



# The Communique

Southwest Virginia Chapter  
Military Officers Association of America



VOLUME 11 NUMBER 4

ROANOKE, VIRGINIA

OCT-NOV-DEC 2019

## MOAA SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA CHAPTER BEGINS FALL MEETING SCHEDULE



On **Thursday 19 September 2019** The Southwest Virginia Chapter of MOAA held its first fall membership meeting and lunch at the Hidden Valley Country Club. The guest speaker and program was presented by Mr. Seungsoo “RJ” Jun, Senior Pastor, Raleigh Court United Methodist Church. His topic was “Dynamic Korea”. Originally from S. Korea, “RJ” compared South Korea and the U.S. providing background and recent developments in North Korea. He opined that with the border between North and South Korea just some 30 miles from Seoul the South Korean’s are not as worried as the U.S. is. He indicated that the North Korean leader is doing what he does just to protect his regime. With mandatory military service in Korea, he served as a sergeant in the South Korean military to augment the US Army stationed in South Korea and served alongside U.S. soldiers. “RJ” has family in both South and North Korea.



On **Thursday, 17 October 2019** the Southwest Virginia Chapter of MOAA held its membership dinner meeting at the Shenandoah Club. Approximately 40 members and guests were in attendance. The speaker for the evening program was Ms. Heath Hardage Lee who discussed her book, “The League of Wives: The Untold Story of the Women Who Took on the U.S.

Government to Bring Their Husbands Home from Vietnam”. This is the true story of the fierce band of women who battled Washington—and Hanoi—to bring their husbands home from the jungles of Vietnam. Ms. Lee told how she decided to write the book and the detailed research and multiple interviews she conducted to gather the information to write the story. Following is the genesis of the story: On February 12, 1973, one hundred and sixteen men who, just six years earlier, had been high flying Navy and Air Force pilots, shuffled, limped, or were carried off a huge military transport plane at Clark Air Base in the Philippines. These American servicemen had endured years of brutal torture, kept shackled and starving in solitary confinement, in rat-infested, mosquito-laden prisons, the worst of which was The Hanoi Hilton. Months later, the first Vietnam POWs to return home would learn that their rescuers were their wives, a group of women that included Jane Denton, Sybil Stockdale, Louise Mulligan, Andrea Rander, Phyllis Galanti, and Helene Knapp. These women, who formed The National League of Families, would never have called themselves “feminists,” but they had become the POW and MIAs most fervent advocates, going to extraordinary lengths to facilitate their husbands’ freedom—and to account for missing military men—by relentlessly lobbying government leaders, conducting a savvy media campaign, conducting covert meetings with antiwar activists, and most astonishingly, helping to code secret letters to their imprisoned husbands.



## President’s Corner



This will be my last “President’s Column” as I am finishing up my second year as President. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as chapter president. Together, we have accomplished a great deal in serving the military community of Roanoke, New River Valley, and Smith Mountain Lake. There are more opportunities before us. I would encourage everyone to pitch in and “never stop serving.” The calendar has moved to the time of the year which I call “the holiday season.” (I write this on Columbus Day) The first holiday which I would want us to focus on is Veterans Day. Originally observed to remember the end of World War I. After World War II, all veterans were honored. There is a line in the Wizard of Oz where the Wizard tells the Cowardly Lion that back where he comes from (Kansas) once a year “men take their fortitude out of moth balls and parade it down Main Street.” Veterans Day is a reminder that men and women have served and our serving our country. We may not march down Main Street putting our fortitude on display. However, we should go to events that celebrate and commemorate Veterans. The second holiday is one which is unique to North America, Thanksgiving Day.

*Continued on Page 5 “President”*

<p><b>2019 OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA</b></p>	<p><b>MOAA SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA CHAPTER BEGINS FALL MEETING SCHEDULE (Cont.)</b></p>
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On **Thursday 21 November 2019** The Southwest Virginia Chapter of MOAA held its monthly membership meeting and lunch at the Hidden Valley Country Club. The guest speaker and program was presented by Jerry Barnes a veteran U.S. Army combat engineer and a career with the Army Corps of Engineers. His program touched on the origins of the Corps of Engineers, unique work he has been involved in as a Army Officer from 1968-1971 and later as a civilian in the Senior Executive Service throughout the US and abroad. He also spoke about his published book "When Heaven Visits, Dramatic Accounts of Military Heroes". The book is written around the last four words of the oath of enlistment - "**So Help Me God**".





