



Charleston Chapter, Military Officers Association of America

August — Issue 07 2026

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Web site: www.charlestonmoaa.com



MOAA SIGNATURE GROUPS

Join MOAA Leadership and your fellow MOAA members
on these hosted cruises and land tours.

AFFORDABLE TRAVEL — Every MOAA Signature Group is a negotiated special which is not available to the general public — only MOAA members and their guests can attend. You can, however, bring as many friends and family members with you as you like.

EASIER, SAFER TRAVEL — Vacations are meant to be an escape. It is your time to relax and unwind, explore, and discover. So, let us take care of the details. This is valuable time that doesn't have to be spent worrying about how you're going to get there or, what you're going to do when you get there

INCREASE THE FUN FACTOR — Being surrounded by like-minded people offers you the chance to share experiences and make new memories together. Group travel can give you the chance to meet people and make new friends. You'll meet individuals who are also passionate about travel and have experiences that are similar to your own. With shared military backgrounds and values, camaraderie forms naturally and often leads to lasting friendships.

2026 & 2027 SIGNATURE GROUPS

July 12-21, 2026	Highlights of Eastern Europe River Cruise	9-nights from \$3,999
October 1-10, 2026	Western Europe Yacht Cruise	9-nights from \$4,999
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For complete details, including detailed day-by-day itinerary, please visit us online

Check out our interesting JROTC Awards Ceremonies on page 3.

Legislative Summary

Submitted by: Bud Schneeweis



CAPT, USCG (Ret)

Special, Check Out: MOAA's [Take Action Center](#)

New Republican Primary

The untimely passing of South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham reminds us of our awesome duty and privilege as citizens of our nation, state and community to vote for those who govern. Although Sen. Graham's sister Darline Graham Nordone has been sworn in as his temporary replacement (until the new Congress is sworn in in January 2027) and has entered the race for his seat in a new term, a new Republican primary, and if necessary a runoff, are scheduled in August. Check your eligibility to vote in the upcoming Republican primary here. (<https://scvotes.gov/statement-from-the-south-carolina-state-election-commission/>)

Everyone should plan to vote in the November elections!

Coming Soon: Changes to Your MOAA Account Login

In efforts to continually improve your customer experience, MOAA is proud to announce MOAA National will transition to a new customer account system later this year. This transition will provide a simpler way to manage your account with MOAA.

Verify, Update, or Add Your Email Address

In order for MOAA to provide you with the most robust online experience, including access to your account through our updated customer portal, you will need to have a current email address on file with us. You can verify which email address we have on record or make updates by logging in to

your online account. If you have not yet shared your email address with us, please call our Member Service Center at 1-800-234-6622 and a representative will be happy to add it to your customer record.

House Delays Action on Omnibus Veterans Package; MOAA Continues Advocacy

House leadership postponed consideration of the Take Care of America's Veterans Act (TCAVA) on July 16 after pulling the bill (H.R. 9237) from the floor before a final vote. While the legislation now faces additional hurdles, MOAA and our advocacy partners continue to work with lawmakers in both the House and Senate to advance the bill's key provisions before the end of the 119th Congress.

The legislation would secure several long-standing MOAA priorities, including relief for combat-injured retirees, expanded support for military caregivers, and protections for

Continued on page 5.

Thank You

The following have renewed their membership for Five or More Years:

Maj Gen Thomas L. Carter, USAF (Ret)



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Our Final Tribute to our 2026 ROTC and JROTC Awards Programs

Military Magnet Academy 2026 Army JROTC Award Ceremony

It was my honor to once again represent our Charleston MOAA Chapter at Military Magnet Academy's (MMA) Award Ceremony on Tuesday, 12 May 2026. The ceremony began with the Posting of the Colors, the playing of the National Anthem, and the reciting of the Cadet Creed. MMA representatives attending were Principal Dr. Robert Perribeau, Senior Army Instructor Major Keith Eisenberger Jr, and Army Instructors 1SGT Margaret Mitchell and 1SGT Luis Hernandez. There was a large number of parents attending. The ceremony was smooth running and well received by the cadets and families.

The National MOAA Medal was awarded to Junior Cadet Maurice Isadore. This summer he is enlisting in the Army Reserves, following which he will return to MMA for his senior year. Our chapter's Outstanding Cadet Award, and \$50 cash, was presented to Senior Cadet Luz Malpica. Following graduation, she will be enlisting in the Army National Guard. The JROTC staff shared high praises for both of these cadets.

