

THE CHRISTMAS TRUCE –CHRISTMAS EVE 1914



In the photograph above is shown Arno Bohm, a German soldier, standing alongside British troops from the London Rifle Brigade. They're standing together in the middle of no man's land during the Christmas truce of 1914. This photograph captures a moment so unusual in the First World War that many people at the time, and to this day, believed it to be a myth. In the midst of a brutal total war, how did this momentary peace come about, what impact did it have in the course of the First World War and why did it never happen again?

Marmaduke Walkinton: *"We were in the front line. We were about 300 yards from the Germans and we had I think on Christmas Eve, we'd been singing carols and this that and the other, and the Germans had been doing the same, and we'd been shouting to each other, sometimes rude remarks, more often just joking remarks."*

Eventually a German said, 'Tomorrow you no shoot, we no shoot'. At the start of the war many believed it would all be over by Christmas. However, by December that year it was obvious that this was not the case, and thousands of families and soldiers were facing a Christmas of separation, grief and hardship.

Anthony Richards: *"So for those soldiers who are in the trenches over winter 1914, the conditions would have got gradually worse and worse. You got a lot of rain; a lot of frost and the general living conditions would have been terrible."* But the British troops were not alone. In the trenches opposite theirs, sometimes only 30 yards away across the strip of no man's land, were German soldiers in the exact same situation. *"There was lots of opportunity for each side to communicate with the other, and this was a regular thing which happened right from the start of trench warfare. But communication would often be in the form of soldiers from one side shouting over insults to those in the other trenches. But what was interesting at Christmas is that both sides actually started to communicate in more friendly terms. It really began with the Germans singing Christmas carols and setting up Christmas trees on top of their parapets. And so, they came to very much empathize with one another."*

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President's Corner

Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and Happy Holidays however you

celebrate. I hope all had a blessed Thanksgiving holiday also. As this year ends let us take time to be with family and friends.



Remembering the good times as well as taking time to remember those we lost this past year.

I find it hard to believe this is my last column as president. Not sure where the time went but it has been a privilege to have led this chapter. I will hand over the gavel in January to CAPT USN (Ret.) Gary Powers who I know will continue to do great things for our chapter. Gary has been a long-time member and board member and has a wealth of knowledge that will benefit all of us.

As I leave there are many things, I was happy to see completed and disappointed that a few of my goals did not get accomplished. I am very proud of this chapter and the support I received from both the board and the membership. Speaking of our board we still have a few positions open so if you think you may be interested in serving, please talk to me or any other board member about joining. I hope you will join me in continuing to serve, not only our chapter, but MOAA and the causes it supports.

2023 OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Presidents Corner Cont'd from page 1

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Not only the last two years but this past quarter has gone by quickly and your chapter has been busy. This year as last, several members of MOAA were able to ride with Gary Powers in his Shore Patrol Jeep and represent our local chapter in the Roanoke Veterans Day Parade. Thank you again to Gary for providing your Jeep.

I also represented MOAA SWVA at the Roanoke Valley Veterans Council sponsored Veteran Legislative Forum on 7 December. This was an opportunity for members of all veteran organizations to meet with our local state legislators. Legislators in attendance were, Delegate Joseph McNamara, Senator David Sutterlein, Senator Christopher Head, and Representative elect Chris Obenshain (Yes this is our member Joe Obenshain's son.).

This forum was any opportunity to get their input on several legislative initiatives that the Joint Leadership Council of Veteran Service Organizations developed as well as address issues to all such as Interstate 81 repairs that affect all who live in the area. All legislators were supportive of the initiatives in concept but wanted to fully review before they committed to them. They once again expressed concern that the General Assembly may want to approve the easy, low-cost initiatives and push the more expensive and more beneficial to veteran initiatives to the next year. That way they can say they supported veterans but not take a stand that will cost the taxpayer in either higher taxes or loss of other services to pay for the veteran initiatives.

This year the legislative initiative that will have the largest impact (and therefore cost) is to reduce the tax-exempt retirement age to be able to receive the reduction from 55 to 40. Personally, I would like to see the age requirement eliminated as many junior personnel have been medically retired because of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and they could really use this benefit.

In closing I just want to wish you all the best. I hope to see you at our December meeting and if not there than at our meetings next year.

Happy Holidays,

Matthew K. Haag
CAPT USN (Ret.)
President

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.



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Mr Rickner: *"I remember very well Christmas. I remember the Christmas Day when the German and the French soldiers left their trenches, went to the barbed wire between them with champagne and cigarettes in their hands and had feelings of fraternisation and shouted they wanted to finish the war. And that lasted only two days - one and a half really - and then strict order came that no fraternisation was allowed, and we had to stay back in our trenches."*

The Christmas truce varied in different parts of the front line. Ceasefires were hastily arranged, sometimes to enable the collection and burial of bodies or to allow the trenches to be repaired, in other cases the soldiers simply enjoyed fraternizing with the other side. **Ernie Williams:** *"And we shared fags and goodies with the Germans, and then from somewhere, somehow this football appeared." "It was a proper football. But we didn't form a team, it wasn't a team game in any sense of the word. You know it was a kickabout. Everybody was having a go. It came from their side; it wasn't from our side where the ball came." "I should think there'd be at least a couple of hundred." "I had to go at it, I was pretty good then, at 19."*

But while some parts of the front line were playing football and swapping stories, others were confused by what they heard or felt no inclination to socialize with those they had so recently been fighting. **Clifford Lane:** *"After a few moments, there were lighted objects raised above the German parapets. The Germans were shouting over to our trench, there's no doubt about that at all, and before we could take any action or do anything, we were ordered to open rapid fire you see, which we did. The Germans did not reply to our rapid fire, they simply carried on with their celebrations and were having a very fine time indeed. They certainly were not going to do it anymore; they thought that we were idiots I suppose, which we were. Not us but the command, you see."*

Anthony Richards: *"The way that trench warfare was organized in the First World War, each sector was very distinctive and so you wouldn't necessarily know what was happening in the sector next door to you, and you do get stories of one area of the front where they're experiencing a truce but then suddenly they get fired on by the troops in the next sector who don't realise what's happening."*

For those soldiers not involved, the truce must have seemed unbelievable, and even more so for those back home. For months the media and government propaganda had shaped the perception of German soldiers as bloodthirsty enemies, baby eaters, devils, ruthless killers. But news of the remarkable Christmas truce soon spread aboard. By the end of December, letters and photos arrived home and newspapers began to publish accounts of the truce.

John Wedderburn-Maxwell: *"My father was delighted to have a letter giving such a description of events and he sent it or sent them up to the Daily Telegraph. I got into frightful rocket; it showed up that it must have been me who wrote it and he got hold of me gave me an awful dressing down for daring to write to the press, but of course I didn't, my old man wrote to the press!"*

Photographs were taken on personal cameras that some soldiers had taken with them into the trenches. Photography in the trenches was discouraged for obvious reasons but during the Christmas Truce of 1914, soldiers on both sides of the trenches could not resist the opportunity to document such a unique event.

Anthony Richards: *"At the beginning of January 1915, the newspapers suddenly start printing these letters and to begin with there was a certain amount of disbelief but then over time suddenly photographs started to appear as well, and by that time the evidence was clear that this did happen it wasn't a myth, and the media at the time absolutely loved it. There were lots of discussions in the newspapers about whether this was a good thing, or a bad thing and you know in a way it's a wonderful snapshot of Christmas 1914 when attitudes were still slightly naïve because the war had only really just begun. You find that in 1915 and onwards the war becomes almost a much more serious endeavor."*

The Christmas truce would come to be remembered as something of a blip in the regular conduct of the war. It conflicted with the patriotic aggression required by both sides. It also served to highlight the great contrast between war and religion: how can you fight a war of aggression while also celebrating Christmas, the traditional time for peace and goodwill? For those reasons the Christmas truce was increasingly seen as unimportant and awkward to fit into the standard narrative of the First World War.

Anthony Richards: *"You never get anything like the Christmas truce happening again, and over time not only is it seen as an anomaly but almost as a myth, and it gets to the point where people are actually doubting whether it happened in the first place, which continues right up to this day. So, there's still a lot of confusion about whether there was a football match played and things like this."*

Harold Lewis: *"We didn't cross to France until March of 1915 but although it would be arrogant to say that the thing didn't actually take place I very much doubt whether anything of the nature or magnitude that had been claimed for it took place at all"*.

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Now the purpose of that barbed wire and the trenches was to keep each side in its own place therefore why would anybody try to break that and if anybody tried what are the NCOs doing? I think the whole thing borders on the fairy tale and may be classed with the Russians with snow on their boots and the Angels of Mons."

