chairs are wrong, the doors are in the wrong place, there were no heavy draperies at the windows, and the display of military flags and banners on the back wall is strictly a figment of Trumbull’s imagination. But what is accurate about it are the faces. Every single one of the 47 men in that painting is an identifiable, and thus accountable, individual. We know what they look like. We know who they were. And that’s what Trumbull wanted. He wanted us to know them and, by God, not to forget them. Because this momentous step wasn’t a paper being handed down by a potentate or a king or a czar, it was the decision of a Congress acting freely.

Our Failure, Our Duty

We are raising a generation of young Americans who are by-and-large historically illiterate. And it’s not their fault. There have been innumerable studies, and there’s no denying it. I’ve experienced it myself again and again. I had a young woman come up to me after a talk one morning at the University of Missouri to tell me that she was glad she came to hear me speak, and I said I was pleased she had shown up. She said, “Yes, I’m very pleased, because until now I never understood that all of the 13 colonies — the original 13 colonies—were on the east coast.” Now you hear that and you think: What in the world have we done? How could this young lady, this wonderful young American, become a student at a fine university and not know that? I taught a seminar at Dartmouth of seniors majoring in history, honor students, 25 of them. The first morning we sat down and I said, “How many of you know who George Marshall was?” Not one. There was a long silence and finally one young man asked, “Did he have, maybe, something to do with the Marshall Plan?” And I said yes, he certainly did, and that’s a good place to begin talking about George Marshall.

We have to do several things. First of all we have to get across the idea that we have to know who we were if we’re to know who we are and where we’re headed. This is essential. We have to value what our forebears—and not just in the 18th century, but our own parents and grandparents—did for us, or we’re not going to take it very seriously, and it can slip away. If you don’t care about it—if you’ve inherited some great work of art that is worth a fortune and you don’t know that it’s worth a fortune, you don’t even know that it’s a great work of art and you’re not interested in it—you’re going to lose it.

We have to do a far better job of teaching our teachers. We have too many teachers who are graduating with degrees in education. They go to schools of education or they major in education, and they graduate knowing something called education, but they don’t know a subject. They’re assigned to teach botany ---

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or English literature or history, and of course they can't perform as they should. Knowing a subject is important because you want to know what you're talking about when you're teaching. But beyond that, you can't love what you don't know. And the great teachers—the teachers who influence you, who change your lives—almost always, I'm sure, are the teachers that love what they are teaching. It is that wonderful teacher who says **“Come over here and look in this microscope, you're really going to get a kick out of this.”**

There was a wonderful professor of child psychology at the University of Pittsburgh named Margaret McFarland who was so wise that I wish her teachings and her ideas and her themes were much better known. She said that attitudes aren't taught, they're caught. If the teacher has an attitude of enthusiasm for the subject, the student catches that whether the student is in second grade or is in graduate school. She said that if you show them what you love, they'll get it and they'll want to get it. Also if the teachers know what they are teaching, they are much less dependent on textbooks. And I don't know when the last time you picked up a textbook in American history might have been. And there are, to be sure, some very good ones still in print. But most of them, it appears to me, have been published in order to kill any interest that anyone might have in history. I think that students would be better served by cutting out all the pages, clipping up all the page numbers, mixing them all up and then asking students to put the pages back together in the right order. The textbooks are dreary, they're done by committee, they're often hilariously politically correct and they're not doing any good. Students should not have to read anything that we, you and I, wouldn't want to read ourselves. And there are wonderful books, past and present. There is literature in history. Let's begin with Longfellow, for example. Let's begin with Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, for example. These are literature. They can read that too.

History isn't just something that ought to be taught or ought to be read or ought to be encouraged because it's going to make us a better citizen. It will make us a better citizen; or because it will make us a more thoughtful and understanding human being, which it will; or because it will cause us to behave better, which it will. It should be taught for pleasure: The pleasure of history, like art or music or literature, consists of an expansion of the experience of being alive, which is what education is largely about. And we need not leave the whole job of teaching history to the teachers. If I could have you come away from what I have to say tonight remembering one thing, it would be this: The teaching of history, the emphasis on the importance of history, the enjoyment of history, should begin at home. We who are parents or grandparents should be taking our children to historic sites. We should be talking about those books in biography or history that we have particularly enjoyed, or that character or those characters in history that have meant something to us. We should be talking about what it was like when we were growing up in the olden days. Children, particularly little children, love this. And in my view, the real focus should be at the grade school level. We all know that those little guys can learn languages so fast it takes your breath away. They can learn anything so fast it takes your breath away. And the other very important truth is that they want to learn. They can be taught to dissect a cow's eye. They can be taught anything. And there's no secret to teaching history or to making history interesting. Barbara Tuchman said it in two words, **“Tell stories.”** That's what history is: a story. And what's a story? E.M. Forster gave a wonderful definition to it: If I say to you the king died and then the queen died, that's a sequence of events. If I say the king died and the queen died of grief, that's a story. That's human. That calls for empathy on the part of the teller of the story and of the reader or listener to the story. And we ought to be growing, encouraging, developing historians who have heart and empathy to put students in that place of those people before us who were just as human, just as real—and maybe in some ways more real than we are. We've got to teach history and nurture history and encourage history because it's an antidote to the hubris of the present—the idea that everything we have and everything we do and everything we think is the ultimate, the best. Going through the Panama Canal, I couldn't help but think about all that I had read in my research on that story of what they endured to build that great path, how much they had to know and to learn, how many different kinds of talent it took to achieve that success, and what the Americans did under John Stevens and George Goethals in the face of unexpected breakdowns, landslides and floods. They built a canal that cost less than--