On **Thursday 12 December 2019** The Southwest Virginia Chapter of MOAA held its monthly membership meeting and lunch at the Hidden Valley Country Club. The guest speaker and program was presented by Colonel Philip "Coop" Cooper, USAF, a Command helicopter pilot with more than 3,500 flight hours, 500 of which were in combat. Colonel Cooper is currently the Commander, Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps, Detachment 880 at Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Virginia. Colonel Cooper's last assignment was May 2018 – June 2019, as Commander, 438th Air Expeditionary Advisor Group, Kabul International Airport, Kabul Afghanistan assisting and advising a 4,038-person Kabul Air Wing. Colonel Cooper updated the membership on the current status of the AFROTC program at VMI and provided a review of the international support being provided to the Afghanistan Air Force. Chapter President CDR Lee Ensley presented COL Cooper with a certificate of appreciation for his presentation.



**CHAPTER CALENDER**

**12 DEC 2019: 1200**  
Lunch & Program Hidden Valley CC. Installation of officers and Board members for 2020. Board of Directors meeting 1000.

**16 JAN 2020: 1200**  
Lunch and Program Hidden Valley CC. Dr. Peter Coogan, History Professor Hollins University, Military strategy, national security policy, Vietnam and perceptions on counterinsurgency.

**20 FEB 2020: 1200**  
Lunch and Program Hidden Valley CC. Mr. Gary Crawford will present a program on President Abraham Lincoln our 16th President of the United States Board of Directors meeting at 1000.

**19 MAR 2020: 1200**  
Lunch and Program Hidden Valley CC. Ms. Amy White, Dean, School of Science, Technology and Ms. Michelle Hilts Veterans Director Virginia Western Community College. STEM Program and veterans. Board of Directors meeting.

**16 April 2020 :1800**  
Dinner meeting and Program Shenandoah Club. CDR Youssef Aboul-Enein U.S. Navy Medical Service Corps and Middle East Foreign Area Officer. Middle East issues and Islamist radicalization.

**21 May 2020:**  
Lunch and Program Hidden Valley CC. TBD. Board of Directors meeting.

**NOTICE**

*It is with regret to notify the membership that this will be the last print and mailing of the newsletter. The cost of printing and mailing the newsletter to chapter members has become cost prohibitive. Future newsletter will be sent by e-mail. Copies may be printed from our computer for individuals without e-mail if so notified.*

## MEMBER PROFILE

### RONNIE "RON" JOHNSON



Ronnie "Ron" Johnson was born on 20 September 1946 in Benham, Kentucky. He graduated from Lynch High School in 1964 where he was President of his Senior Class. Ron enrolled at the University of Kentucky where he was a distinguished member of the Army ROTC program and recognized as such as the top cadet at two different ROTC training camps. Ron graduated in 1968 with a Bachelor of Arts degree and was commissioned an infantry officer in the United States Army.

Ron Johnson began his active duty service in the Army in August 1968 at Fort Benning, Georgia and then Fort Knox, Kentucky. After serving briefly as a training officer he was assigned as a Combat Platoon Leader in Vietnam with Bravo Company 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Seventh Cavalry First Air Cavalry Division. During November 1969 in combat operations in Viet Nam around the Parrots Beak area of Cambodia, Second Lieutenant Johnson distinguished himself in heavy combat by rescuing wounded soldiers, caring for the many casualties and reorganizing survivors to effectively complete the mission thus saving many lives. For his actions he was awarded the Silver Star for Gallantry during combat, the Combat Infantryman's Badge, and a Bronze Star along with other awards and commendations and promoted to the rank of First Lieutenant. Upon leaving active service he remained in the Army Reserves where he was subsequently promoted to Captain

After serving his country in the U.S. Army Ron Johnson returned to Kentucky and enrolled at the University Of Kentucky College Of Law. Upon graduation he was admitted into the bar and embarked on a distinguished legal career in service to the people of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. He served as an Assistant Commonwealth Attorney in both Pike and Harlan Counties and in 1988 the Kentucky Commonwealth Attorneys Association presented him with the 1988 Carroll M. Redford Award as Kentucky's Prosecutor of the Year.