Anthony Richards: "We know by looking at German newspapers that the Christmas truce was covered there in a very similar way to how it was in Britain. In the 1920s and the 1930s you see definite examples of how the Christmas truce changes in its depiction because there was a much greater emphasis then on the German soldier as a hero fighting a noble war, whereas the Christmas truce conflicts with that to a degree. So, in Germany in particular the Christmas truce goes out of favour definitely in the 20s and 30s, whereas in Britain it continues to be a popular celebrated story as part of the First World War." The letters and photographs that reached home in Britain confirmed that this remarkable event had indeed taken place but it was one that was not to be repeated.

Anthony Richards: "The Christmas truce was unique and nothing like it happened again to that scale, and the reasons for this are varied. Immediately after the truce, the high command of both sides stepped in to make sure that fraternization and ceasefires like this would not happen in the same way. But also, in the long term the real reason the truth is like this didn't happen is that the war changed the way in which it was being fought. As the war progressed there's a more centralized method of command: those in the front line would have been forced into constant aggression, you would have had artillery and trench mortar units constantly going. And also of course as the war progressed it took a far nastier turn, so you get things like gas warfare introduced, an increasing number of civilian casualties. You also get incidents like sinking of the Lusitania. The temptation I suppose to empathize with the enemy and the desire to fraternize with them changed dramatically from 1915 onwards."

It can be argued that the Christmas truce made little difference to the course of the First World War, but it would be remembered as a crucial moment in history. The truce has featured in films, television programs, inspired songs, and even featured in adverts. It's become part of the symbolism used when discussing the First World War, as synonymous with that conflict as poppies, mud and war poets. This unique event has become legendary, in part because the idea of peace at Christmas in such an unlikely place is an irresistible story. But its enduring legacy is also due to the incredible photographs and the interviews from those who were there, documenting an event that to so many still seems wholly unbelievable.




NEW FREEDOM FARM, INC. HEALING HUMANS THROUGH HORSES

On 21 September 2023 Ms. Deborah Ingram, Resource Advocate Community Development for New Freedom Farm, Inc provided an in-depth summary of the purpose and mission of New Freedom Farm. In the United States, veterans commit suicide at a rate of 22 individuals per day. The farm itself is a safe place for veterans and first responders suffering from trauma, depression/anxiety, substance use, and other issues. Staff and volunteers engage visitors to the farm by encouraging therapeutic interaction



The Problem...

- Many veterans feel as though no one understands them.
- Veterans do not want to be labeled by insurance companies, analyzed by therapists or feel trapped indoors.
- For veterans haunted by memories of traumatic events, suicide can seem to them to be the only way out.
- Chronic & repetitive reliving and an inability to make the internal war stop.
- Flashbacks & Re-experiencing
- Avoidance & Isolation




with the farm's equine residents, farm chores, and peer-to-peer support. These visits help veterans and first responders with feelings of isolation, communication, trust, and social skills. The end-goal of these interactions is to empower veterans and first responders to heal by realizing their efforts and contributions and assisting with reintegration into civilian life.

The Solution...

- New Freedom Farm is a place where veterans can feel safe without schedules or defining structure.
- Some veterans report that other types of therapy were not effective in relieving their symptoms.
- Veterans may have a love of, or interest in, animals, farming and gardening, including horses.
- The veteran may relate to a horse as a respected symbol of power.
- Veterans recognize physical and mental health benefits from interacting with horses, being outdoors, and moving around in a receptive setting.
- Veteran to veteran approach



American Heroes with American Icons

- "If you add in a wild mustang that has been ungentled, never ever touched, the veteran needs to learn communication skills and patience."
- Being present
- Program how it works
- BLM Compliance top 5 Facilities in the USA
- GFAS Accreditation 4/21 Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries first veteran/mustang Program in history



Why New Freedom Farm?

- New Freedom Farm was founded by U.S. Navy Veteran, Forensic Nurse, Lois Dawn Magill after a personal struggle with PTSD and substance abuse.
- After lots of feedback from fellow veterans; we have often heard that the typical therapy setting was not working.
- Every day 22 Veterans a commit suicide in our country.
- A Safe Sober Place to Just Be!



Just as New Freedom Farm is a safe place for humans, it is also a dedicated safe haven for its equine residents. The horses and other animals that live on the farm have come from their own traumatic situations, including abandonment and auction. The animals that reside at New Freedom Farm are what make the programs unique and will remain permanent inhabitants of the farm. One exception to this is the wild mustangs that make their way to this idyllic farm. Veterans chosen to participate in the Wild Mustang program may be eligible to assume responsibility for the animal if it is deemed appropriate for all.



The farm also offers unique service opportunities, including the New Freedom Farm Honor Guard and the mandated service program for individuals referred through local courts. New Freedom Farm is dedicated to helping those who have served our country and their families. Veterans and first responders are never charged for their visits to the farm. New Freedom Farm is a non-profit organization founded by veteran and retired forensic nurse investigator Lois Dawn Magill in 2016. Lois founded New Freedom Farm out of her personal understanding of PTSD and the therapeutic benefits of being around horses. Located on 26 level acres in Buchanan, VA, the farm is home to a number of equines, including wild mustangs, mares and their foals saved from slaughter, mini horses, and mini donkeys, among others. New Freedom Farm is dedicated to helping those who have served our country and their families. Since 2016, the farm's residents and programs have grown and continue to find new ways to serve veterans, first responders, and their families.

Mission Statement: New Freedom Farm provides refuge and rehabilitation from trauma to veterans and first responders, and equines, including the American Mustang. **Vision Statement:** New Freedom Farm envisions a future where all veterans and first responders are empowered, healthy, and supported, and all equines have peaceful homes.

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Why NFF?

- New Freedom Farm targets its market focus on two groups: veterans with PTSD, substance abuse and/or traumatic brain injuries and their families.
- Our property is flat, handicap accessible, and we provide broader access across the property with a golf cart made available for transportation on the farm.
- Networking has been done with many veteran's groups through meetings & community events.
- By leveraging technology, the farm enjoys a strong social media presence in the broader community.
- We are located 28 miles from the Salem Veterans Administration Hospital.



Veteran Needs...

The following is a summary of Veteran Statistics for PTSD, Substance Abuse, TBI and Suicide as listed on www.VA.gov :

- As of September 2014, there are about 2.7 million American veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars (compared to 2.6 million Vietnam veterans who fought in Vietnam).
- There are 8.2 million "Vietnam Era Veterans" (personnel who served anywhere during any time of the Vietnam War).
- At least 20% of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans have PTSD and/or Depression.
- Vietnam veterans also report high lifetime rates of PTSD ranging from 10% to 31%.
- PTSD is the third most prevalent psychiatric diagnosis among veterans using Veterans Affairs (VA) hospitals.
- 50% of those with PTSD do not seek treatment. Out of the half that seeks treatment, only half of them get "minimally adequate" treatment.



Collaborations

- Virginia Tech
- Virginia Tech Calvary Cadets
- US Federal Court Probation
- Angels of Assisi
- ARCH Services, Inc./Goodwill
- VA Medical Center, Salem, VA
- Botetourt County Community Court Corrections
- Roanoke County Community Court Corrections
- Botetourt County Commonwealth Attorney's Office
- Lynchburg Area Veterans Council
- Roanoke Area Veterans Council
- Bureau of Land Management to foster mustangs
- VFW
- American Legion
- Combat Veteran Motorcycle Association
- Keep Virginia Clean Lithia Roadside pick up

How Will New Freedom Farm Continue to Grow?

- There is a rapidly growing interest in equine-assisted therapy supporting the psychological health and family relationships of service members, veterans and their families worldwide. More than 30 major VA Medical Centers in the U.S. are participating in Equine Assisted Activities and that number is growing rapidly, particularly with returning combat veterans with PTSD.
- Our operation will likely expand as we begin to offer more services to these veterans and their families. There are a growing number of veterans asking for help with their PTSD and substance abuse issues. In our immediate vicinity alone there are 15,560 veterans.
- New Freedom Farm will continue to bring new visitors to the Buchanan and Botetourt County Area.
- There is a possibility of employing 3-8 people from our community.