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it was expected to cost, was finished before it was expected to be finished and is still running today exactly the same as it was in 1914 when it opened. They didn't, by present day standards for example, understand the chemistry of making concrete. But when we go and drill into those concrete locks now, we find the deterioration is practically nil and we don't know how they did it. That ingenious contrivance by the American engineers is a perfect expression of what engineering ought to be at its best—man's creations working with nature. The giant gates work because they're floating, they're hollow like airplane wings. The electric motors that open and close the gates use power which is generated by the spillway from the dam that creates the lake that bridges the isthmus. It's an extraordinary work of civilization. And we couldn't do it any better today, and in some ways we probably wouldn't do it as well. If you were to take a look, for example, at what's happened with the "Big Dig" in Boston, you realize that we maybe aren't closer to the angels by any means nearly a hundred years later. We should never look down on those people and say that they should have known better. What do you think they're going to be saying about us in the future? They're going to be saying we should have known better. Why did we do that? What were we thinking of? All this second-guessing and the arrogance of it are unfortunate.

Listening To The Past

Samuel Eliot Morison said we ought to read history because it will help us to behave better. It does. And we ought to read history because it helps to break down the dividers between the disciplines of science, medicine, philosophy, art, music, whatever. It's all part of the human story and ought to be seen as such. You can't understand it unless you see it that way. You can't understand the 18th century, for example, unless you understand the vocabulary of the 18th century. What did they mean by those words? They didn't necessarily mean the same thing as we do. There's a line in one of the letters written by John Adams where he's telling his wife Abigail at home, "We can't guarantee success in this war, but we can do something better. We can deserve it." Think how different that is from the attitude today when all that matters is success, being number one, getting ahead, getting to the top. However you betray or gouge or claw or do whatever awful thing is immaterial if you get to the top.

That line in the Adams letter is saying that how the war turns out is in the hands of God. We can't control that, but we can control how we behave. We can deserve success. When I read that line when I was doing the research on the book, it practically lifted me out of my chair. And then about three weeks later I was reading some correspondence written by George Washington and there was the same line. I thought, wait a minute, what's going on? And I thought, they're quoting something. So, as we all often do, I got down good old Bartlett's Familiar Quotations, and I started going through the entries from the 18th century and bingo, there it was. It's a line from the play Cato. They were quoting something that was in the language of the time. They were quoting scripture of a kind, a kind of secular creed if you will. And you can't understand why they behaved as they did if you don't understand that. You can't understand why honor was so important to them and why they were truly ready to put their lives, their fortunes, their sacred honor on the line. Those weren't just words.

I want to read to you, in conclusion, a letter that John Quincy Adams received from his mother. Little John Adams was taken to Europe by his father when his father sailed out of Massachusetts in the midst of winter, in the midst of war, to serve our country in France. Nobody went to sea in the wintertime, on the North Atlantic, if it could possibly be avoided. And nobody did it trying to cut through the British barricade outside of Boston Harbor because the British ships were sitting out there waiting to capture somebody like John Adams and take him to London and to the Tower, where he would have been hanged as a traitor. But they sent this little ten-year-old boy with his father, risking his life, his mother knowing that she wouldn't see him for months, maybe years at best. Why? Because she and his father wanted John Quincy to be in association with Franklin and the great political philosophers of France, to learn to speak French, to travel in Europe, to be able to soak it all up. And they risked his life for that—for his education. We have no idea what people were willing to do for education in times past. It's the one sustaining theme through our whole country—that the next generation will be better educated than we are. John Adams himself is a living example of the transforming miracle of education.

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His father was able to write his name, we know. His mother was almost certainly illiterate. And because he had a scholarship to Harvard, everything changed for him. He said, “I discovered books and read forever,” and he did. And they wanted this for their son.

Well, it was a horrendous voyage. Everything that could have happened to go wrong, went wrong. And when the little boy came back, he said he didn’t ever want to go across the Atlantic again as long as he lived. And then his father was called back, and his mother said you’re going back. And here is what she wrote to him. Now, keep in mind that this is being written to a little kid and listen to how different it is from how we talk to our children in our time. She’s talking as if to a grownup. She’s talking to someone whom they want to bring along quickly because there’s work to do and survival is essential: These are the times in which genius would wish to live. It is not in the still calm of life or the repose of a pacific station that great characters are formed. The habits of a vigorous mind are formed in contending with difficulties. Great necessities call out great virtues. When a mind is raised and animated by scenes that engage the heart, then those qualities which would otherwise lay dormant wake into life and form the character of the hero and the statesman.

Now, there are several interesting things going on in that letter. For all the times that she mentions the mind, in the last sentence she says, **“When a mind is raised and animated by scenes that engage the heart, then those qualities which would otherwise lay dormant wake into life and form the character of the hero and the statesman.”** In other words, the mind itself isn’t enough. You have to have the heart. Well, of course he went and the history of our country is different because of it. John Quincy Adams, in my view, was the most superbly educated and maybe the most brilliant human being who ever occupied the executive office. He was, in my view, the greatest Secretary of State we’ve ever had. He wrote the Monroe Doctrine, among other things. And he was a wonderful human being and a great writer. Told to keep a diary by his father when he was in Europe, he kept the diary for 65 years. And those diaries are unbelievable. They are essays on all kinds of important, heavy subjects. He never tells you who he had lunch with or what the weather’s like. But if you want to know that, there’s another sort of little Cliff diary that he kept about such things.