He later was elected as Harlan County Circuit Court Judge where he served for 16 years during which time he was named the 1998 Judge of the Year by the Kentucky Bar Association. In the fall of 2018 Ron was again recognized by the citizens' of Cumberland Kentucky by having a bridge dedicated in his name in recognition of his long and distinguished service both as a U.S. Army Soldier and a Prosecutor and Judge.

Ron and his wife Linda, a school teacher, have two children, a son and daughter. They retired in 2013 and moved to Roanoke to be near their daughter and their grandchildren. Ron is an avid Kentucky sports fan.

## SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA CHAPTER OFFICERS 2020



On 12 December 2019 the Southwest Virginia Chapter conducted an installation of Chapter Officers and Board Members for 2020. The new officers and Board members were administered the oath of office by the outgoing President David Gilleran. The new Chapter officers and Board Members for 2020 are: PRESIDENT LEE M ENSLEY / 1<sup>ST</sup> VICE PRESIDENT MATTHEW HAAG / 2<sup>ND</sup> VICE PRESIDENT ROBERT BROWN / SECRETARY STEPHEN L JAMISON / TREASURER SCOTT P VAN CLEEF / CHAPLAIN DAVID GILLERAN / LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS REPRESENTATIVE ROBERT S HABERMANN / VCOC REPRESENTATIVE JAMES FLYNN / PERSONNEL AFFAIRS REPRESENTATIVE STEPHEN L JAMISON / PUBLIC AFFAIRS (NEWSLETTER/WEB SITE/FACEBOOK) THOMAS DALZELL / PROGRAMS THOMAS DALZELL / MEMBERSHIP ROBERT BROWN / AWARDS CHAIRMAN ROBERT S HABER-

MANN / SERGEANT AT ARMS MICHAEL KASNICK / BREVEMENT COMMITTEE DAVID GILLERAN / TRANSITION TEAM REPRESENTATIVE MICHAEL LEIGH / SURVIVING SPOUSE REPRESENTATIVE MARY LOU SUMMERS / PAST PRESIDENT DAVID GILLERAN / COMMUNITY SERVICES VOLUNTEER REPRESENTATIVE DAN KARNES / SMITH MOUNTAIN LAKE SATELLITE REPRESENTATIVE RICHARD COCRANE / BOARD MEMBERS ROGER BURNETT, LAWRENCE JOHNSON, JOHN MILLER.

### SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA CHAPTER LEADERSHIP AWARDS AND MOAA ROTC AWARDS, THANK YOU NOTES

Each year the SWVC chapter presents two Leadership Awards to ROTC Cadets/Midshipmen from either Virginia Tech or Radford University. The awards are presented each year at the University Awards Ceremony. The General William B. Rosson Leadership Award for 2018 was presented to Cadet Colleen Pramenko of the VT USAF ROTC Unit. The General Lloyd B. Ramsey Leadership Award for 2018 was presented to Cadet Djamila Lou of the VT USAF ROTC Unit. Their Thank You notes are as shown below: Chapter Certificates of Recognition were also presented to four other Cadets who submitted Leadership Award applications.

Each year the SWVC chapter presents MOAA ROTC Medal Awards to ROTC Cadets/Midshipmen from Virginia Tech and Radford University. The awards are presented each year at the University Awards Ceremony. The MOAA ROTC Awards were presented to Virginia Tech Cadets Harrison Barone, Kimberly Hoffman and Isabelle Pfund. Their thank you notes are shown below.