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Accomplishments from the start

- Community Service workers
- Council for Community Service
- Buddy Check 22
- Army veterans horse clinics
- Veteran Suicidal / Relapse Save Committed
- Calls from across the United States
- Military Vehicles club
- DAV Veterans Council
- Case management homeless veterans, household goods, physical moving
- Admin / Board Meetings / Accountant / Strategic Planning
- Boy scouts Pine Wood Derby, Girl Scouts Ice Cream social, Church Life Group
- Radio stations, live radio
- Monument terrace, HOG Dealer in Lynchburg
- Hospice for Veterans
- Veterans and RT from Across the Country
- 4/7/18 Freedom Fest #1 817 COLD
- Barnyard Breakfast, BBQ and impromptu gatherings
- New Electric in Barn / Generator
- Week of filming, upcoming documentary
- Healing Waters, Guitars for Veterans, Honor Fest
- Team Rubicon staging for local emergency construction operation

WHAT DO WE NEED AND HOW CAN YOU HELP

- Of course, funding. Our current yearly operating budget is \$275,000.00 not including allocations for capital improvements.
- Staples gift cards
- Home Depot gift cards
- Select NFF as your Amazon Smiles designated charity
- Select NFF as your Kroger designated charity
- Gravel/stone dust arena replenishment
- Postage stamps
- Equine vet care account
- Feed account
- Staffing salaries
- Grant Writer
- Funding for roof canopy at covered riding arena



SWVC Chapter President CAPT Matt Haag, USN (Ret) presenting Ms. Deborah Ingram, New Freedom Farm, a token of appreciation for her excellent presentation



A veteran and his family



Renovation Alliance “Community Renovation Day” Saturday 7 October 2023

Southwest Virginia Chapter members participated in Roanoke, Virginia’s “*Community Renovation Day*” on Saturday 7 October 2023. Renovation Alliance (RA) was established in 1999 out of the recognition that each year, too many homes are lost to age and decay because low-income homeowners are unable to afford the high cost of home repairs and maintenance. That year, 50 volunteers joined together to repair 4 homes in the City of Roanoke and since then, we have repaired more than 1,600 homes in the Roanoke Valley. RA works with more than 1,000 volunteers and skilled contractors each year to provide free critical and necessary home repairs to an average of 100 homeowners. The work completed by RA is aimed at rebuilding warm, safe, dry, accessible, and healthy homes to preserve affordable homeownership and revitalize communities.

Renovation Alliance serves low-income homeowners residing within the Roanoke Valley (the cities of Roanoke and Salem and the counties of Roanoke, Botetourt, Craig, Floyd, and Franklin in southwest Virginia). To be eligible for services, the homeowner must have a gross annual household income equal to or below 80 percent of the Area Median Income. The organization prioritizes its services for homeowners who are over the age of 60, persons living with a disability, veterans and surviving partners, and families caring for young children. Their motto is: Bringing volunteers and communities together to improve the homes and lives of low-income homeowners in need.

The “**Veterans Team**” this year consisted of 15 veterans and volunteers from The Southwest Virginia Chapter of MOAA, The West Point Society and the Stonewall Jackson Chapter of the Association of the United States Army. The project site was the home of a widow of a veteran located at 1106 Jackson Ave. Project work included installing a comfort height toilet in the bathroom, safety grab bars in the bathroom tub/shower, a new bathroom sink, vanity and facet set, a new bathroom medicine cabinet, replacing a ceiling fan/light in the living room, repairing the landing and stairs on the rear door porch and cutting and removing overgrown trees, bushes and vines in the yard. The team also installed smoke detectors and replaced a bathroom vent fan. Mrs. Finney the owner is shown in the middle top row in picture.



GEORGE CATLETT MARSHALL, JR. : AMERICAN ARMY OFFICER AND STATESMAN

On Thursday 19 October 2023 Dr. Paul A. Levensgood, President of the George C. Marshall Foundation, presented a program on George Catlett Marshall Jr. General George C. Marshall was an American army officer and statesman. He rose through the United States Army to become Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army under Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman, then served as Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense under President Harry S. Truman. The program focused on George Catlett Marshall, the man and his lessons on leadership. There is no single type of leadership. However apparently many people are. Just take a look at the books on leadership available on Amazon, from Sun Tzu and Machiavelli to Nick Saban and Coach K. It's clearly a popular topic. But because Marshall's resume shines like very few in our history, it is worth a reminder:



- (1) Army Chief of Staff, who was the behind-the-scenes architect of victory in World War II.
- (2) The first American soldier to be named a five-star general.
- (3) Secretary of State whose vision helped rebuild western Europe after World War II through the plan named after him, the Marshall Plan.
- (4) Secretary of Defense during the Korean War.
- (5) The only career soldier to ever receive the Nobel Prize for Peace.
- (6) And a man who counted world leaders like Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, and even Josef Stalin as his greatest admirers.

Well, with a record like that, you'd think George C. Marshall was a born leader. As a child, Marshall was constantly getting in trouble, in the classroom and out. His behavior and his grades were so poor that when his brother, a recent VMI graduate, heard that his younger sibling was applying to his alma mater he begged his parents not to let him. He feared that George would disgrace the family. Maybe just to prove his brother wrong, he showed up at VMI in 1897 anyway. And then something sort of amazing happened. Although he remained a mediocre student at best, George Marshall took to military training like a duck to water. He quickly rose through the ranks and by his final year at VMI, he was regimental commander, the highest rank in the corps of cadets. He took great pride that others looked to him for direction and as a model of behavior. He had become, for the first time, a leader. And he did it not because he had a natural gift, but because it was something he focused on and consciously nurtured for the rest of his life. Some examples that illustrate a few leadership principles by which Marshall lived.

WWI

The first one is shown during World War I when Marshall was a young officer of a unit of untrained troops brought to France in the final days of that conflict. He was literally training these young men to fight only a few miles behind the front lines—just before they would be thrust into one of the most brutal wars in world history. It was, frankly, a mess. They didn't have proper equipment, and when the commanding American general came to check on Marshall's unit, he loudly criticized its commander in front of all the men. Something in Marshall, a sense of fairness and an unwillingness to let unfairness go unchecked, something snapped. Risking his entire Army career, he took hold of the general's arm, turned him around, and proceeded to tell him why his criticisms were unfair. Marshall's friends practically started packing his bags, assuming he would be court-martialed for insubordination. But guess what happened: the general, John J. Pershing, realized that this young officer was giving him on-the-ground information he needed to know. He didn't kick him out of the Army; he brought him onto his staff. What are the Leadership Lessons Marshall learned here?

1. **Don't be afraid to speak truth to power.**
2. **And always demonstrate loyalty to your team**



Ft. Benning

After the war, George Marshall had a number of Army posts, including an important one at Fort Benning (now Moore) where he completely changed the way American officers would be trained. He used the hard lessons of World War I to try and make sure that we would be better prepared for the next war, whenever that might come. His guiding principle was to train officers to be smart, flexible leaders who were ready and capable of making decisions under the most difficult circumstances. During his time overseeing this new way of training officers, Marshall made it a point to seek out the best soldiers he came into contact with and involved them in this process. I won't bore you with a bunch of names but trust me: the men whose talents Marshall nurtured became the backbone of the Army that was victorious in World War II. He truly believed what is often said:

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if you pay attention to picking the right people, being clear about what is required, and then trusting in them to do their jobs, success usually follows. It's no mistake that from Dwight Eisenhower down, many of these American warriors agreed that they never had a better boss than George C. Marshall. He cared for them as people. And he had confidence in their abilities. And that helped them be their best. **Leadership Lessons:**

1. No leader does it on his own, success comes from the team you build.
2. Empower those who work under you
3. Care for them
4. And get out of their way.

D-DAY

Marshall directed the U.S. effort in World War II from 1941 on. He orchestrated the movement and equipping of millions of men and women around the world, all while balancing the conflicting demands of the British, French, and Soviets, not to mention a U.S. Congress that then, as now, had its share of challenging personalities. So skilled was Marshall at this role, with Allied success as a result, that when it came time to finally invade Europe and bring Nazi Germany down, almost everyone, from Churchill to Stalin, assumed that Marshall would be in command. If you know your history of the invasion of Normandy, D-Day, on June 6, 1944, you will realize that Marshall's name is nowhere to be found. That is because, despite everyone's assumptions, the command went to Dwight Eisenhower. When FDR asked Marshall if he wanted command, he refused to state his preference. Now, Marshall desperately wanted that prize. He knew that history remembers best the generals who lead troops into battle—the one thing missing from his resume. And yet, he understood that in our constitutional order such a decision must rest with the commander-in-chief, the president. And he was unwilling to try and use his personal feelings to sway Roosevelt. Of course, Eisenhower became world famous for his role at D-Day and beyond and ultimately rode that acclaim to the White House. **Leadership Lesson:**



1. Leaders must be selfless. Their own personal glory is not the point—success of the mission is.

Marshall Plan

My final example of the traits by which Marshall built his own style of leadership are on display during his most famous achievement. In early 1947, less than two years after the end of World War II, Europe was still devastated. Its cities still lay in ruins, its



economy was shattered, and people were actually starving to death. And it seemed realistic that the Soviet Union would capitalize on the chaos and bring the whole continent under its thumb, or perhaps as the Russian bear, its paw. As the new secretary of state under President Truman, Marshall learned the seriousness of the problem and told his staff to find a solution. In two weeks, what we came to call the Marshall Plan lay on his desk. This attempt to save Europe was a combination of humanitarian relief, economic assistance, and geopolitical strategy. Proposing to spend

billions of dollars, It was the most ambitious and important American foreign policy effort ever. There was one problem. The country had just gone through a war that had cost billions of dollars and more than 400,000 American lives. The last thing that we wanted was to spend more money solving problems across the ocean. This feeling made Congress skeptical of, even hostile to, the Marshall Plan and its price tag. No other American could have gotten the bill authorizing the plan passed. No one except George C. Marshall. Even the president knew that. He begged that this not be called the "Truman Plan" because half of Congress wouldn't vote for it. "Marshall Plan" he knew would command respect. That's because through his years in Washington, Marshall had built a reputation for absolute integrity and honesty.