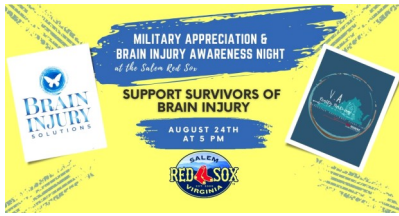
Well after the war was over, Abigail went to Europe to be with her husband, particularly when he became our first minister to the court of Saint James. And John Quincy came home from Europe to prepare for Harvard. And he had not been home in Massachusetts very long when Abigail received a letter from her sister saying that John Quincy was a very impressive young man — and of course everybody was quite astonished that he could speak French—but that, alas, he seemed a little overly enamored with himself and with his own opinions and that this was not going over very well in town. So Abigail sat down in a house that still stands on Grosvenor Square in London—it was our first embassy if you will, a little 18th century house—and wrote a letter to John Quincy. And here’s what she said: If you are conscious to yourself that you possess more knowledge upon some subjects than others of your standing, reflect that you have had greater opportunities of seeing the world and obtaining knowledge of mankind than any of your contemporaries. That you have never wanted a book, but it has been supplied to you. That your whole time has been spent in the company of men of literature and science. How unpardonable would it have been in you to have turned out a blockhead. How unpardonable it would be for us—with all that we have been given, all the advantages we have, all the continuing opportunities we have to enhance and increase our love of learning—to turn out blockheads or to raise blockheads. What we do in education, what these wonderful teachers and administrators and college presidents and college and university trustees do is the best, most important work there is.

So I salute you all for your interest in education and in the education. I salute you for coming out tonight to be at an event like this. Not just sitting at home being a spectator. It’s important that we take part. **Citizenship isn’t just voting.** We all know that. Let’s all pitch in. And let’s not lose heart. They talk about what a difficult, dangerous time we live in. And it is very difficult, very dangerous and very uncertain. But so it has always been. And this nation of ours has been through darker times. And if you don’t know that—as so many who broadcast the news and subject us to their opinions in the press don’t seem to know—that’s because we’re failing in our understanding of history. The Revolutionary War was as dark a time as we’ve ever been through. 1776, the year we so consistently and rightly celebrate every year, was one of the darkest times, if not the darkest time in the history of the country. Many of us here remember the first months of 1942 after Pearl Harbor when German submarines were sinking our oil tankers right off the coasts of Florida and New Jersey, in sight of the beaches, and there wasn’t a thing we could do about it. Our recruits were drilling with wooden rifles, we had no air force, half of our navy had been destroyed at Pearl Harbor, and there was nothing to say or guarantee that the Nazi machine could be defeated—nothing. Who was to know? I like to think of what Churchill said when he crossed the Atlantic after Pearl Harbor and gave a magnificent speech. He said we haven’t journeyed this far because we’re made of sugar candy. It’s as true today as it ever was.

BRAIN INJURY SERVICES OF SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA

On Saturday 24 August 2024 members of the Southwest Virginia Chapter participated in welcoming all for an Appreciation Event Celebrating Veterans, Brain Injury Survivors and their Families for a reception and base-ball game at the Salem Memorial Baseball Stadium. Located in Roanoke, Brain Injury Solutions mission is to help children and adults living with brain injury improve the quality of their lives and reintegrate into family and community. They offer case management to meet with survivors of brain injury, and family if available, in their homes to help identify and reach goals in their journey to recovery, Community Living Connection (CLiC), a telehealth program that brings survivors of brain injury together through user-friendly assistive technology and the Internet to form small individual learning groups that provide support, education, social, and cognitive skill building, (PALS)

Providing a Link for Survivors to pair a survivor of brain injury and a volunteer for socialization, recreation and leisure activities, community outings, and an overall supportive relationship, and other services such as support groups, Community Support Specialist Services and advocacy. Welcoming remarks were given by Jodi Judge, Executive Director of Brain Injury Solutions followed by remarks and information by Alex Barge, Director of Development and Marketing, Brain Injury Solutions. Marisa Little, A Realty Partners then introduced Zac Farrell of the National Center for Healthy Veterans. The National Center for Healthy Vet-



Jodi Judge - Executive Director Brain Injury Solutions



Alex Barge - Director of Development and Marketing Brain Injury Solutions



Marisa Little, VA Realty Partners & Zac Farrell National Center for Healthy Veterans

ernans at Valor Farm located in Altavista, Virginia helps Veterans navigate the challenges of trauma and transition to achieve their full potential and contribute to every facet of American society. Zac provided an overview of the **“Healthy Veterans Master Plan”** based on **“Community”** as the primary antidote to isolation, loneliness, and broken relationships. Residents experience a renewed sense of community and camaraderie in the National Center for Healthy Veteran Villages and form lasting bonds of friendship. Formerly homeless veterans not only have a place to live, but also a place to thrive and contribute. The community includes 100 tiny homes, an equestrian center, and a planned wellness center. Army veteran Stephen Kelly, a participant of the Brain Injury Solutions program, related his experiences in combat and his struggle with Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) and how

with the support of his loving family and the Brain Injury Solutions Programs have allowed him to get back to leading a somewhat normal life. Also in attendance were State Senator David R. Suetterlein, and Delegate Joseph McNamara who greeted and thanked the veterans and their families.



Army veteran Stephen Kelly



LTC Bob and Linda Habermann



COL Bob Brown and COL Tom Dalzell



State Senator David Suetterlein, and Delegate Joseph McNamara



VA PROPOSES RULE TO EXTEND PRESUMED AREA OF EXPOSURE TO AGENT ORANGE AND OTHER HERBICIDES, MAKING IT EASIER FOR EXPOSED VETERANS TO RECEIVE THEIR EARNED BENEFITS

9 February 2024

WASHINGTON — Today, the Department of Veterans Affairs issued a proposed rule outlining plans to expand the locations and time frames for which VA presumes exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides. If this proposed rule becomes final, VA will implement a new presumption of exposure to locations where herbicides were tested, used, or stored outside of Vietnam. Specifically, this proposed rule would add locations in the United States (full list of US locations where Agent Orange was tested or stored: [https:// www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/locations/tests-storage/usa.asp](https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/locations/tests-storage/usa.asp)), (Canada: [https:// www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/locations/tests-storage/outside-vietnam.asp](https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/locations/tests-storage/outside-vietnam.asp)), and (India: [https:// www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/locations/tests-storage/outside-vietnam.asp](https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/locations/tests-storage/outside-vietnam.asp)) to the existing presumptives for Agent Orange in Vietnam, Cambodia, Johnson Atoll, Guam, American Samoa, Korea, Laos, and Thailand.