**VTCC** 2019  
 Dear Southwest Virginia Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America,  
 It was an honor to be selected for the General William B. Rosson Leadership Award. I am very appreciative of the generous gift of \$500. Your investment in my future has lightened my financial burden.  
 This summer I have an internship at Wright-Patterson AFB working on a research project to determine the total average divergence in thunderstorm production in direct support of a space launch at Cape Canaveral. Your gift will help pay for some of my expenses. Thank you again for your continued support of the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets.  
 Sincerely,  
 Colleen Pramenko  
 Thank You

**VTCC**  
 To the Military Officers Association,  
 I am so grateful that I was chosen for the recipient of this award. I was so excited to learn that I was chosen for this award! It is so wonderful that you took time out of your busy schedule to give this award. Thank you again!  
 With respect,  
 Isabel Pfund  
 Thank You

**VTCC**  
 To the MOAA and its Southwest Virginia Chapter  
 I am sincerely honored to have been selected as the recipient of the MOAA ROTC Award Medal. Thank you for your support of my leadership development as well as your support of the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets and Army ROTC.  
 Very Respectfully,  
 Kimberly Hoffman  
 Thank You

**VTCC**  
 Dear Oldies Southwest Virginia Chapter,  
 Thank you very much with the Major General Lloyd B. Ramsey Leadership Award. I am honored to have been selected, and appreciate all the time and effort that it took to consider my application.  
 Very Respectfully,  
 Djamila Lou  
 Thank You

**VTCC**  
 Dear Military Officers Association of America,  
 It is my honor to receive an award from your prestigious organization. To be given this opportunity and recognition means dearly to myself and the Corps of Cadets.  
 Thank you.

### MOAA SWVC CHAPTER MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN THE SEVENTH ANNUAL SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA VETERANS CEMETERY WREATH LAYING CEREMONY



SWVC chapter members LTC Bob Habermann, USA, COL Tom Dalzell, USMC, CDR Lee Ensley USN, COL Mark Clark, USAF, LT Dave Brammer USCG, and COL John Miller USA await the start of the 7th annual wreath laying ceremony at the Virginia Veterans Cemetery in

Dublin, VA on Saturday 14 December 2019. Over 1800 wreaths were placed by families and members of the public. The program included music by the 29th Division Band, Virginia Army National Guard, the Virginia State Police Color Guard, the Montgomery County Sheriff's Department Rifle Team for the Ceremonial Rifle Salute, the Pledge of Allegiance by the Roanoke Battalion US Naval Sea Cadets – Roanoke, VA, and Bagpiper Andrew Shields. The Guest Speaker was Acting Commissioner of VA Veterans Services Mr. Steve Combs.



COL Tom Dalzell, USMC, LTC Bob Habermann, USA, CDR Lee Ensley USN, Ms. Mary Lou Summers, COL Mark Clark, USAF, COL John Miller USA and LT Dave Brammer USCG after the wreath laying ceremony. Thanks to Mary Lou and her volunteers for organizing

and coordinating this event each year.



### MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF MERICA 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 new members joining MOAA between 1 July and 31 December are \$20.00. Please mail dues payment to: **MOAA, SW Virginia Chapter, P.O. Box 3090, Roanoke, VA 24015-1090**

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE** (Cont'd from page 1)

(Canada had its Thanksgiving Day today, Oct. 14) Both Jamestown and Plymouth claim the first Thanksgiving. No matter who gets the credit, it is a day which we set aside to thank Almighty God for the blessing which He has poured on each of us. It should be more than a day of eating and watching football. It is time to reflect upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. I would encourage each of us to take time on Thanksgiving to count our blessing and name them one by one. Lastly, on New Year's Day give thanks for the past but look forward to 2020. What will you do to fulfill the words of the Prophet Micah, "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God."

*Dave Gilleran*

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

### **THE VA IS PROCESSING MORE APPEALS, DECISIONS , THANKS TO NEW SYSTEM**

The results are in: The Board of Veterans' Appeals processed 11% more decisions and held 38% more hearings in fiscal 2019 than 2018 thanks, in part, to a new congressionally-mandated appeals structure, officials reported this month. That new process, combined with hiring more staff, helped the board process nearly 95,100 rating appeals, of which 35% were granted and 30% denied, BVA Chairman Cheryl Mason said. "The entire department is mostly focused on changing what we do," Mason said. "This is really about changing for the veterans and providing the services that the veterans and their families need and that's what the board is committed to." Two years ago, Congress passed a modernization act to have the board develop three options for reviewing decisions, better notifying veterans about outcomes, and improving claim resolution time. VBA is tasked with reviewing veterans' appeals for the three administrations under the Department of Veterans Affairs: Veterans Benefits Administration, Veterans Health Administration and National Cemetery Administration. Before the new three-track plan went into effect in February, it took an average of seven years to resolve a single appeal -- three to make it to the board in the first place and at least three more as the BVA considered it, Mason said. The three claim tracks included in the new system focus on review levels. One option lets veterans introduce new evidence in their case and have a regional specialist review it through the "supplemental claim lane." A higher-level review will let their case be reviewed by a more senior official. A third option allows them to send the appeal to BVA using a system similar to the one previously used for all claims. "That's what