Continued on Page 11 "George Catlett Marshall Jr"

Continued from Page 10 "George Catlett Marshall Jr."



He was also known to be completely non-partisan. So, the Democrats and Republicans could trust that this program was needed and that American funds would be well spent. The rest, as they say, is history. It's no exaggeration to say that the Marshall Plan saved Western Europe. It became our greatest ally and our biggest trading partner. The world, as we know it now, would have been a very, very different place without it. **Leadership lessons:**

1. Vision and seeing the big picture are key.
2. Build credibility—you will eventually need it



THE
GEORGE C. MARSHALL
FOUNDATION



It's important for you to know that it is the work of the George C. Marshall Foundation to use the leadership lessons so perfectly embodied in the man's life to inspire current and future generations. We have made the strategic decision that—as in my remarks this evening—it is not enough for us to try and make sure as many people as possible know of Marshall's accomplishments—which are numerous and admirable. No, we feel that what is most vital about him were the underpinnings of his character that guided his life and career. They, we argue, are what allowed him to become the history-shaping figure he was. Our programs increasingly seek to drive home this point. For example, we are in the midst of a massive project to digitize the Marshall



Papers, a 400,000-document collection that has been a centerpiece of our library since Marshall himself donated it before his death. But we do this not just to make these documents available to researchers around the world through the internet. We do this because through the great work of recent authors, Marshall's character, his personal qualities, have been revealed to be the factor that set him apart from not only his contemporaries but from all but a few in American history. Similarly, when we launched a seminar for secondary school teachers this summer, it was not only so those hard-working educators had better ways to teach the Marshall Plan in their schools. We did so for them to understand the "why" of that momentous event. This allows them to communicate the grounding of the plan and how it came about in the bedrock principles of the life of George C. Marshall. Thus, they can go back to their classrooms and help develop the next generation of leaders. Not all of us will become 5-star generals.

Dr. Paul A. Levensgood, President of the George C. Marshall Foundation presenting a program on George Catlett Marshall Jr.

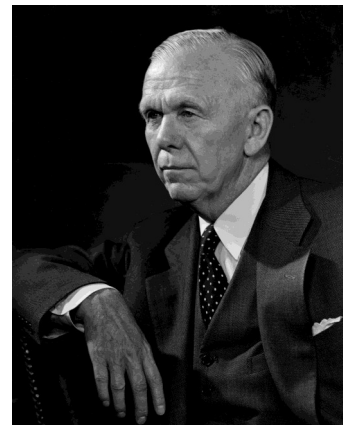
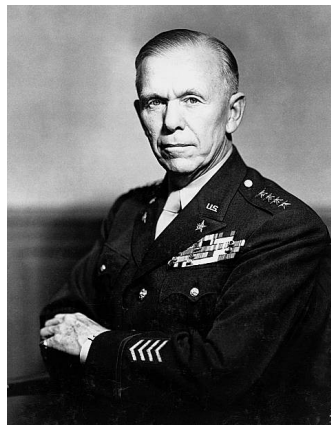
Continued on Page 12 "George Catlett Marshall Jr."

Continued from Page 11 "George Catlett Marshall Jr."

But all can find opportunities for leadership in their lives—in their profession, community, or family. And in George C. Marshall they can see someone who at age 18 George Marshall didn't resemble what anyone would call a leader. He found a role for himself that felt right, and he decided to work to cultivate traits and habits that allowed him to lead. Some of you here are generous supporters of our work at the Marshall Foundation. To you I say "thank you." Your generosity is helping keep the leadership lessons of George C. Marshall alive and inspiring generations 64 years after his death. For those of you who have not yet supported us, I hope that you enjoyed what I have discussed here and feel inspired to help us carry out our work. In a world beset by peril and often bereft of wise, principled leadership it has never been more important.



Southwest Virginia Chapter President CAPT Matt Haag, USN (Ret) presenting a SWVC MOAA Mug and Gift Card to Dr. Paul A. Levensgood, President of the George C. Marshall Foundation in appreciation for his excellent program on George Catlett Marshall.



SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA CHAPTER PARTICIPATES IN THE 13th ANNUAL VETERANS DAY PARADE, ROANOKE VIRGINIA, SATURDAY, 11 NOVEMBER 2023

A sunny, cool morning brought crowds to Jefferson Street and Campbell Avenue on Saturday for the 2023 edition of the annual Virginia Veterans Day Parade. The Southwest Virginia Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America participated in the 13th Annual Veterans Day parade in downtown Roanoke Virginia. The Virginia's Veterans Parade celebrates and recognizes those who have served with a public procession featuring floats, music, and other entertainment organized by The Roanoke Valley Veterans Council to show support from the community and to recognize veterans of all the armed services and all conflicts, as well as honoring those who currently serve this great nation. The parade route was lined with enthusiastic supporters and watched by folks at home on television. Children cheering from curbs clamored for candy thrown by waving military veterans driving muscle cars, lifted trucks and rumbling motorcycles. High School and college marching bands rattled off renditions of their favorite music. Camouflage-clad and navy-uniformed junior ROTC cadets trudged along, belting out chants. Other youths stood at street corners, handing out small America stick



flags to passersby. Those flags were waved aplenty by parade attendees and participants alike. Spectators clapped and hollered as fire trucks, police cars, ambulances and dented old military Jeeps tooted their horns while rolling along in the procession. Riding in a vintage 1947 Navy Shore Patrol Jeep and responding to the crowd waving flags were Southwest Virginia Chapter members CAPT Gary Powers, USN (Ret), COL Thomas Dalzell, USMC (Ret) and CDR Lee Ensley, USN (Ret).



Inside the Market Building veterans and guests mingled to greet each other and share stories and enjoy coffee and doughnuts provided by volunteers dressed as "Donut Dollies" the popular term used to refer to the American Red Cross women who volunteered to work overseas in mobile service clubs called club mobiles.



Chapter member COL Bob Brown USA (Ret) and wife Jackie sharing memories with several veterans over coffee and doughnuts in the market building prior to the parade.

"Donut Dollies" American Red Cross women who volunteered to work overseas in mobile service clubs called club mobiles with CAPT Gary Powers, USN Ret)

COL Bob Brown USA (Ret) with a veteran before the parade.

Cont on Page 14 "Veterans Day Parade"

Continued from Page "13 Veterans Day Parade"

Outside in the cool but sunlit day, thousands of people flooded the sidewalks of Downtown Roanoke to watch the annual Veterans' Day parade and cheering on our nation's heroes. It is a beautiful moment where the community can come together as a family and remember those who have sacrificed for our freedom. We have Memorial Day to honor those who have fallen. Veterans Day is to honor the living. That's what's so important about celebrating veterans who have sacrificed so much and have given up their freedoms, so we can keep ours. In this small way we express our gratitude for everything they've done for us. The Veterans Day parade is a celebration of their sacrifice and a way to show gratitude from the community.



Annie Lin and her son Jerry Wu wrapped in Red, White and Blue with Southwest Virginia Chapter CAPT Matt Haag, USN (Ret), COL Thomas Dalzell, USMC (Ret) and CDR Lee Ensley, USN (Ret) sitting in the MOAA Shore Patrol Jeep prior to the Veterans Day Parade.



Southwest Virginia Chapter members alongside the Shore Patrol Jeep they rode in during the Roanoke Veterans Day Parade 11 November 2023. L to R: CDR Lee Ensley, USN (Ret), CAPT Gary Powers, USN (Ret) and COL Thomas Dalzell, USMC (Ret).