A presumption of exposure means that VA automatically assumes that Veterans who served in certain locations were exposed to certain toxins. Presumptives lower the burden of proof required to receive disability benefits, helping Veterans get the benefits they deserve as quickly as possible. This expansion of presumptives will help Veterans who served in the specified locations receive health care and benefits for certain cancers and chronic conditions. To be eligible, a Veteran must have served in the identified location(s) during a specific time period and currently have a condition(s) presumptively associated with herbicide exposure.

Delivering world-class health care and benefits to toxic-exposed Veterans is a top priority for VA and the Biden-Harris Administration. As a part of President Biden’s pledge to serve Veterans with military toxic exposures, over the past few years, VA has expanded presumptive service connection for more than hundreds of health conditions related to toxic exposures under the PACT Act – the largest expansion of Veteran care and benefits in generations. Thanks to this historic action, VA is delivering more care and more benefits to more Veterans than ever before in U.S. history. **“This proposed change would make it easier for Veterans exposed to herbicides who served outside Vietnam to access the benefits they so rightly deserve,”** said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. **“Our goal is to provide every Veteran – of every era – with the VA health care and benefits they deserve, and this is another step in the right direction.”**

Veterans who want to file an initial claim for a herbicide-related disability can visit VA’s website: [https:// www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/](https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/), use VA Form 21-526EZ, Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits: <https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/>, or work with a VA-recognized Veterans Service Organization to assist with the application process. Veterans may also contact their state Veterans Affairs Office. Survivors can file claims for benefits based on the Veteran’s service if the Veteran died from at least one of the recognized presumptive herbicide diseases.

This proposed rule also codifies provisions in the PACT Act: <https://www.va.gov/resources/the-pact-act-and-your-va-benefits/>, the Blue Water Navy Act of 2019: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/housebill/299/text>, and the National Defense Authorization Act for 2021: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116thcongress/house-bill/6395>. For more information about the changes, visit The Federal Register: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/02/12/2024-02590/updating-va-adjudication-regulations-for-disability-or-death-benefitclaims-related-to-exposure-to>.



THE SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA CHAPTER RECEIVES MOAA 2023 FIVE STAR AWARDS

Chapter President CAPT Gary Powers, USN (Ret) and COL Thomas Dalzell, USMC (Ret) receiving the MOAA Chapter 2023 Five Star Levels of Excellence Award; the MOAA Chapter 2023 Five Star COL Marvin J. Harris Communications Award/Website; and the MOAA Chapter 2023 Five Star COL Marvin J. Harris Communications Award/Newsletter. Congratulations to LCDR Klaus D. Lonitz, USN (Ret) Chapter Webmaster and COL Thomas J. Dalzell, USMC (Ret) Newsletter Editor.

74 Senators Back a Plan to Help Combat-Injured Vets. Why Won't They Vote on It?

By: Mark Belinsky



Lance Cpl. Alex Nicoll, USMC (Ret), center, and other combat-injured veterans joined MOAA and fellow veterans' advocates at a July 10 press event in Washington, D.C., to support the Major Richard Star Act. (Photo by Mike Morones/MOAA)

In today's polarized political climate, it's extraordinary to see members of Congress find common ground on anything. So it's disheartening when a plan supported by **more than 75% of lawmakers that would undo a longtime injustice faced by combat-injured veterans could go without a floor vote for the second straight year.**

[TAKE ACTION: [Ask Your Senators to Support the Major Richard Star Act](#)]

This procedural decision could derail the progress made by the wildly popular Major Richard Star Act, a bill supported by [74](#) senators and [327](#) House members (counting original sponsors) including the speaker of the House and the Senate majority leader. The bill corrects an oversight from the 2004 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) which docks the retirement pay of combat-injured veterans to save money in the DoD personnel account.

This [updated information paper](#) answers all the questions about the bill except the one you should ask your senators, and their staffers, as they campaign in their home states this month: *Does it sound right to you that we are saving money in the DoD personnel account on the backs of our combat-injured veterans?*

What Can We Do?

It is an election year, and members of Congress want your vote. This makes your voice as a voter important on the campaign trail. Be sure to attend town halls and rallies. Ask your senators not only to support the Major Richard Star Act, but to allow for a vote on the act to be included as an amendment to the FY 2025 NDAA. Ask your House members to support the Star Act in any way they can as the final NDAA takes shape.

[RELATED: [Wounded Warriors Meet With Legislators, Seek Senate Action on Star Act](#)]

In addition to attending these events, please activate your network and take these actions:

Visit MOAA.org/StarAct and send our updated message to your senators. It's a two-part request: Support our efforts to ensure the Star Act amendment receives a floor vote, and vote in favor of the amendment once it reaches the floor. As we've seen in the House NDAA proceedings, prior support and/or sponsorship for the bill does not always translate into meaningful action – this election year, constituents need to send a message to their senators that words aren't enough.

Reach out to your senators' offices via MOAA's toll-free line to the U.S. Capitol switchboard – 866-272-MOAA (6622). Ask to speak with the military legislative assistant. Use [these talking points](#), or refer to [MOAA's Star Act issue paper](#) for additional materials.

Share all of the above materials with your personal and professional networks – you don't need to be a MOAA member to send messages through the Legislative Action Center or to use our switchboard. Good luck this campaign season. Your voice matters more than ever, and our servicemembers need your advocacy; learn more about other parts of MOAA's Advocacy in Action Summer Campaign [at this link](#).