similar to the one previously used for all claims. "That's what it's about: choices for veterans so they don't get stuck for three or seven years," Mason said. Mason said they don't yet know the average processing time since it hasn't been a full year since the new appeals options were introduced. The processed claims don't include movement on "legacy" appeals, or those filed before the new track system, which still need to be processed, Mason said. She estimated over the next year, BVA will tackle 60,000 veterans with "legacy" appeals requesting a hearing in addition to 12,000 veterans asking for a hearing under the new system. "There's a little bit of an inventory there," Mason said, "but that's why we're excited about the virtual hearings and the opportunity it provides to us." While staff are working to create "telehearings," BVA officials have taken over the hearing scheduling and reorganized the decision letter to be easier to understand. Meanwhile, Mason said she's increased the office size by about 400 people since she took office in December 2017, giving her 96 judges and about 800 attorneys to review appeals and make decisions. Moving forward, she said the BVA will leverage its ability to hire more military spouses to increase staff size. "That's part of our commitment to changing the process, improving the process, hiring the right people, and just hiring veterans and their families," Mason said, "because all of those groups bring a perspective that we need to have." "here's a little bit of an inventory there," Mason said, "but that's why we're excited about the virtual hearings and the opportunity it provides to us." While staff are working to create "telehearings," BVA officials have taken over the hearing scheduling and reorganized the decision letter to be easier to understand. Meanwhile, Mason said she's increased the office size by about 400 people since she took office in December 2017, giving her 96 judges and about 800 attorneys to review appeals and make decisions. Moving forward, she said the BVA will leverage its ability to hire more military spouses to increase staff size. "That's part of our commitment to changing the process, improving the process, hiring the right people, and just hiring veterans and their families," Mason said, "because all of those groups bring a perspective that we need to have." *Dorothy Mills-Gregg, Military.com. For more information go to: <http://takeaction.moa.org>.*

### **LEGISLATIVE NOTE**

The SW Virginia MOAA Chapter is a nonpartisan organization. We encourage our members to participate in the political process. However, members cannot use their membership in MOAA when supporting a candidate or political position. We are an advocacy organization for veterans and military issues at the local, state and national level.

**ROANOKE VETERANS DAY PARADE 2019**



The Southwest Virginia Chapter of MOAA participated in the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual 2019 Virginia’s Veterans Day Parade on 9 November 2019. Riding in the Thunderbird convertible are representatives of the Southwest Virginia Chapter, Lieutenant Colonel Dan Karnes, USAR (Ret) and Major Jim Baum, USA (Ret). The Parade Grand Marshal was BGEN Scott Van Cleef, USAF (Ret), SWVC chapter treasurer.

**MEMORIAL BENCH IN HONOR OF LTC JAMES “PAT” GREEN USA (RET)**

The Southwest Virginia Chapter of MOAA approved a resolution to purchase and locate a granite “Memorial Bench” to be placed at



the Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Dublin, Virginia in memory of LTC James “Pat” Green, USA (Ret). LTC Green was instrumental in getting the cemetery located in Dublin, Virginia. Lettering on one side of the bench will read

“**MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA CHAPTER.**” The opposite side of the bench will read “**LTC PATRICK H. GREEN, USA (RET) A DRIVING FORCE IN ESTABLISHING THIS CENETERY.**” Dedication of the Memorial Bench will be conducted at a later date.

