

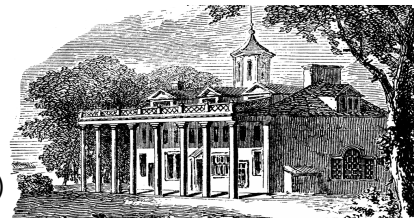
Dedicated to the memory of
General George Washington

The Despatch



Mount Vernon, Virginia Chapter - MOAA

www.mvmoaa.org



Mount Vernon Chapter

5 Star Level of Excellence



Awards (2003-2023)



Message from the Editor

MAJ Peter Chen, USA(Ret), Editor

2025 Membership Renewal. This year started off with a very fast pace. The sweeping pace of the current administration is unlike anything before. Regardless if you are for or against these changes, they are impacting many of us professionally and personally. In times like this, non-partisan veterans' organizations such as ours are more important than ever. We will continue to inform our elected officials, promote policies that serve our national interests and take care of military personnel, veterans, and family members who sacrificed so much for this great nation. I have to admit that even I forgot to renew my chapter membership. If you did, please renew at http://mvmoaa.org/member_registration.cfm

Army Reached Record Recruitment Number. From the Association of United States Army: *The Army is adding 10 basic training units at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and Fort Sill, Oklahoma. The move comes after the Army invested in several programs and incentives to reverse a recruiting slump, exceeding its goals in fiscal 2024 after missing them two years in a row. In fiscal 2024, the Army recruited 55,000 new soldiers and put 11,000 in its delayed entry program.*

In This Issue

- 1 Message from the Editor
- 2 Smash on Station
- 3 Chapter Officers
- 4 Legislative Corner
- 5 Virginia State Legislature
- 6 Upcoming Events
- 7 More from our Sponsors

What to Watch: Slated to be in place by April, the new units allow the Army to train an additional 9,600 recruits a year and push through a backlog in the delayed entry program. The Army's goal for fiscal 2025 is 61,000 new soldiers and 10,000 in the delayed entry program.



US Army Photo

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Smash on Station



Esteemed colleagues,

Only 28 days in February this year. The Mount Vernon Chapter awards for the Despatch, Website and Level of Effort for 2024 were submitted earlier this month.

February Observances – February came in as a lamb with mild weather, but windy. Phil did see his shadow and Sonny and Cher was on my radio, so more winter. Statistically in the last 10 years, he was right only 40% of the time according to NOAA. Just about a coin toss, I guess. February is Black History Month. During February the contributions and achievements of African-Americans are celebrated and commemorated. We also observed President’s Day on February 17th, honoring George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. You better not have forgotten Valentines Day on Friday the 14th. The 23rd of February is the 80th anniversary of the Iwo Jima flag raising in 1945.



“No people will tamely surrender their liberties, nor can any be easily subdued, when knowledge is diffused and virtue is preserved.” – Sam Adams

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Continuing to Serve,
Smash



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MVC MOAA Legislative Corner

Despatch Editor

Summary of MOAA's Legislative Priorities for the 119th Congress

Currently Serving: Recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) report reveals the myriad challenges servicemembers in unaccompanied housing are facing. The health, safety, and privacy concerns outlined by GAO show the need for action. MOAA seeks to improve funding and condition transparency for unaccompanied housing by requiring an annual, publicly available report, which will highlight areas that require the most attention from both DoD and Congress.

Retirees/Veterans: MOAA will focus on capitalizing on our recently released report, *Ending the Wait for Toxic-Exposed Veterans*, to advocate for veterans exposed to toxic materials during their service. While the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act has made major improvements to how toxic exposures are treated by the VA, additional measures are required. In cooperation with other VSOs, MOAA will advocate for Congress to pass legislation that shortens the time veterans must wait before their toxic exposures are acknowledged and conceded by the VA.

Family/Survivors: Rate of unemployment for military spouses is four to five times higher than the national average. This persistent challenge requires not only providing education and employment resources for spouses, but also incentivizing businesses to hire someone who will likely move in two to three years. The Work Opportunity Tax Credit program was established to support populations who face significant barriers to employment, and adding a military spouse target group is long overdue. Passing the Military Spouse Hiring Act will provide another important lever needed to address the critical issue of spouse unemployment.

DoD Health Care: DoD has acknowledged that congressionally directed reforms to the Military Health System (MHS), together with U.S. medical workforce volatility, exacerbated long-standing access challenges and led to a destabilized MHS that does not consistently deliver timely care to beneficiaries. MOAA is seeking a digital MHS assistance platform allowing beneficiaries to report access-to-care challenges and receive help navigating the MHS.

VA Health Care: MOAA has long advocated for legislation that would improve caregiving support for veterans' families. This includes enhancements to the VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) and expansion of home health and long-term care services to meet current and future needs of veterans, their caregivers, and families. MOAA strongly supports the reintroduction and enactment of the Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement Act. By offering education, employment, and retirement opportunities, the legislation empowers caregivers to achieve financial security while potentially reducing the federal government's long-term economic burden.