MOAA-Supported Policy Change Will Help More Homeless Veterans

By: Kevin Lilley 12 August 2024



A policy change by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will allow more homeless veterans to qualify for a key housing program by exempting service-connected disability benefits from income-limit calculations. The move echoes proposals in the bipartisan Home for the Brave Act (H.R. 6179), [a MOAA-supported proposal](#) introduced last November by Reps. Salud Carbajal (D-Calif.) and Lloyd Smucker (R-Pa.).

[JOIN THE FIGHT: [MOAA's Legislative Action Center](#)] |

“The days of a veteran having to choose between getting the VA benefits they deserve and the housing support they need are finally over,” VA Secretary Denis McDonough said in the Aug. 8 press release [announcing the HUD change](#) to the HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program. “This is a critical step forward that will help veterans nationwide – and bring us one step closer to our ultimate goal of putting an end to veteran homelessness for good.”

Federal agencies like the IRS already excluded disability payments from similar income calculations. The change brings the HUD program in line with those practices. “This change will make housing more affordable and accessible on the Central Coast and across the country, and support those who stepped up to defend our nation by ending this housing discrimination against our disabled veterans,” Carbajal said in [a press release](#) noting MOAA’s endorsement of his legislation, alongside the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the National Coalition for the Homeless. Learn more about the HUD-VASH changes [at this link](#). Learn more about VA homeless programs [at this VA website](#).

More Work to Support Veterans

When Congress returns from its summer recess, MOAA will look to continue its work on behalf of VA beneficiaries. MOAA’s top VA advocacy priority remains the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act.

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

This comprehensive, bipartisan legislation would tackle a wide range of needed upgrades, to include:

- The creation of a VA pilot program to provide assisted living services to eligible veterans.
- Improvements to VA home- and community-based services for veterans, as well as support to family caregivers.
- Program modifications that would improve transparency and access to services for caregivers of veterans, and aid in navigating Veterans Health Administration (VHA) health care programs and services.
- Dental care for veterans with heart disease.
- Improvements to mental health, rehabilitation, and suicide prevention programs; outreach and financial services; and disability claims and examination processes.

Learn more about the bill [at this link](#).

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HONORS DUBLIN CEMETERY

The Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Dublin, Virginia received the National Cemetery Administration's 2024 Award For Operational Excellence at a ceremony on Thursday 29 August 2024 at 10:00 AM. The award was presented by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemeteries Administration. The award is presented to selected state veterans cemeteries for outstanding compliance to 95 NCA standards during rigorous triennial review. It was the first NCA review for the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery using the new Operational Excellence Award standards. The 80-acre cemetery is located in the town of Dublin in Pulaski County adjacent to the Radford Army Ammunition Plant complex. Currently, 2,705 veterans and family members are interred on its grounds. The NCA, part of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, operates 155 national cemeteries and oversees 122 state and tribal veteran cemeteries that were funded through USDVA grants. The Operational Excellence Award places the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery among the best of those state and tribal cemeteries. "We are truly blessed to have this magnificent cemetery here in Pulaski County to serve as a final resting place for my fellow veterans and their family members from throughout Southwest Virginia," said state Del. Jason Ballard, R-Giles.

The emcee for the event was Michael Henshaw, director of cemetery services for the Virginia Department of Veterans. Those in attendance include: state Del. Jason S. Ballard, R-Giles; James Earp, director, NCA's Veterans Cemeteries Grant Program; Chuck Zingler, commissioner, Virginia Department of Veterans Services; Travis Graham, superintendent, Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery; Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery Honor Guard and member of Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery volunteers. The Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery is one of the three state veterans cemeteries operated by the Virginia Department of Veterans Services to serve state veterans and their eligible dependents.



L to R: Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery team members; National Cemetery Administration Director James Earp; DVS Director of Cemetery Services Michael Henshaw; and Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery Superintendent Travis Graham.



The SWVC of MOAA have been involved with the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery in the annual Wreath Laying Program, providing a mobile vehicle and supporting the volunteers under the auspice of Chapter Surviving Spouse Representative Mrs. Mary Lou Summers.

Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery Volunteers - History

Established in August of 2013, the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery Volunteers (SWVAVCV) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Our membership includes private citizens, members of military units such as the UAW Local 2069 Veterans Committee and members of civic and industrial groups. Organizations organized and operated exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, testing for public safety, literary, educational, or other specified purposes and that meet certain other requirements are tax exempt under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3). "The SWVAVCV is an all volunteer 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization that raises funds for the placement of wreaths on veterans graves at the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery each December. The SWVAVCV also has an Ambassador Program and representatives attend all Veterans funerals at the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery ensuring that no Veteran is ever buried alone. The SWVAVCV is involved with beautification of the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery. The SWVAVCV is getting ready to launch a capital campaign for the construction of a Veterans Memorial Tower to house the speakers for the Carilion within the cemetery. The SWVAVCV's motto is **"To Serve, to Educate, and to Honor"**." Website: <https://swvavcv.org/>

SURVIVING SPOUSE CORNER: WHO IS BEST TO SERVE AS AN EXECUTOR?

By: Suzanne Walker
30 July 2024



One of the many important decisions when making an estate plan is whom to trust to be the executor (of the will) of the deceased's estate. Usually, the executor is named in the last will and testament and is likely the surviving spouse, adult child, a trusted family member, or a trusted friend. Sometimes the executor is an attorney, bank officer, or other impartial agent.

[RELATED: [Join our Webinar "Preparing a Spouse or Family Member for Survivorship"](#)]

The person named for this important role should be asked if they are willing to assume responsibility and if they understand what the duty entails and what they will be responsible for when the time comes. The duty of executor can be a very complicated and time-consuming role, and no one should be "surprised" to learn they are the executor of an estate. The executor has a legal duty to act primarily for the benefit of another with duties involving good faith, trust, special confidence, and candor.