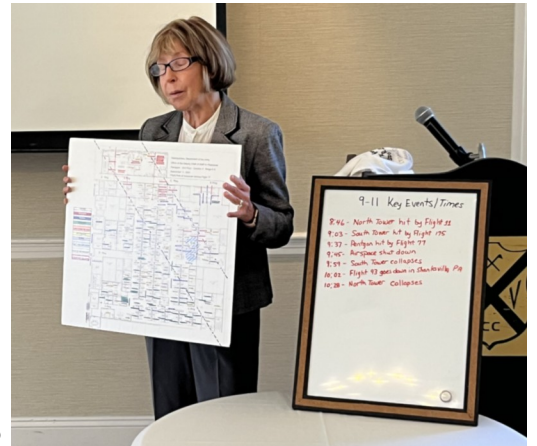
"Pentagon Survivors Tell Their Story."

On Thursday 16 November 2023 LTC Roberta Chrissy, USA (Ret) presented a program about her experience as a survivor of the attack on the Pentagon on 11 September 2001. The Pentagon was struck by American Airlines Flight 77 at approximately 0937 on 11 September 2001. The plane hit the E Ring at the first deck level between Corridors 4 and 5. The plane's path of destruction ended in the alley between the C Ring and B Ring. LTC Roberta Chrissy was a lieutenant colonel working for the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel. She was in charge of the officer command and school boards.



"I came to work and, first thing, my senior supervisor needed to see me." The Chief of Military Personnel Colonel Knoblock called me in and said that Lieutenant General (Timothy) Maude wanted to see us that afternoon, and we needed to get on his calendar. She told him she had staff call

with her boss and after that she would schedule them on his calendar. LTGEN Maude was the deputy chief of staff for personnel, and the highest ranking military officer killed on 9-11.



Continued on Page 15 "Pentagon Survivors Tell Their Story."

Continued from Page 14 **“Pentagon Survivors Tell Their Story.”**

I worked with a warrant officer and he came in and said the Twin Towers had been hit by a plane. He was always a joker and I said, “Bill, that’s not funny.” And he said “No, it’s true.” So my coworker, Karen Wagner, and I went to our general’s office, because he had a TV, and we watched for a few minutes to see what was happening. About 35 minutes elapsed between the time



LTC Roberta Chrissy addressing the membership and answering questions on her presentation **“Pentagon Survivors Tell Their Story”**



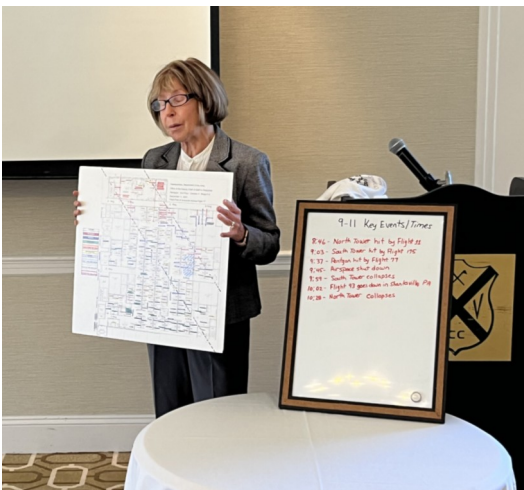
LTC Roberta Chrissy with CAPT Roger Burnett USN, (Ret) left, and Mr. Bruce Smith, right,, a Army veteran who was also working in the Pentagon that day and shared his experiences.

that the second jetliner struck the World Trade Center and American Airlines Flight 77 struck the Pentagon. LTC Chrissy remembers exactly what they did as the minutes ran out. “We watched TV for a few minutes to see what was happening with the Twin Towers.” I had a lot of work to do so I told Karen “I am going back to my desk.” So we went back to our desks and we were working. Our boss, Phil Smith, said that the Army Operations Center was standing up, and he told Maj. Linda Herbert to go to the AOC.

So we left our desks, and I ran into Colonel Knoblock. I said, ‘Sir, I still need to see Lieutenant General Maude and get on his calendar.’ He said, ‘Don’t worry; I’ve already done that. We’ll see him at 3:30 (p.m.) this afternoon. So Linda and I left for the Army Operations Center. There seemed to be almost no thought that the Pentagon might be a target. There was no inkling whatsoever in our group that the Pentagon would be hit,” Chrissy said. “We were still shocked that someone would fly into the World Trade Center. Then the jetliner struck. It felt like the Pentagon had been bombed. The ceiling fell, and the windows

were breaking, and it got pitch-black. Linda and I got down flat on the floor and laid there for a few seconds. Then someone yelled, ‘Get out of the building! So we got up, and we were trying to find a way out because it was pitch-black. The whole way out Linda was repeating the Lord’s Prayer. We were hand-in-hand, and it was dark, and other people were trying to get out, too. We hit a wall. I guess one of those firewalls that close automatically in the Pentagon. So we turned around and went downstairs and got out to Ground Zero, the center court of the Pentagon. Later I learned what happened in the office I had left moments before. The airplane came in right under our office.

The whole floor buckled, all the furniture fell over, and it was pitch-black. We had two doors, and the primary door was blocked but the back door was clear. One of my coworkers made it to the back door. He could hear Karen and Bill, and he tried to direct them out. But eventually he didn’t hear them any more. We were in the center courtyard for a few minutes, and we could see the huge cloud of smoke. Then someone said ‘There’s another plane coming toward the Pentagon.



LTC Roberta Chrissy showing the flight path of the jetliner as it flew toward the Pentagon

Continued on Page 16 **“Pentagon Survivors Tell Their Story.”**

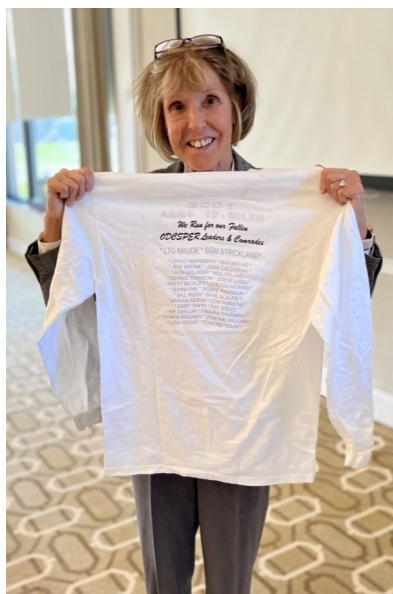
Continued from Page 15 **“Pentagon Survivors Tell Their Story.”**

Then someone said 'There's another plane coming toward the Pentagon. We have to get out of here. So we left Ground Zero, ran through the Pentagon, and out into the parking lot.

Then the police told us, 'You have to go to the other side of I-395 because it's not safe here.' So we crossed I-395, and everyone started toward the Residence Inn. Most of that afternoon I sat in the Residence Inn with a lot of other people. The hotel staff brought in phones so we could call our families and let them know we were OK. A friend picked me up and drove me home about two that afternoon. I got home and started getting phone calls. People in my office were missing and their family members were asking, 'I haven't heard from Bill,' or 'I haven't heard from Karen.' "I told them, 'It's a confusing day, people are scattered. I don't know where they are, but I'm sure they're OK. I called Colonel Knoblock to tell him I was OK and that people were asking me a lot of questions. "He said, 'Roberta, don't say anything, because a lot of people have been killed.' And I realized, 'Oh my God. We were right there.'" So that was 9-11 for me. I spent a lot of that afternoon and evening talking to my family, telling them I was OK.

On September 12th at 6 a.m. Colonel Knoblock called and said, 'We don't have an office, but they've set up space for us at the Hoffman Building. So report to work there. We set up a family assistance operations center because several people from our office had been killed. We worked there from September 12th until after Christmas. That whole time we were at the Hoffman Building we were scheduling funerals and attending funerals. We still did our regular daily work, but all of our records had been destroyed in the Pentagon, so we had to recreate everything. "Immediately after 9-11 we were so focused on supporting the families of those who were injured or died, and planning and attending funerals, plus our normal mission, I think for a long time we didn't have time to dwell on it. In early January we moved back into the Pentagon and that was really emotional because you thought, 'This is where my friends and coworkers died.' I had flashbacks when we moved back into the Pentagon, and I had bad dreams routinely. I had survivor guilt, knowing that the two people to my right were both killed. It was tough, thinking that life is short and you never know what's going to happen. There was a 9-11 counseling program, and I got into counseling in February 2002 because I wasn't dealing with it well. I was depressed. I was crying for no reason. The counseling helped a lot. I still sometimes have bad dreams and survivor guilt, but not nearly as much as I did then.