Robert C McKay Jr, USA (Former 1Lt)



Cadet Luz
Malpica and
1LT Bob
McKay

Cadet Maurice
Isadore and 1LT
Bob McKay



Colleton County High School Naval JROTC Awards Program

PR1 Christopher Hutchens, USN (Ret) and Chief Delee, USN (Ret) have done an outstanding job training the Cougar Nation in Walterboro, South Carolina. On Tuesday 05 May 2026, the auditorium was filled with excited students and parents as the program started.

The program was orchestrated by the cadets starting with the Invocation and the singing of the National Anthem.

Cadet Nevaeh Bellinger was presented with the MOAA National Medal and Certificate for his work with the unit during the past year.

Cadet Mark Denton received the MOAA National Certificate and the fifty - dollar cash award for his support of the unit this past year as well as his support throughout his tenure in the JROTC program.

I recommend that we continue to support them with our presentations of awards in the coming years.



Cadet Nevaeh
Bellinger



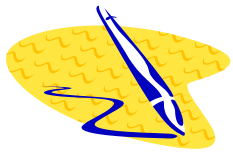
Cadet Mark Denton



Rest in Peace

*Military Brothers and Sisters. Your Service
to Our Country is Recorded and Honored.*

*Thankfully, nothing to report this
month.*



President's Pen

Welcome back from our summer vacation with our monthly Charleston MOAA Chapter Newsletter! You will notice that the front page is drastically different from our normal Charleston MOAA Chapter Luncheon Menu, Speaker Information and Reservation Instructions. This month we feature the MOAA Vacations Travel Brochure advertising their 2026 & 2027 Signature Groups. In addition to providing our members the opportunity to take part in any of these trips, by including this advertisement in our monthly newsletter and on our website, MOAA Vacations will be sending our Chapter a check for \$100.00.

MOAA Vacations not only provides these Signature Group offers, they also will arrange trips for MOAA members and their friends and relatives on any cruise line that you might be investigating. When you use MOAA Vacations, they will rebate a percentage back to our MOAA Chapter. Several of our Charleston MOAA Chapter members have taken advantage of these offers including Beverly and me. Should you have any questions about our experiences, please do not hesitate to give us a call.

With this month's issue, we will complete our articles for our ROTC and JROTC Awards presentations. A huge "thank you" to Bob McKay and to Steve Rowe for their MOAA National Medal ordering and Certificate preparation! Also, a huge "thank you" to all those Chapter members who volunteered to attend the Awards programs, present the medals and certificates and draft the articles to appear in our newsletter to show what our support to these programs means to the local students, instructors and the institutions they represent.

With the beginning of our fall luncheons, please let Bud Schneeweis know if there are any speakers that you would like to have invited to our luncheons. Also if there are any other local

Thank You

**Lt Col Edward D. Knowles Toys for
Tots Benefits Program**
30th Year

Current Toys for Tots Fund

\$ 1,199.17

venues that you would like for us to try please let us know. The only restrictions that we have with locations is that, as a volunteer organization trying to keep our operating costs to a minimum, we are not able to pay a fee for use of a room. Looking forward to seeing everyone at our luncheon starting in September!

Thank you again for your continued support to the Charleston Chapter!!

Ernie

MOAA Charleston Legislative Update for August 2026
Newsletter (continued from page 5.)

efforts during the summer recess. Visit the MOAA advocacy news page in the coming weeks for details.

From the American Red Cross

Make a Plan to Stay Cool.

Do not rely only on electric fans during extreme heat. When temperatures are in the high 90s, fans may not prevent heat-related illness. Taking a cool shower or bath or moving to an air-conditioned place is a much better way to cool off.

Spending a few hours each day in air conditioning can help prevent heat illness.

- If you have air conditioning, be sure that it is in working order.
- If you do not have air conditioning or if there is a power outage, find locations where you can stay cool. For example, a public library, shopping mall or a public cooling center. Plan how you will get there.

Additional resources may be available from local government or community groups.

- Make sure you have plenty of lightweight, loose clothing to wear.
- Create a support team of people you may assist and who can assist you. Check in with them often to make sure that everyone is safe.

surviving spouses. As discussions continue, MOAA remains engaged with members of Congress and Capitol Hill staffers to address questions about the bill and correct several misconceptions.

Disability Rating Changes

Much of the recent debate has centered on language that would codify VA's proposed changes to disability ratings for sleep apnea and tinnitus. MOAA's position has been driven by one key consideration: VA officials testified before Congress that these changes would be implemented before the end of the fiscal year. Subsequent reporting that the proposed changes are under review with no effort to rescind the rule, combined with the recent publication of a final date for rule implementation, indicate the VA plans to move forward with the revised rating schedule.