[RELATED: [MOAA Members Can Save With Everplans](#)]

Many times, married couples just assume their spouse will be the executor of the estate, and that spouse might have no idea of the complexities and requirements, which can vary from state to state. A person who manages money or property for the deceased must exercise a standard of care as imposed by law or contract with specific responsibilities.

The administration of an estate generally requires a fair amount of time and energy. Often compensation is allowed, and a court or commissioner of accounts must approve the compensation, which is often a percentage of the assets handled.

Some other duties of an executor include:

- Understand the rules of probate (the official proving and recording of the will as the authentic and valid last will and testament of the deceased).
- Know which asset types that do and do not pass through probate.
- Keep assets under control as a fiduciary, separate from individual, personal and business assets.
- Prepare a complete inventory of all assets in the estate (stocks, bonds, brokerage accounts, bank accounts, life insurance policies, real property, automobiles, and any other assets). Having a complete and accurate inventory of the assets enables the executor to properly manage the estate and satisfy all of the terms of the will.
- Open a separate fiduciary (estate) bank account at a bank that can provide you with the original canceled checks or statements with images of all canceled checks.
- Take possession of the assets of the deceased and inquire about safe deposit boxes and accounts they may have maintained.
- Make an online search for any unclaimed property in the name of the deceased.
- Close bank accounts and transfer funds in a separate account (create an estate account with a separate tax identification number).
- Follow the disbursements to heirs as instructed in the will.
- Document all transactions and prepare to file income tax.

For more information on all the documents an estate plan might include, [download MOAA's Estate Planning Guide](#).

SAFEGUARDING YOUR IDENTITY: KEEPING YOUR VA BENEFITS SAFE FROM IDENTITY THEFT AND FRAUD



Collaboration: VBA Benefits Delivery Protection & Remediation and VA Privacy Service

29 January 2024

By Sylvia Zayas, Senior Program Analyst, Veterans Benefits Administration

In the contemporary digital era, identity theft is a more likely occurrence than home burglary or car theft. As a Veteran, you hold more [sensitive information](#) than an average citizen, necessitating careful protection of your personal accounts, Veteran ID, VA.gov account login, and any benefits you may receive, such as [disability compensation](#) and [education benefits](#). Veterans are highly susceptible to fraudulent activities, [online scams](#) and deceitful individuals.

[Identity theft](#) occurs when hackers obtain sensitive Personally Identifiable Information (PII) like credit card details to sell on the dark web or use for their own gain. Identity theft is a difficult crime to prevent, but there are several measures you can take to safeguard yourself and your VA benefits. It's essential to stay vigilant and familiarize yourself with the following frequently occurring common online scams:

- **Direct Deposit/Payment redirection:** A bad actor obtains PII to unlawfully access and gain control of Veterans' and beneficiaries' accounts.
- **Phishing:** A fraudulent practice where an imposter creates a fake online persona to deceive Veterans and their beneficiaries into providing PII.
- **Email:** A type of scam in which a fraudster sends a fake email, often promoting a contest or reward, to trick a user into clicking on a malware link or obtaining sensitive personal information.
- **Phone:** A scammer may pose as someone you trust and try to obtain your money or personal information to commit identity theft.
- **Spoofing:** A caller disguises the information shown on caller ID, giving them the ability to impersonate a specific person from a certain location.
- **Wired:** A type of fraud that involves the use of some form of telecommunications or the internet.
- **Forgery:** The act of forging or producing a copy of a document, signature, banknote or work of art.
- **Malware:** One of the top cyber schemes used by bad actors to infect computers. They may even hold your computer "hostage" with malware until you agree to pay a ransom; this type of malware is also known as "ransom ware."

Continued from Page 14 "Safeguarding Your Identity"

How to protect yourself against identity theft:

VA is committed to bringing awareness to veterans and their beneficiaries about trending fraud scams targeting their personal information and benefits to avoid becoming victims of fraudulent acts. Here are some identity theft prevention tips veterans can follow to protect themselves.

- Screen emails carefully, and only open emails from senders you know and trust. Delete and block emails from unknown or suspicious senders.
- Be cautious of popups and links on websites, emails and texts that can infect your device with harmful malware.
- Limit PII when you post online, such as your address, date of birth, workplace, or kinship details.
- Delete old social media accounts and limit online presence and available biographical information.
- Maximize privacy settings on all active social media accounts to protect information from unknown users.
- Do not accept friend or connection requests from individuals with only an online presence. Only add friends or connections you know and trust in real life, not those who you have only met online.
- Download strong antivirus software to protect yourself from malware attacks
- Be aware of signs of a malware infection. If your computer runs unusually slowly or frequently crashes without explanation, it may be an indication it is infected with malware.
- Never send bank information or payment to "online friends" or others. Scammers may threaten to destroy your files or data if you do not send payment or banking information. Be alert! Identity theft is not always committed by strangers
- Frequently change and maintain strong passwords and never use PII in the password.
- Be cautious of telephone numbers on your caller ID. Scammers can change the telephone number (spoofing) to make a call appear to come from a different person or place.
- Only shop on validated sites - go directly where you want to shop. Check the URL for spelling mistakes or errors.
- Use a credit card instead of a debit card. Credit cards typically provide added protection against fraudulent charges.
- Do not sign forms that are not VA generated or are third-party authorization for someone to provide "behind-the-scenes" claims assistance.

How to report identity theft and fraud

The VA encourages Veterans and their beneficiaries to know the warning signs of the various types of fraud and the best practices to avoid falling victim to a scam.