I know my story could have ended differently. I had been told to go see Lieutenant General Maude, but I stopped and told my senior supervisor that I hadn't gone yet. That was out of character for me. When you're given an order, you do it. But I talked to Colonel Knoblock, and he said he had taken care of it. I think that a higher power had me stop and talk to him, otherwise, I might have been in the general's office or on my way there when the plane hit. If I had been at my desk, maybe I would have been with my coworkers who couldn't get out. There were opportunities where I could have gone into harm's way but I didn't, and I believe it was because of a higher power. I was blessed that day.



LTC Roberta Chrissy showing a memorial “T” shirt from the 2001 Army 10 Miler run for fellow ODCSPER ladies and comrades lost in the 9/11 attack on the Pentagon.



Chapter President CAPT Matt Haag, USN presenting a Chapter “MUG” to LTC Roberta Chrissy USA in appreciation for the outstanding presentation on Pentagon Survivors tell their story.

REMEMBERING BERTHA ROUPAS ANGEL MITCHEL ROSSON

4 MARCH 1926 - 5 NOVEMBER 2023

Bertha Roupas Angel Mitchell Rosson, 97, of Harrisonburg, Virginia and formerly of Roanoke, passed away on Sunday, November 5, 2023, at Sunnyside Retirement Community. Bertha was born 4 March 1926, at Roanoke Hospital and was the daughter of



the late Fotios "Frank" Athanasios and Evaggelia "Eva" Kallianis Roupas. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, General William Bradford Rosson, USA (Ret); her brother, Thomas Frank Roupas, Sr. and wife, Dottie; her sister, Lee Roupas Strautin and husband, Walter, and two half-brothers, George Frank and Theodore Frank Roupas.

Her parents immigrated to the United States from Megalopolis, Arcadia, Greece. Her father arrived at Ellis Island in 1910 and her mother in 1918, they were married in 1922. Bertha attended Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox, where she was a member of the church choir for many years and played the organ. She graduated on 6 June 1944, D-Day, from Jefferson High School in Roanoke and went to work at the U.S. Army Induction and Recruiting Station. After the war she transferred to the Veterans Administration Regional Office. She married James Harry Angel of Atlanta, Georgia in 1954, and worked as secretary to the District Manager of the Social Security Office in Atlanta, Georgia. Returning to Roanoke with her husband and two children, she went to work in the Engineer's Office at the VA Hospital in Salem. In 1969, she was divorced and returned to the VA Regional Office in Roanoke.

Eleven years later, Bertha married Colonel George Mitchell. Nine months into their marriage, Colonel Mitchell was stricken with brain cancer and died five months later on January 15, 1980. He was interred at Arlington National Cemetery on January 20, 1982. Years later, General William Bradford Rosson, who served with Colonel Mitchell, was traveling through Virginia. He made a stop in Roanoke to pay his respects. Six years later, she married General Rosson on 17 September 1988. For 17 years they enjoyed many military functions and dances. He passed away in 2004 and was also interred at Arlington National Cemetery.

Bertha was president of The Daughters of Penelope, the auxiliary of The Order of American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association" (AHEPA). She was a member of the Roanoke Valley Cotillion Club for many years, and in 1992 was elected as the First Woman President since the founding of the club in 1939. The Rossons were members of Christ Episcopal Church in Roanoke, St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Salem, the Jefferson Club, Hidden Valley Country Club and the Shenandoah Club. She loved to dance and was the queen of hospitality, hosting countless dinners, parties, and holidays for family and friends, always putting others above herself. She was a blessing to everyone who knew her.

Surviving are her beloved children, Kristi Angel Pascarella and husband, Jed, and Harry Frank Angel and wife, Kelly; grandchildren Nicholas Pascarella and wife Jessica, Leigh Pascarella Cohen and husband Corey, James Pascarella and wife Rebecca, Thomas Pascarella, and wife Kimberly, Kalli Angel, Emily Angel and William Angel; three great-grandchildren, Joseph and William Cohen and Ava Pascarella, as well as many nieces and nephews that she greatly loved. Mrs. Rosson was interred at Arlington National Cemetery with General Rosson.

Mrs. Bertha Rosson was a strong advocate of the Military Officers Association and the Southwest Virginia Chapter. In 2009 the Board of Directors of the Southwest Virginia Chapter established **The General William B. Rosson, USA Leadership Award** to be presented to ROTC Cadets /Midshipmen at Virginia Tech/Radford University during each 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/Radford University ROTC Program. The Leadership Award consists of an appropriate framed award certificate and a \$500 monetary award.

Mrs. Rosson appreciated the honor and recognition of her late husband with the establishment of **The General William B. Rosson, USA Leadership Award**.

INSTALLATION OF SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA CHAPTER OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS FOR 2024 AND MOAA UPDATE

On **Thursday 14 December 2023** the Southwest Virginia Chapter held its monthly Membership meeting. The guest speaker and program was presented by Capt. Jim Carman, USN (Ret), MOAA Vice President, Council/Chapter and Member Support. Captain Carman administered the oath of office to the 2024 Chapter Officers and Board members.



Capt. Jim Carman, USN (Ret) addresses the Southwest Virginia Chapter members



Capt. Jim Carman, USN (Ret) administers the Oath of Office to the 2024 Southwest Virginia Chapter Officers and Board of Directors

Captain Jim Carman then presented an update on the current status of MOAA. CAPT Carman stressed the point that the success of MOAA depends upon volunteers. He spoke about the new MOAA CEO Lt Gen Brian Kelly, USAF (Ret) as being the perfect fit as CEO with his extensive leadership background. CAPT Carman went on to list Lt Gen Kelley's Six Primary Concerns.

- (1) **Long Term Financial Stability**; MOAA's assets include its investment portfolio, membership dues, its affinity programs (business partnerships) such as insurance with USAA and AMDA, advertising revenue from printed material, stakeholders reports and electronic newsletters.
- (2) **Advocacy**: There is the constant need to educate politicians at all levels, local, state and federal about MOAA's top legislative priorities ensuring they don't let important bills languish so veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors are not forgotten. MOAA is working to address the TRICARE Pharmacy Co-Pay to ensure a gradual mirror that cost increases go along with the cost of living increase. MOAA is advocating for the Major Richard Star Act and addressing concerns to ensure that it maintains service connected concurrent receipts.
- (3) **MOAA Advocacy - Legal Action Center**: MOAA's Legal Action Center provides updated information on key advocacy issues, MOAA supported legislation and how to find and contact your elected representatives.
- (4) **Membership Growth**: The future of MOAA lies in the Chapter System throughout the country. MOAA is emphasizing the importance of recruiting. To help our chapter leaders with their recruiting efforts nation wide, MOAA provides leaders with an accurate list of potential members who live in their chapter's jurisdiction. Annual chapter roundtables provided affiliate leaders with an operational snapshot of MOAA's council and chapter system, listed refinements to the annual chapter-recruiting program, and MOAA's aspirational goal to achieve chapter influence in every congressional district, and more.
- (5) **MOAA Charities**: CAPT Carman spoke of the necessity to consider charitable gifts to the MOAA Foundation and the MOAA Scholarship Fund. The MOAA Foundation provides programs and support to everyone in the uniformed services and veteran community, no matter their rank, how long they served or branch of service. The Scholarship Fund has provided interest-free loans and grants to military children since 1948.
- (6) **Work On The MOAA Brand**: Build the MOAA brand in the local area through your actions within the community, advertising through the local media on programs and initiatives. Make yourself heard. Give back to the community. Sponsor interesting programs and opportunities to interact with civic, political, military, and business leaders on issues important to members. Networking with fellow officers. Stay informed. Influence State legislation. Camaraderie with a purpose.

Continued on Page 19 "Installation of Officers and Board Members"

Continued from Page 18 "Installation of Officers and Board Members"

REASONS FOR SUPPORTING MOAA

Numbers: **51/2 million** military veterans that require caregivers of some sort or **another**. MOAA has a Guide For Caregivers on line that includes details on new VA regulations, up-to-date forms, respite care information, and much more. The family members who quietly serve by supporting a veteran's daily needs can find guidance and assistance through the VA's Caregiver Support Line, which answers as many as 350 calls a day. The hotline, hosted by the VA since 2011, connects veteran caregivers with responders who are professional social workers, trained counselors and experienced case managers. They help caregivers find resources inside the VA and community, from financial assistance to tutorials on applying for benefits. The personal impact of providing care is enormous, the physical and emotional toll can be substantial, and navigating through the policies and procedures of various government agencies can be overwhelming. **260,000**: The number of new recruits needed to maintain service requirements from a pool of approximately 400,000 eligible out of 2 million age eligible individuals. **67,000**: Surviving spouses receiving support. Surviving spouses whose benefits increased last year as part of the phased elimination of the Survivor Benefit Plan-Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (SBP-DIC) offset.