These actions are consistent with MOAA's view that if the changes are moving forward, Congress should pass TCAVA to ensure the resulting savings remain within the veteran community instead of reverting to the Treasury. Those savings would help fund several long-overdue priorities for veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors.

No piece of legislation is perfect. Years of advocacy experience have taught us that overwhelming bipartisan support alone is not always enough to move important veteran's legislation across the finish line.

Consider just two of the 60-plus bills that make up TCAVA: The Major Richard Star Act has more than 300 House cosponsors, and the Love Lives On Act has nearly 180 - first and second, respectively, among military-related legislation. Both bills have had broad bipartisan, bicameral backing in multiple Congresses. And despite this significant support, both bills have stalled ... alongside other critical veteran's legislation.

Rest in Peace Spouses

*For Your Support to our Military
Brothers and Sisters. Your Service is
Recorded and Honored.*

**Lt Col Kruger B. Smith, USAF (Ret) passed
away 09 July 2026. He is survived by his wife
June.**

Time for Action Is Now

TCAVA presents a rare opportunity to advance many priorities supported not only by Congress but by our community - veterans, caregivers, and survivors, along with military and veterans service organizations (MSOs/VSOs). This community has waited long enough.

MOAA will continue working with congressional leaders, committee staff, coalition partners, and the administration to advance these priorities. We remain committed to ensuring combat-injured veterans, caregivers, surviving spouses, and military families receive the support they have earned.

This is a pivotal moment for the veteran community. We urge every MOAA advocate to use the Legislative Action Center today to ask your lawmakers to support this bill and help turn decades of advocacy into lasting benefits for those who have sacrificed so much.

VA Expands Caregiver Support as MOAA Pushes for Long-Term Stability

A recent VA briefing for MOAA and other veterans service organizations (VSOs) underscored the department's commitment to seeing caregivers as partners in care ... and reinforced the urgency to move forward on legislation ensuring caregivers receive consistent and sustainable support.

The VA Offices of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention highlighted ongoing and new efforts to strengthen caregiver resources during the July 15 meeting, emphasizing the growing alignment among federal and community partners to meet rising demand.

The department continues to build on long-standing caregiver programs, which MOAA helped champion through comprehensive caregiver legislation. The Caregiver Support Program (CSP), established in 2007, now includes two primary frameworks: the Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS) and the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC). Together, these programs offer a wide range of services including caregiver training and skills development, respite care, counseling and wellness programs, and financial and legal planning services.

CSP teams are located at every medical center and provide personalized assistance. They serve as the primary point of contact for caregivers navigating VA and community resources.

A VA CSP representative provided updates aligned with VA's annual "Caregiving Connects Us; Communi-

Continued on page 6.

ty Strengthens Us” theme, which guides the department’s ongoing efforts to reduce isolation and improve caregiver resilience:

Centralized eligibility decisions. The VA centralized the PCAFC case management and eligibility decision-making process as of May 18, a move designed to improve consistency and timeliness.

Expanded mental health and peer support. The VA continues to grow access to virtual psychotherapy, peer mentoring, group programs, and targeted caregiver webinars.

Greater community collaboration. Partnerships with VSOs and nonprofit organizations extend VA’s reach and connect caregivers to additional support networks.

Veterans Omnibus Package

The Take Care of America’s Veterans Act (TCAVA) includes MOAA’s top caregiving priority — the Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement (3R) Act.

The bill recognizes caregivers as partners in VA’s care of veterans and addresses the unique burdens they face, including financial stress, emotional strain, and complex care demands.

It would expand access to education and job training, provide employment assistance, and strengthen retirement security for caregivers whose time out of the workforce often leads to lasting economic impacts.

A Fleeting Window of Opportunity

TCAVA represents a unique but time sensitive opportunity to advance the Veteran Caregiver 3R Act alongside other MOAA supported priorities, such as relief for combat injured retirees affected by the disability offset, elimination of remarriage penalties for surviving spouses under age 55, and expanded eligibility for enhanced Dependency and Indemnity Compensation for survivors of veterans with ALS.

With this congressional session rapidly drawing to a close, the window for action is narrow. Add your voice and ask your lawmakers to act now and ensure swift passage of TCAVA.

Spouse Unemployment Is Getting Worse. This MOAA-Backed Plan Can Make a Difference

Despite decades of support programs, training

and education efforts, and other attempts to combat the high rate of military spouse unemployment, a recent survey shows that rate is getting higher.

Nearly 3 out of 10 military spouses actively looking for work who took part in the Military Family Advisory Network’s 2025 Military Family 360 Report said they were unemployed, up from 21.8% among the same group two years earlier.

A recent Military Times piece reexamined the issue and highlighted a new approach to attacking the problem: Incentivize businesses to hire military spouses using a tax-break program designed to target groups facing barriers to employment.

