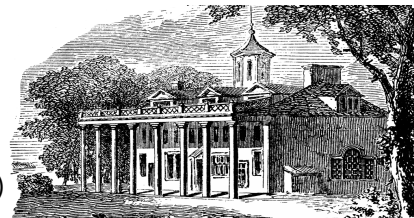


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The Despatch



Mount Vernon, Virginia Chapter - MOAA
www.mvmoaa.org



Mount Vernon Chapter

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Annual Business Meeting

MAJ Peter Chen, USA(Ret), Editor

On Saturday, November 16, we conducted our annual business meeting at the Glory Days Grill. Our guest speaker, Col Diana Kupchella, USAF (Ret.), Virginia Council of Chapters (VCOC) President, spoke on a wide range of topics, from the history of VCOC and how it functions, to answering questions about the diverse assignments during her professional careers. One of the questions raised was how and why did someone in the medical profession decided to go to law school and became an attorney? She explained that while she was a US Air Force nurse working as a congressional liaison, she noticed that there was a shortage of people with professional knowledge in both fields. So for her, rather than a complete change of career fields, it was a natural progression. To me this is another example of that every one of our members is a professional with unique and interesting life story. We ended the meeting with the reelection of all current officers and board members. As we wind down this year's activities, we reflect on both the challenges and successes we had this year. Years ago someone said to me that Christmas is for families, and New Year's Eve is for friends. While this might not be 100% true, but I do believe that as families gather, it is time to be thankful for everything we had the past year. The future is always uncertain, yet there are always opportunities for bigger and better things.

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Volume 52 Number 10
December 2024



MVC President Col Douglas Yurovich, USMC (Ret) with VCOC President Col Diana Kupchella, USAF (Ret)

Smash on Station



Esteemed colleagues,

December brings us to holiday preparations and hopefully for many, family visits. Remember and assist those deployed. Enjoy your holiday season!

Chapter News

Wreaths Across America (WAA) – I wanted to include this item in one more President’s Message. The Mount Vernon Chapter, MOAA participates in the

Wreaths Across America Project, the national effort that remembers and honors our veterans and educates all generations about their sacrifice. We have been supporting them with the purchase of wreaths in the last few months and with the wreath placement at Alexandria National Cemetery on December 14, 2024. Mount Vernon Chapter also uses this as a fundraising effort that helps service members and their families on Fort Belvoir. Several of our chapter’s members supported the project this year and assisted in placing wreaths at the cemetery. My thanks to all who participated in this year’s effort!

December Observances – Dec. 7th “The Day That Will Live in Infamy” Pearl Harbor

Remembrance; Hanukkah begins 25 Dec; Dec. 24/25th Christmas Eve and Day; and on Dec. 31st New Year’s Eve, looking forward to 2025!

Final Thoughts:

The holiday season is a season of giving, and thankfulness. We are all very blessed, and at this time of year, we can reflect on those blessings and help the less blessed around us; whether we know them or not.

Merry Christmas and have a Happy New Year,

Smash

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MVC MOAA Legislative Corner

COL Kevin Catron, Legislative Chair



Tis the Season!! ... For pending legislation to be hung up in Committees!

This is always a very challenging time to get anything passed in Congress. But I just had to check LegiScan to see just HOW many bills affecting veterans were pending review before the Senate Affairs' Committee. By rough count ... there are 120 bills pending! You can check out all the proposed legislation here:

<https://legiscan.com/US/pending/senate-veterans-affairs-committee/id/2333>. That is an excellent site to review pending legislation that impact our lives. To pique your interest, here are some interesting topics:



- SB5455 is a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a program for the construction and renovation of committal shelters at State-owned veterans' cemeteries, and for other purposes.
- SB5324 is a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure veterans of secrecy oath programs receive the full benefits they have earned, and for other purposes.
- HB7323 is a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to disapprove courses of education offered by a public institution of higher learning that does not charge the in-State tuition rate to a veteran using certain educational assistance under Title 10.
- SB5221 is a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand eligibility for memorial headstones and markers furnished by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to certain individuals who died before November 11, 1998, and for other purposes.
- SB4437 is a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to coordinate, navigate, and manage care and benefits for veterans enrolled in both the Medicare program and the system of annual patient enrollment of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

See what MOAA's priorities are and take action: [Legislative Action Center](#).