Capt Jim Carman presenting the MOAA 2022 5 Star Chapter of Excellence Award to outgoing Chapter President Capt Matt Haag and incoming Chapter President, center, Capt Gary Powers.



2024 Chapter President Capt Gary Powers presenting Capt Jim Carman a SWVC signature coffee mug as a memento for his presentation to the membership.



Chapter Presidents Capt Matt Haag, Capt Gary Powers CDR Lee Ensley

CHAPTER MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN THE 11TH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS WREATH LAYING CEREMOY AT THE VIRGINIA VETERANS CEMETERY IN DUBLIN VIRGINIA

On Saturday 16 December 2023 members of the SWVA chapter participated in the 11th Annual Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Dublin, Virginia. This event is sponsored each year by The Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery Volunteers aptly led by the Chapter Surviving Spouse Representative Mrs. Mary Lou Summers. Southwest Virginia Chapter participants included CAPT Gary Powers, USN (Ret) Master of Ceremonies, US Army Representative - COL Bob Brown, USA (Ret), US Navy Representative - CDR Lee Ensley, USN (Ret), US Marine Corps Representative - COL Thomas Dalzell, USMC (Ret), US Air Force Representative - COL John Rogers, USAF, US Coast Guard Representative - CDR Richard At Lee, USCG (Ret), US Space Force Representative Larry Johnson, Former Helicopter Pilot, POW-MIA Representative - LTC David Gilleran, USA (Ret), Commonwealth of Virginia Flag Representative - LTC Robert Habermann, USA (Ret). Chapter members also donated funds to purchase some 1,900 Christmas wreaths put on the headstones by family members and guests.



Participants in the 2023 Wreath Laying Program. L to R: COL Bob Brown, USA; Delegate Chris Obenshain ,Virginia 41 District Representative; Ms. Mary Lou Summers; LTC Bob Habermann, USA; LTC David Gilleran, USA; COL Thomas Dalzell, USMC; CAPT Gary Powers, USN; CDR Lee Ensley, USN; CDR Richard At Lee, USCG; Larry Johnson, former USA helicopter pilot; COL John Rogers , USAF.



Continued from Page 20 "Wreath Laying Ceremony"



CAPT Gary Powers, USN (Ret), Master of Ceremonies

Ms. Mary Lou Summers being honored for her long standing work in organizing the Annual Wreath Laying Ceremony each of the past 11 years by Dublin Mayor Benny P. Skeens



MOAA'S LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

MOAA's Legislative Priorities for advocacy as the 118th Congress continues its work. Their focus remains on all seven of the uniformed services and their service-earned entitlements.

- 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/2023-news-articles/advocacy/moaas-legislative-priorities-118th-Congress/>**

VIRGINIA COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS/JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL INITIATIVES

- JLC 2023 Initiatives: JLC 2023 Approved Initiatives
- JLC 2023-01 Expand Tax Relief for Surviving Spouses of Military Service Members to also include “Died in the Line-of-Duty”
- JLC 2023-02 Real Property Tax Exemption Effective Date.
- JLC 2023-03 Removal of Age Requirement Income Tax Subtraction
- JLC 2023-04 Appropriate \$400,000 for State Veterans Cemeteries; Eliminate Spouse/Dependent and Guard/Reserve Burial Fees
- JLC 2023-05 Virginia National Guard State Park Admission
- JLC 2023-06 Virginia National Guard Income Tax Exemption

A summary of the approved 2023 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>



ROANOKE VALLEY VETERANS COUNCIL
VETERANS LEGISLATIVE FORUM

On Thursday 7 December 2023 the Roanoke Valley Veterans Council presented a **Veterans Legislative Forum** at the American Legion Post 3, 710 Apperson Road, Salem, Virginia. Coordinating and hosting the event was Perry C Taylor, President Roanoke Valley Veterans Council. The Town Hall Format



covered the six Joint Leadership Council's Initiatives for the year: 1) Request Veteran Service Office (VSO) Relief from Charitable Gaming Regulations. 2) Standardization for Service Dog Training and Certification. 3) Virginia National Guard (VNG) Tuition Assistance Waiver. 4) Tax Relief for Surviving Spouses of Military Service Members – “Killed in Action”. 5) Enhanced Emergency Response Medical Protection. 6) Income Tax Subtraction Removal of Age Requirement. There was discussion on how all the State Legislators support Veterans in SWVA, Highway I-81 funding and improvements, General Assembly Tri-Annual Budget, Catawba Hospital improvements and

treating substance abuse at Catawba, Improving and updating Mental Health Facilities in Virginia, How the Democrats and Republicans need to work together for best results for the Commonwealth of Virginia, and a question from the floor on the Veteran Mental Health in Virginia.

Legislators in attendance were Delegate Sam Obenshain, Delegate Joe McNamara, Senator David Suetterlein and Legislative Assistant Kendall Bailey for Senator Chris Head. Delegate Sam Rasoul was represented by his Legislative Assistant. Dignitaries in attendance were: Director Rebecca Stackhouse, Salem VAMC; State Commander Ralph Hensley, AMVETS Dept of Virginia; **CAPT Matthew Haag, USN (Ret) President MOAA SWVA**; **COL John Miller, USA (Ret) President AUSA**; and US Senator Candidate Kimberley Lowe. There were 38 participants attending the event.

Proposed JLC 2024 Initiatives 20 September 2023

<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>
JLC 2024 -1 Request Relief from Charitable Gaming Regulations	That the Governor and General Assembly allow the VSO's be open to the public for bingo and raffles. Request prior regulation be reinstated to allow the use of building operation expenses and capital improvements be part of the 10% requirement. Exempt social quarters from the proposed regulations.
JLC 2024 - 2 Standardization for Service Dog Training and Certification	That the Governor and General Assembly establish the statutes governing the oversight of service dog's organizations and trainers with the standardization of training and certification for service dogs provided to Veterans.
JLC 2024 - 3 VNG Tuition Assistance Waiver	That the Governor and General Assembly offer a tuition voucher for state schools in Virginia for members of the Virginia National Guard.
JLC 2024 - 4 Tax Relief for Surviving Spouses of Military Service Members – “Killed in Action”	That the Governor and the General Assembly reform the Virginia state law through a Virginia Constitutional Amendment to include “Died on Duty”.
JLC 2024 - 5 Enhanced Emergency Response Medical Protection	That the Governor and General Assembly provide more protection for VNG injured during Virginia's State Emergency Response Operations.
JLC 2024 - 6 Income Tax Subtraction Removal of Age Requirement	That the Governor and General Assembly remove the age limitation of 55 years old, to allow military retirees at age 40 years old and over to receive partial subtraction of their military retirement.

Additional information can be found on the JLC webpage at: <https://www.dvs.virginia.gov/dvs/joint-leadership-council-veterans-service-organizations-2>

2024 TRICARE Rates Released: Here's What You Will Pay in the New Year

By: Paul Frost 8 November 2023

TRICARE released 2024 costs for TRICARE Prime and Select plans Nov. 7, a week before the beginning of open season – and your chance to decide whether switching health care plans makes sense for you or your family.

TRICARE open season runs from Nov. 13 until midnight Dec. 12. Cost changes to Prime and Select plans are driven by the retiree cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), which sits at 3.2% for the upcoming year; 2024 rates for plans tied to other factors – TRICARE Reserve Select, Retired Reserve, Young Adult and the Continued Health Care Benefit Program – were released last August.

[AT TRICARE.MIL: Get the 2024 Costs]

For retirees and their dependents, TRICARE Prime is generally less expensive than TRICARE Select, especially if you are enrolled in a military treatment facility (MTF). However, TRICARE Select is considered much more flexible, as it does not require a visit to your primary care manager (PCM) to get a referral for specialty care.

The difference in maximum out-of-pocket costs for covered services – the catastrophic cap (CC) – has steadily grown since the TRICARE Select CC was increased from \$3,000 to \$3,500 in 2019 and has been COLA-adjusted each year since. The TRICARE Select CC will increase to \$4,157, as the Prime CC remains at \$3,000.