If a Veteran believes their identity has been stolen, they should contact the [Federal Trade Commission](#) (FTC). Identity theft can be reported to the FTC at IdentityTheft@va.gov. If a Veteran has concerns about their VA services being impacted by identity theft, they can call the toll-free VA Identity Theft Helpline at 1-855-578-5492.

In addition, VA has more than 400 VA Privacy Officers (POs) nationwide. Their responsibilities include all matters related to protecting Veteran information, such as receiving and processing privacy complaints, monitoring VA facility compliance with privacy requirements, and promoting privacy training and awareness. Watch this [VA Privacy Officers video](#) to learn more about Privacy Officers and how to identify and contact the one in your area.

VA also has fraud prevention resources for Veterans. If a Veteran believes they've experienced health care-related fraud, they can contact the Veterans Health Administration, Office of Integrity, and Compliance Helpline at 1-866-842-4357 (VHAHELP). If a Veteran believes they've experienced VA Benefits fraud, they can contact the VA Benefits Hotline at 1-800-827-1000. Veterans can also learn more about fraud prevention by visiting the [Protecting Veterans from Fraud](#) webpage.

WELCOME

WELCOME to our newest member **Paul M, Booton, Jr.LTC, USA (Ret)**. Paul was raised in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and is married to wife Patricia (60 years this May). They have two daughters, Amy (in Minneapolis, MN) and Cori (in Roanoke, VA), and a total of nine grandchildren. Paul has the following degrees; B.S. Mathematics and Statistics, Oklahoma State University, 1965, M.S. Mathematics and Statistics, Oklahoma State University, 1967 and M.B..A. , C.W. Post, Long Island University, New York, 1980.



Paul received commission as a lieutenant in Air Defense Artillery through ROTC upon graduation from Oklahoma State University. However, he did not report for active duty until February 1967 after being granted an educational deferment to attend graduate school. After completing his two-year obligation, as a cost analyst at HQ, CONARC at Fort Monroe, VA, he exited active duty to start a career at Texas Instruments in Dallas, TX. However, after experiencing almost two years in the corporate world he decided he preferred the military, so he requested recall to active duty, was accepted, then shipped to Viet Nam, where he spent a year at HQ USARV, also in cost analysis. Upon return from Viet Nam he was assigned to an air defense battalion in Los Angeles, CA. After a short period on the battalion staff he was assigned as a Battery Commander. Subsequently he received a branch transfer to the Adjutant General Corps, where he served the remainder of his career with a variety of assignments to include MILPERCEN Europe (Heidelberg, FRG), USMA (West Point, the 24th Division (Ft.

Stewart, GA) , and Washington D.C.

After military retirement in 1988 he moved to Hinesville, Georgia, where they had lived during a previous assignment. One of his other previous assignments was as a math instructor at West Point, which provided him credentials for the initial stage of his retirement career. He was able to secure a teaching position at Georgia Southern University, where he taught until 1992, then went into business for himself as an Information Management Consultant.

In 2004 he made what he thought was his final retirement home on Amelia Island, FL. However, after encountering health issues and losing several close friends, advanced aging changed his mind, so he decided he needed to be closer to family. Weather being the tie breaker, he chose Roanoke, where he moved at the end of April this year.

Paul is a Life Member since 2000 and has been a member of MOAA Chapters in Hinesville, GA, Mayport, FL, Nassau County FL and the SWC. He has held positions as Chapter Secretary, Database Administer and as a Board member.



“Tragedy on Slapton Sands”

On Thursday 19 September 2024 Mr. John Long, Director of Education at the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, VA presented a program 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.

Exercise Tiger, a little-known training disaster in the English Channel occurred 80 years ago. The exercise was a dress rehearsal for D-Day for the 4th Infantry Division and attached units, held at Slapton Sands, a beach chosen specifically for its resemblance to the coast of Normandy. Naturally, where and when this meticulously planned assault would occur was the utmost secret of the war, so much so that top brass fretted that if the Germans discovered where the practice landings were being held, they might crack the veil of secrecy.

In the morning hours of April 28, 1944, a flotilla of eight LSTs loaded with various vehicles and men of the 1st Engineer Special Brigade were steaming through Lyme Bay awaiting their assigned landing time. The Landing Ship, Tank (LST), was the all-essential vessel for the coming invasion, necessary to bring vehicles, supplies and troops to the beaches after D-Day. Many sailors quipped that the initials (LST), actually stood for **“Large, Slow Target.”** Only one British warship was present to protect the column; another had been damaged earlier and its replacement had not yet arrived. In another example of bad planning, the LSTs and nearby British ships were unable easily to communicate, operating on different radio frequencies. At about 1:30 AM, a flotilla of nine German E-Boats (fast torpedo boats) stumbled onto the LSTs. Apparently unsure what type of vessels had encountered or what they were doing, the German captain ordered an attack. Two LSTs were



Two LSTs were sunk and another severely damaged, but able to make port. Many men who abandoned the stricken ships soon succumbed to hypothermia in the frigid waters. All told, although estimates have varied through the years, 749 American soldiers and sailors, mostly army engineers needed for the invasion, perished. The German E-Boats escaped.



It was a disaster for the Allies by any reckoning. The loss of so many men certainly stung, but the loss of three all-important LSTs, already in short supply, left no reserves for the invasion only weeks out. Worse was the threat to Allied security. Did the Germans now know that practices were being held in a region reminiscent of Normandy? Potentially worst of all, ten officers were missing who had top-secret clearance and knew essential details of the invasion plans, including where it was slated to happen. These **“Bigots”** (**“Bigot” was the codeword for top-secret clearance prior to the invasion**) in enemy hands might give up their secrets. If any of them drowned with Bigot-level documents or maps on their persons and their bodies were recovered by the E-Boats, the German high command could be reading the invasion plans by dawn. These fears, fortunately, did not come to pass. The bodies of the ten **“Bigots”** were soon recovered. And if the Germans gained any clues about the invasion, it ultimately did not seem to make much difference.