**MOAA 2018 FOUR STAR LEVEL OF EXCELLENCE AWARD**



On Wednesday 9 October 2019 LTC Jim Flynn USA (Ret), the Southwest Virginia Chapter VCOC Representative received the MOAA 2018 Four Star Level of Excellence Award presented to the Southwest Virginia Chapter from LTGEN Dana Atkins, CEO of MOAA during the Fourth Quarter VCOC Biennial Luncheon at Patriots Colony in Williamsburg, VA.



**Anderson, Desimone & Green, P.C.**

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Thank you for your service

## PROPOSED CHANGES TO BURIAL ELIGIBILITY AT ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY



On Sept. 25, then-Acting Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy [announced](#) the proposed eligibility changes for burial at Arlington National Cemetery. These draft revisions begin the first step of the [federal rule-making process](#), a

minimum nine-month procedure.

The Administrative Procedures Act requires the Department of the Army, to publish the notice of proposed rulemaking in the Federal Register and allow any interested parties to comment. The agency is also required to respond to “significant” comments and consider changes based on those comments. Since the release of the proposed revisions, many MOAA members have written and called the Member Service Center with questions. To better understand the rulemaking process and how these proposals affect them, MOAA has prepared several Frequently Asked Questions:

### Q. How do these proposals differ from current eligibility?

A. Current eligibility standards can be found in this [Arlington fact sheet](#). Primary differences between the draft proposals and the existing eligibility standards are:

- (1) Emphasis on combat service for award recipients and government officials
- (2) Minimum service of two years on active duty with combat service for traditional veterans
- (3) Distinctions between below ground interment and above ground inurnment for eligibility

### Q. Which groups won't see significant changes?

A. These individuals who are now eligible for both inurnment and in-ground burial would remain so under the proposal:

- (1) Any veteran who received the Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross (Air Force or Navy), Distinguished Service Medal, Silver Star, or Purple Heart with combat service.
- (2) Any former prisoner of war who, while a prisoner of war, served honorably in the active military, naval, or air service; whose last period of service terminated honorably; and who died on or after Nov. 30, 1993.
- (3) Any president or vice president.
- (4) Spouses, minor and adult dependents of qualifying veterans.

### Q. Which groups would be most affected by the proposed changes?

A. These individuals would see significant changes under the proposed eligibility rules:

- (1) Those who die on Title 10 federal active duty (other than for training) had been eligible for inurnment and in-ground burial. They would remain eligible for both under the draft, but only if their death is combat-related.
- (2) Those veterans who retired from active duty and are receiving retirement pay would no longer be eligible for ground burial but would remain eligible for inurnment.
- (3) Veterans who served less than two years on active duty in combat no longer would be eligible for inurnment. At present, veterans who served at least a day on active duty (other than for training) are eligible; this group is not eligible for in-ground burial.
- (4) Any member of a reserve component, and any member of the Army National Guard, whose death occurs under honorable conditions while on active duty for training or performing full time ser-

vice would retain eligibility for inurnment only if death occurs in active duty combat or if they served at least two years in active duty combat. They would remain ineligible for in-ground burial unless they meet other qualifying criteria.

### Q. Are there any exceptions to the proposed changes?

A. Yes. World War II era veterans would be eligible for inurnment, and veterans with combat service who also served out of uniform as a government official with significant contributions to national security would be eligible for both inurnment and in-ground burial.

### Q. My spouse is already buried at Arlington. Will I be able to be buried with him/her?

A. Yes. The current policy at ANC states that spouses who are considered derivatively eligible and/or have pre-deceased the service-member are still eligible for burial if space is available in the same gravesite. There will be no change to this policy.

### Q. I am a retiree of xx years and had planned to be interred at ANC. Will I still be eligible?

A. It is still too early in the rulemaking process to know the specifics of what DoD plans; however, the current proposal allows for above-ground inurnment for any member of the armed forces [eligible to receive retired pay] who is not otherwise eligible. Above ground inurnments qualify for the same level of [funeral honors](#) as ground burials.

### Q. I am not eligible for burial under the proposal. What does this mean for my plans and what are my options?

A. This is only the first step of a lengthy process, which includes a period of public comment. At that time, members of the public will be encouraged to share their thoughts in the Federal Registry on the proposed rule change. MOAA Members are encouraged to participate during the public comment period.