Other 2024 rates to consider for retirees and their families in Group A (those who entered service before Jan. 1, 2018):

TRICARE Prime

- Annual premium, individual: \$363 (up from \$351.96 in 2023)
- Annual premium, family: \$726 (up from \$703.92)
- Deductible: \$0 (same as 2023)
- Primary care copayment: \$25 (up from \$24)
- Specialty care copayment: \$37 (up from \$36)
- Catastrophic cap: \$3,000 (same as 2023)

TRICARE Select

- Annual premium, individual: \$177.96 (up from \$171.96 in 2023)
- Annual premium, family: \$355.92 (up from \$345)
- Deductible, individual: \$150 (same as 2023)
- Deductible, family: \$300 (same as 2023)
- Primary care copayment: \$36 (up from \$34)
- Specialty care copayment: \$50 (up from \$49)
- Catastrophic cap: \$4,157 (up from \$4,028)

[TAKE ACTION: Tell Congress You Oppose TRICARE/TRICARE for Life Fee Increases]

Visit this link for full 2024 pricing, including costs for active duty servicemembers and families; out-of-pocket costs for ambulance services, emergency room visits, and inpatient admission; and a full breakdown of out-of-network pricing for TRICARE Select users. The site also includes prices for Group B beneficiaries (those whose service began on or after Jan. 1, 2018).

MEDIPLUS® TRICARE Supplement

Works hand-in-hand with your Select or Prime Plan. Count on valuable protection.

Caregiver Support, Long Term Care Programs Top MOAA's VA To-Do List

By MOAA Staff 7 November 2023



MOAA outlined its veterans health care priorities during the recent Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs (NOVA) meeting in Las Vegas, topped by two critical bills offering in-home care for veterans and more support for their caregivers. The Oct. 26-27 event came just days before the launch of National Veterans and Military Families Month and National Families Caregiver Month, and included a legislative-priorities panel discussion featuring MOAA and staffers from the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs committees. "MOAA thanks the nurses, doctors, and other clinical staff and employees who support the system, and support veterans like me," Cmdr. René Campos, USN (Ret), MOAA's senior director for Government Relations, told nurse attendees. "My advocacy work is both professional and personal to me as a veteran and user of VA health care. I am especially grateful to my VA medical center nurse practitioner who is helpful, accessible, and compassionate, and who loves taking care of veterans."

[TAKE ACTION TODAY: MOAA's Legislative Action Center]

MOAA's Priorities

Atop MOAA's list of veterans health care priorities for this session of Congress, which is rapidly ending, are two critical bills: **Elizabeth Dole Home and Community Based Services for Veterans and Caregivers Act (H.R. 542 and S. 141)** — Also known as the Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act, this is a bipartisan, bicameral bill supported by many stakeholders (including MOAA) that would help veterans and their caregivers transition between caregiver support programs, assess the level of care they need, expand mental health services, and improve communication and coordination between veterans and their families and veteran service organizations like MOAA.

[TAKE ACTION: Urge Your Legislators to Support H.R. 542 and Provisions in S. 141]

Expanding Veterans' Options for Long Term Care Act (H.R. 1815 and S. 495) — Another bipartisan bill supported in both chambers would allow the VA to launch a pilot program to look at the effectiveness of paying for assisted living services. Currently, the VA is unable to pay room and board expenses at these facilities.

[TAKE ACTION: Urge Your Legislators to Support S. 495 and H.R. 1815]

Under Secretary of Health's Priorities

The two-day meeting focused on the care and dedication of VA nurses who strive every day to provide excellent care to all veterans. Dr. Shereef Elnahal, VA's under secretary for health, was a featured speaker at the event. "While VA has made great strides in recruiting and retaining nurses and other clinical and medical center staff our work is far from over," Elnahal said. "VA is looking at implementing night clinics to reduce the access backlog, exploring ways to reduce wait times, and exploring how to fully staff our patient aligned care teams. However, we need your innovative ideas to help VA health care remain equal to or better than care in the community."

Cont'd. on Page 26 **"Caregiver Support, Long Term Care Programs"**

Continued from Page 25 “Caregiver Support, Long Term Care Programs “

[Related: VA Health Care Workforce Emerging Stronger Post-Pandemic]

When asked by NOVA nurses what they could do to advance VA’s work, Elnahal said, “Recruit, recruit, recruit — tell your story and how awesome it is to work at VA.”

Other Legislative Priorities

MOAA was pleased to hear Veterans’ Affairs committee staffers highlighting many of our priorities, including the Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act as well as other home and community-based and long-term care provisions.

Other issues of importance to NOVA nurses and MOAA included:

- Expanding continuing education opportunities
- Fixing wage and promotion disparities within the nurse workforce
- Reducing staff burnout
- Improving safety and security at medical facilities
- Investing in medical facility infrastructure
- Improving coordination of community care

How Can MOAA Members, Partners help Veterans and the VA?

What better time to support our veteran community than by coming together to take action as our way of serving those who served during this national month of recognition.

With only a handful of weeks left this year with both the House and Senate in session, MOAA needs your help:

- Reach out to your lawmakers now to support the Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act and the Expanding Veterans’ Options for Long-Term Care Act.
- If you are a MOAA member or partner, or a current or former nurse or employee in the VA health care system, please send us your story on why the VA is a great place to work.
- If you have ideas on how the VA could innovate to improve its health care system, send them to MSC@MOAA.org so we will share your information with the under secretary.

Tips for Lifelong Caregiving

MOAA has partnered with the Elizabeth Dole Foundation to provide an online resource outlining legal and financial support available to multiple generations of caregivers.

[LEARN MORE](#)

MOAA IS PUSHING BACK ON PHARMACY COPAYS

A top priority for MOAA in the second half of the 118th Congress is protecting TRICARE beneficiaries from excessive pharmacy copay increases. With the FY 2018 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), Congress gave DoD the authority, starting in 2028, to set prescription drug copays to reflect changes in pharmacy program costs. MOAA is concerned the Defense Health Agency might use this authority to implement excessive copay increases. Next year, MOAA will work to achieve statutory guardrails on this authority, consistent with past legislation governing the TRICARE pharmacy benefit.

TRICARE For Life legislation in the FY 2001 NDAA expanded the TRICARE home delivery and retail pharmacy programs to Medicare-eligible retirees who had previously been limited to filling prescriptions at military treatment facility (MTF) pharmacies. For more information check [MOAA’s 2023-24 TRICARE Guide](#)

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 has been a strong supporter of the Military Family Support Center. However, the Military Family Support Center has gone out of operation. The Southwest Virginia Chapter is looking into new options to restart the mission to identify and provide for the morale, welfare, and informational needs of military families (of all branches and components) who reside outside of the established support networks. During 2023 the chapter hopes to merge with another food pantry to be able to provide supplies and distribute food stuffs to needy military families.

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

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



Chapter Website Up and Running

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

WANT TO KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON AT MOAA?

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

Log on to MOAA.org

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

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

UPCOMING MEMBERSHIP PROGRAMS

18 January 2024 - Board of Directors meeting. Program: Frank T. Stritter, Professor Emeritus at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill on "**Heroes of the D-Day Landing**" or "**D-Day: Just a Walk on the Beach.**"

15 February 2024 - Board of Directors meeting. Program: Mr. John Ketwig, retired auto executive, author and Vietnam Veteran living in Bedford, Virginia on his military experience and his two books about Vietnam, "...and a hard rain fell: **A GI's True Story of the War in Vietnam**", and "**Vietnam Reconsidered: The War, the Times, and Why They Matter**".

21 March 2024 - Tentative: CDR Porter Alexander Halyburton, USN (Ret) on his book "**Reflections on Captivity a Tapestry of Stories by a Vietnam War POW.**"

18 April 2024 - Board of Directors meeting. Program by Christine Link-Owens, Volunteer Coordination Group Manager, Virginia Tech Transportation Institute on the "**Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (The Smart Road) and its many Divisions that engage to improve all types of transportation.**"

16 May 2024 - Chapter Membership BBQ meeting at the American Legion Post 3 shelter facility in Salem, Virginia catered by Mission BBQ in Roanoke. Program to be determined.

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

FUTURE PROGRAMS BEING CONSIDERED - TBD:

1. Mr. Mike Stewart, Roanoke Regional Airport Commission (RRAC) Director on "The Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport - Current Status and The Future"
2. Ms. Sara Stanford or Ms. Carly Harris on the "Sports Nutrition Program For Athletes At Virginia Tech"
3. CAPT Gary Powers, USN (Ret) on "History of the 303rd Bomb Group & RAF Molesworth, UK"



**CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP
as of 31 December 2023**

Regular Members 109
Surviving Spouses 9
Total Members 118
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 **rbbrown68@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 March 2024.

Featured in This Issuer
 Presidents Corner
 The Christmas Truce
 Renovation Alliance
 George C. Marshall Army Officer and Statesman
 New Freedom Farms, Inc. Healing Vets through Horses
 Pentagon Survivors Tell Their Story.
 Caregiver Support, Long Term Care Programs Top MOAA's VA To-Do List
 2024 TRICARE Rates Released: Here's What You Will Pay in the New Year

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



NEVER STOP SERVING



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