While certifications, college degrees, and networking programs have bolstered the employability of many military spouses, these programs have not been able to overcome employer bias that hiring a military spouse costs a business more money, citing the guaranteed need to rehire the position when the spouse needs to relocate. The Improve and Enhance the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) Act addresses this issue by financially rewarding employers for hiring military spouses, an approach that has worked for veterans and other groups who struggled with significant unemployment barriers.

The bipartisan bill would restart WOTC (which expired at the end of 2025), expand benefits to unemployed military spouses, and increase the tax credit incentive. Businesses that employ members of targeted groups would get an average tax credit of \$6,000 per new hire under the program if they meet various requirements.

Giving companies a financial incentive to onboard military spouses may encourage some organizations to find solutions to employment obstacles that have plagued military spouses for decades, such as frequent military moves. Also, unlike training or education services, the program doesn’t cost anything unless a spouse finds a job.

“We can and should do better in holding ourselves accountable in measuring progress and changing course if a specific program is falling short,” Rep. Don Beyer (D-Va.) told Military Times in the piece. Beyer was an original cosponsor on the House bill, introduced by Rep. Lloyd Smucker (R-Pa.). The Senate bill, introduced by Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-La.), has eight initial cosponsors - four Republicans, four Democrats - including Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.).

While the bill has seen little movement in either chamber since its late 2025 introduction, MOAA plans to make it a key part of upcoming advocacy

Continued on page 4.

Charleston Chapter MOAA () Membership Application () Renewal () Change of Address. Chapter Dues: \$20.00 a year for Regular membership. Surviving Spouse membership \$5.00 per year. Multiple year dues are encouraged in order to reduce paperwork. Make check payable to "Charleston MOAA". Mail to: Charleston MOAA, P.O. Box 70421, Charleston SC 29415-0421.

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Step 2: Add our organization as a recipient. Send your payment to: charlestonmoaa@gmail.com.

Make sure the name shown is: Charleston Chapter, Military Officers Association of America

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This memo helps us credit your payment correctly.

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Prospective Chapter Members: If you are not a member of the Charleston Chapter, MOAA, you have received this copy as a courtesy invitation to contact any Officer or Director for information about joining our Chapter. News and Views herein are not necessarily those of any Government Department or another Chapter, or a Member's Chapter and non-partisan.

Membership News

LATEST INFORMATION

Total Members - 206
Regular Members—159
Honorary Members - 4
Surviving Spouse Members - 42
Special Members—1

Members receiving the newsletter by email 132

CHARLESTON MOAA MEMBERS: We are continuing our recruiting drive for new members. If you are uncertain of your status, just e-mail me at brockman1982@att.net and I will verify if you are current for another year or more or— if you need to pay dues for 2026. My cell number is 704-300-8739, but an e-mail is usually the best and most efficient. We value your membership and appreciate your support of our chapter.

As of January 1, 2026 our dues for Regular Members has been increased to \$20/year. The dues will remain at \$5 for Surviving Spouses—defined as widows or widowers of Regular Members. Please make checks payable to "Charleston MOAA" and mail to Charleston MOAA, PO BOX 70421, Charleston, SC 29415-0421. We now have an alternative method for payment of dues other than USPS. Please see the instructions for Zelle payments on page 7.

RECRUITING UPDATE - I ask everyone to think of our Chapter when you are meeting new folks in your community, neighborhood, church or other organizations. If they are interested in joining our Chapter, and meet the criteria, I will be glad to follow-up and share more information with them. Just provide my name, number and e-mail to them or send me an e-mail with their information and I will reach out to them.

ADDRESS/EMAIL CHANGES-Please keep me advised if you have a change to your address, phone or e-mail and I will update our records. When you have requested a newsletter to be mailed to you and your address has changed or you are on vacation, the Chapter must pay a fee to the Post Office for the newsletter to have the mail released. We will be glad to use your email during your time of travel only if you prefer.

We very much appreciate everyone's support of our Chapter and should you have any questions at any time,— feel free to call me at 704-300-8739 or e-mail me at brockman1982@att.net. I will be happy to answer your questions.

Thank you!
Beverly Brockman Col, USA (Ret)
Membership 2nd Vice President

Thank You

*For your gift in support of
Chapter programs:*

*Thank you to each and everyone who has
contributed to our Charleston MOAA
Chapter programs that we support. Your
generosity is appreciated by all those who
benefit!*

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Chapter and MOAA
information?
Or you need to update your
contact information?**

Visit our Web Site

<http://www.charlestonmoaa.com>

**Many improvements were recently made,
and the work continues.**