There are 138 [Veteran Cemeteries](#) active to-date, which include accommodations for honored burial for veterans which are [continuing to expand](#). (For more, read MOAA's publication [Your Guide to Military Burials](#).)

### Q. When will these revisions take effect?

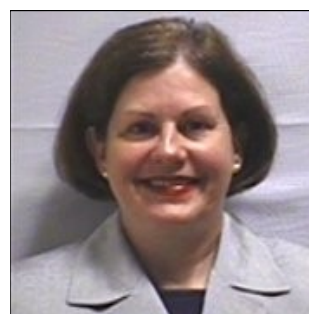
A. The proposal is still in the draft form and still must undergo the nine-month rulemaking process before taking effect. These ten steps ([see this graphic](#)) include review and approval by the secretary of defense and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) before being published in the Federal Registry for Public comment. After this 60-day period, the Army will review and respond to the comments before drafting the final rule for DoD and OMB approval.

### Q. When will the public comment period be?

A. This largely depends on the timeliness of the DoD and OMB. At this time, the public comment period is estimated to take place in April 2020.

### Q. The Secretary's proposal emphasizes "combat-service." What does this mean for veterans who served during eras of

*Cont'd on Pg 8 "Arlington Cemetery"*



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**MOAA, SWVC Chapter Again Participates with Renovation Alliance**



On 5 October 2019, for the eleventh year in a row and for the second time in 2019, the Southwest Virginia Chapter participated in “Renovation Alliance

Day Roanoke” to make needed repairs on a veteran’s home. Repairs were made on the home of Ms. Sharon Caldwell a Navy veteran located at 1102 Syracuse Avenue, NW in Roanoke, VA. Southwest Virginia Chapter members partnered with the West Point Society of Southwest Virginia, the Stonewall Jackson Chapter of AUSA to install seven new windows on the second floor; installing flashing along the siding over the front porch roof; painting the installed flashing to match the siding and some minor repairs on the underside of the front porch roof while checking for possible leaks from the porch roof. Renovation Alliance” is a national organization funded through the local government and businesses to make minor home repairs and upgrades for homes of low income, handicap or veterans families. There were 16 volunteers on site not all available for the picture. The home owner is in the red shirt.

*Cont’d. from Page 7 “Arlington Cemetery”*

**non-combat engagement?**

A. The Secretary has stated the new rules, once implemented, must be applicable across all eras of service and equitable across all the branches.

**Q. What does the proposal for “government official” mean? Does this allow for civilians to be buried at Arlington?**

A. The current eligibility rules include over 100 Title V positions. In order to extend the life of the cemetery “well into the future,” the SecArmy is endeavoring to scale this list of government officials to articulate the imperative of “Sacrifice, Service, and Impact.” Under the proposed criteria, non-veterans would not be eligible for burial at Arlington, unless they were a spouse or dependent family member of qualifying veteran.

**Q. Will other medals for valor awards or religious burial considerations be weighed with eligibility criteria?**

A. Again, it is too early in rulemaking process to discuss specific scenarios. The current eligibility standards for valor awards state: “Received Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross (Air Force or Navy), Distinguished Service Medal, Silver Star, or Purple Heart.” The Army’s proposal does not account for burial requirements based on religion. Due to the ongoing challenge of wait times at ANC, coupled with the scheduling process for funerals, individuals who are unable to go through with cremation or must schedule immediate burial have the option of using the 138 Veteran cemeteries run by the National Cemetery Administration (NCA), as well as state cemeteries, or private cemeteries which allow for VA burial benefits.

Congress.

For more information, please visit [https://](https://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/About/Proposed-Revised-Eligibility-Criteria)

[www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/About/Proposed-Revised-Eligibility-Criteria](https://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/About/Proposed-Revised-Eligibility-Criteria).

The next issue will be published MAR 2020.

Note: The *Communique* is now published quarterly.

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



*Featured in this Issue*

-The VA Is Processing More Appeals, Decisions, Thanks To New System  
-Proposed Changes To Burial Eligibility  
-Arlington National Cemetery  
-SWVA Chapter Officers for 2020  
-Veterans Wreath Laying Ceremony VA Veterans Cemetery Dublin, VA.

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