Historians disagree on what if anything the enemy discerned, but many top German officials continued to suspect the invasion would happen around Calais, not at Normandy. Still, secrets had to be protected, and survivors of the attack, medical personnel who treated them, and sailors on nearby vessels were sworn to secrecy.

Continued from Page 17 “Tragedy On Slapton Sands”

The dark secret of Exercise Tiger was concealed, but it is not entirely true that it was unknown entirely for decades. The Army newspaper “Stars and Stripes” made mention of the disaster (albeit with scant details) later in the summer of 1944, and it was mentioned in postwar memoirs by top military officials. But if not a closely guarded secret for long, neither was it a well-known event until relatively recently. Perhaps it’s more accurate to say it was forgotten and unmentioned—an embarrassment more than a cover-up. Only in the 1980s did the story begin to gain some traction and books on the subject begin to appear. If the Germans failed to learn any lessons from Tiger, the Allies did, and put procedures to prevent E-Boat attacks were instituted, E-Boat pens in Northern France were targeted by bombers prior to D-Day, better training with floatation devices was given to all personnel, and a network of small rescue craft was assembled to save stranded men. In the end, the actual losses on D-Day by the Utah Beach contingent were only a fraction of those who met their end in Exercise Tiger.



A view of Slapton Sands, where Exercise Tiger was carried out.



Inscription on memorial on Slapton Sands



Chapter members and guests enjoying a delicious lunch and the presentation on “The Tragedy On Slapton Sands”



Our guest speaker Mr. John Long accepting the chapter “Mug” from Chapter President Captain Gary Powers, USN, (Ret) as a token of appreciation for his excellent presentation on the “Tragedy On Slapton Sands.”

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.

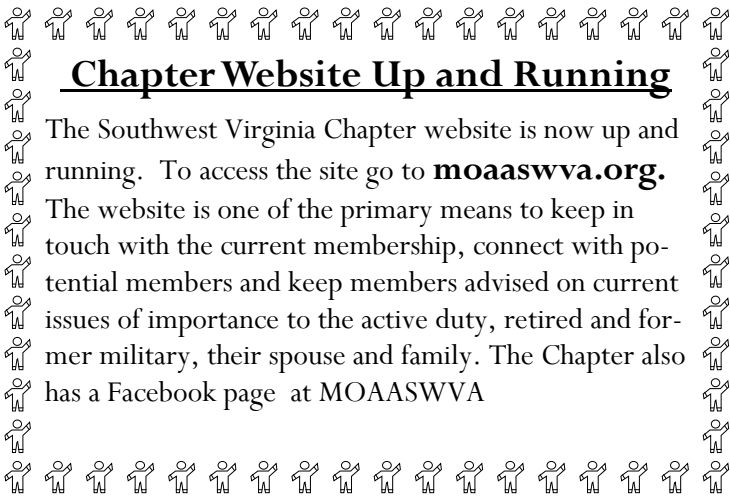
Did you also know that the Southwest Virginia Chapter of MOAA has established two Leadership Awards presented to ROTC Cadets/Midshipmen at Virginia Tech and Radford University during each academic year? Recipients are to be juniors or who will be starting their final year in the coming fall of the academic 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 looked 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 VFF to be able to provide food assistance in the form of credit cards to needy military families. In 2024 the SWVC received a \$2,000 grant from MOAA and \$250 in personal donations to support the VFF program.

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

17 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. Ms. Sara Stanford or Ms. Carly Harris on the "**Sports Nutrition Program For Athletes At Virginia Tech**".

19 December 2024. Mr. Martin Leamy, President and CEO, Central and Southwest Virginia Honor Flight on the Virginia "**Honor Flight Program**". Their mission is one of gratitude for their service, sacrifice and selflessness by proudly celebrating our veterans with a day of honor in our nations capital.

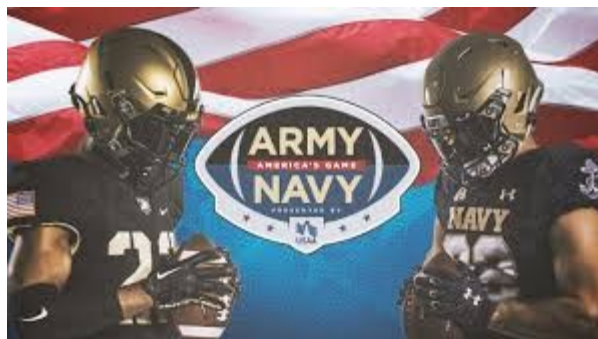
OTHER PROGRAMS BEING CONSIDERED

1. 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**".
2. Dr. Brian Unwin, M.D. Carilion Center for Healthy Aging on "**The Cost of Aging**".
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**"
5. Social gathering on 14 December 2024 for the **2024 ARMY-NAVY Football Game**. Details TBA.

2024 ARMY NAVY FOOTBALL GAME



JOIN THE SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA CHAPTER ON SATURDAY 14 DECEMBER FOR GOOD FUN, GOOD FOOD AND CHEER ON YOUR FAVORITE TEAM TO VICTORY. DETAILS TBA





CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP
as of 30 Sept 2024

Regular Members 78
Surviving Spouses 6
Total Members 84
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 December 2024.



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



NEVER STOP SERVING!

Featured in This Issue
Presidents Corner
Knowing History and Knowing Who We Are
Brain Injury Services of Southwest Virginia
74 Senators Back a Plan to Help Combat-Injured Vets. -
Why Won't They Vote on It?
MOAA-Supported Policy Change Will Help More Homeless
Veterans
Safeguarding Your Identity
Tragedy On Slapton Sands

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