Persistent Efforts. Issues that MOAA will always advocate until passed are concurrent receipt for combat wounded (Major Richard Star Act), Arlington National Cemetery access, and cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs). Other issues under constant watch by MOAA are: Decrements to scheduled pay increases, New TRICARE or TRICARE Pharmacy Program fees, TRICARE cost-sharing increases that exceed military retired pay COLA or TRICARE Pharmacy Program cost sharing that exceeds common industry practice, Unequal decrements of compensation and benefits based on rank, age, family composition, retirement status, or disability benefits.



Through our efforts, MOAA will seek to ensure that servicemembers, veterans, and retirees and their families — who have sacrificed so much — continue to receive benefits earned through their service

Support MOAA's Legislative Priorities and take action: [Legislative Action Center](#)





MVC-MOAA 2025 Events-Calendar

DATE	LOCATION	EVENT / SPEAKER / TOPIC
Wed. Mar 5 7 pm-9 pm	Virtual	BOD Meeting: EOY-audit results; start LOE award pkg-submit May 1; non- renewal letters/drop from rolls; Apr VCOC meeting/report; JROTC medals.
Sat. Apr Date & Time TBD	TBD	Scholarship Candidate Interviews.
Wed. May 7 7 pm-9 pm	Virtual	BOD Meeting: IRS reports due; Scholarship certificates/checks, JROTC medal presentations; 2 nd QTR VCOC Report; VA Corp. Commission fee; renew PO box rental.
Sat. May 10 (Tentative) 11 am-1 pm	LaFiamma Restaurant 6124 Franconia Rd, Alexandria	Lunch brunch. (Speaker TBD) <i>Lunch served at 11:30 am, Speaker to follow.</i>
Wed. Sep 3 7 pm-9 pm	Virtual	BOD Meeting: Appoint Nomination Cmte for Nov Officer election; need volunteers for Ft. Belvoir Retirees Activities Day in Sep; confirm speakers.
Wed. Sep 24 (Tentative) 6 pm-9 pm	TBD	Dinner. Speaker TBD. <i>Social Hour (Cash Bar) 6-7 pm. Buffet served at 7 pm, Speaker at 8 pm.</i>
Wed. Oct 1 7 pm-9 pm	Virtual	BOD Meeting. 4 th QTR VCOC report; Legislative Cmte proposes Natl objectives;
Sat. Nov 15 11 am-1 pm	Glory Days 3141 Duke St Alexandria Commons Shopping Mall	Lunch/Brunch. Annual Business Meeting. Speaker TBD. <i>Lunch served at 11:30 am. Officer Installation and Speaker to follow.</i>
Sat. Dec 13 (Tentative) 1130 am-3 pm	Alexandria Natl Cemetery; Social	 Wreath Laying  Holiday Social <p>This is becoming an annual tradition for the Mount Vernon Chapter. Please join us for the annual Wreaths Across America day at Alexandria National Cemetery. We will be joining veterans from local VSOs, Boy Scouts, various military affiliated youth organizations, and numerous supporters from around the community. Following the wreath laying, we will conduct our holiday social at a place to be determined.</p>

Virginia General Assembly

CDR John Prevar, USN (Ret), VCOC

The Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations, of which the MOAA Virginia Council of Chapters (VCOC) is a member, submitted five initiatives. The status of each is listed below:

JLC Initiative 2025-01: Verification of Veteran Status – Arrest and Jail

Objective: To identify arrested and incarcerated veterans in Virginia so to better connect them to U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (USDVA), Virginia Department of Veterans Services, and community employment, education, and other resources to help lower their recidivism rate and connect them with federal

Status: House Bill 2071, which incorporated House Bill 2522 and was merged with Senate Bill 1251: **Passed.**

JLC Initiative 2025-02: Stop Unscrupulous Firms from Exploiting Veterans

Objective: Prohibit “Claim Shark” companies from preying on veterans seeking to obtain or modify their VA entitlements.

Status: House Bill 1911, House Bill 2112, Senate Bill 1222, and Senate Bill 1226: **Failed.**

JLC Initiative 2025-03: Virginia National Guard Tuition

Objective: Transition the Virginia National Guard State Tuition Assistance Program (STAP) from its current reimbursement model back to an upfront payment model.

Status: House Bill 1595 merged with Senate Bill 118: **Passed.**

JLC Initiative 2025-04: Suffolk State Veterans Cemetery Expansion

Objective: Secure the necessary funds to expand the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery in Suffolk, ensuring that it continues to meet the needs of our veterans and their families.

Status: House Bill 1600, Item C-52.20: **Passed.** Senate Bill 800, Item C52.20: **Failed.** These are included in the House and Senate budget bills, which are currently in conference.

JLC Initiative 2025-05: Women Veterans Day

Objective: To establish June 17th as Women Veterans Day in Virginia, recognizing the contributions and sacrifices of women veterans and commemorating the historic signing of the Women’s Armed Services Integration Act: **Referred to Committee on Rules.**

7 ...and more from our much-appreciated sponsors



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