MVC-MOAA 2025 Events-Calendar



DATE	LOCATION	EVENT / SPEAKER / TOPIC
Wed. Jan 22 (Tentative) 7 pm-9 pm	Virtual	Board of Directors (BOD) Meeting: submissions due soon to Natl on Membership; Marvin A. Harris Communications Award due Feb 1; VCOC report due, 1st QTR meeting; Legislative Cmte submits State/Natl objectives to VCOC/local Congressional Delegation; chapter and scholarship audits; review 2025 calendar/goals.
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 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.

MOAA Urges Swift Passage of FY 2025 NDAA

From the 11 December MOAA Newsletter

MOAA believes the Fiscal Year 2025 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) includes significant quality of life improvements for servicemembers and their families, expands and updates key benefit programs, and requires key reports designed to ensure continued, meaningful congressional oversight.

For these reasons, MOAA supports swift passage of the legislation, which has become law every year since 1961. The bill passed the House 281-140 on Dec. 11 and will move to the Senate in the closing days of the 118th Congress.

[TAKE ACTION: Ask Your Lawmaker to Back Critical NDAA Provisions]

“MOAA is extremely grateful to the lawmakers and their staffs who crafted this bipartisan legislation,” said Lt. Gen. Brian T. Kelly, USAF (Ret), MOAA’s president and CEO. “We are especially appreciative of the work of the House Armed Services Committee’s Quality of Life Panel, whose report served as the foundation for the House bill and whose recommendations have, in many cases, become meaningful parts of the final legislation now under consideration. MOAA believes this legislation will make a real difference in the quality of life and quality of service of our uniformed servicemembers and families. This legislation recognizes strong national defense and readiness start with having strong people and families and appreciates that the two are undeniably linked.”

Kelly highlighted a number of MOAA-endorsed provisions in the bill, to include:

- **Military Pay Raise and Junior Enlisted Pay Increase:** Increased junior enlisted pay by 14.5%, with an increase of 4.5% for all others.
- **Unaccompanied Housing:** Improvements include authorizing the services to provide free broadband internet access to servicemembers residing in unaccompanied housing, and the expansion of the DoD Housing Feedback System to include unaccompanied housing.
- **Basic Needs Allowance:** An increase in the threshold from 150% to 200% of the federal poverty guidelines would increase the number of military families eligible for this vital assistance program.
- **Military Family Support:** Improvements include more child care coverage for military spouses seeking employment, a 100% discount for DoD child care providers on the care of one child and reduced costs for additional children (standardizing the benefit across the departments), and upgrades to the portability of professional licenses of servicemembers and military spouses.
- **TRICARE and the Military Health System:** Improvements include a referral waiver for servicemembers seeking physical therapy, nutrition, audiology, optometry, and podiatry services in military treatment facilities; the elimination of TRICARE contraception copays to align with federal requirements for commercial health plans; and licensure flexibility allowing TRICARE mental health providers to provide tele-mental health care to servicemembers and their families without regard to the location of the provider or the patient.
- **Travel Expense Reimbursement:** Effective in January 2027, DoD would reimburse reserve component travel and some related expenses for servicemembers who travel over 50 miles to inactive duty training (IDT) and muster duty.

These efforts to support the military community and provide for the all-volunteer force show the great strides possible when lawmakers from both sides of the aisle work with stakeholders like MOAA and fellow military service organizations,” Kelly said. “We look forward to Congress moving on this legislation without delay, and for lawmakers to complete their appropriations duties – including a full DoD budget – alongside these measures.”

Keep up with the progress of the NDAA and other MOAA advocacy priorities on [MOAA's Advocacy News page](#) and by registering at our [Legislative Action Center](#).

...and more from our much-appreciated sponsors



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