



Houston Area
PO Box 18372
Sugar Land, TX 77496
www.moahoustonarea.org

~ Five Star ★★★★★ Chapter ~

President's Message...

June 2023 Issue

Greetings Friends,

Happy 248th Birthday to the United States Army.

This month we are delighted to have John Martinec as our monthly chapter meeting speaker. John, along with Gene Tulich the longtime head of the Houston Military Affairs Committee, were instrumental in keeping Ellington Field open and creating what is now Ellington Field Joint Reserve Base (EFJTB). I might add that former TX State Representative CAPT (R) Rick Miller USN, a Chapter member, also played a key role in EFJTB. This should be a quite interesting meeting.



In this edition, there also is great article on "The Greatest Beer Run Ever" ... a teaser.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate again that we can use your assistance in keeping your chapter dues current. Dues and chapter support donations are our primary source revenues and enable the Chapter to continue to support the ROTC and JROTC programs in the area as well as other Veteran support initiatives. Last Month, the U of H Army scholarship fund awarded \$750.00 each to two well deserving Cadets.

Respectfully,
Rob
Robin P. Ritchie, COL, USA (RET)
President

★★★★★

In this issue >>>

- *President's Message, Robin P. Ritchie, COL, Infantry, USAR (Ret)*
- *Air Force Offers Experienced Pilots \$50,000 to Extend Their Service*
- *'Donut Dollies' Serve Up a Boost to Morale*
- *House defense bill would move Mexico under US Southern Command*
- *Blue Ribbon Beer Run*
- *Surviving Spouse Corner*
- *Veterans to See Cost-of-Living Boost to Their Benefits*
- *University of Houston Army ROTC Scholarship Fund*
- *Chaplain's Corner*
- *Membership Application / Renewal Form*

June 2023...Chapter Events:

Tuesday, June 27th, 2023 @ noon

MOAA HA BOD Meeting

Rudi Lechner's German Restaurant
2503 S Gessner Rd
Houston, TX 77063

Saturday, July 1st, 2023 @ 11:30 am

MOAA HA Chapter Meeting

Rudi Lechner's German Restaurant
2503 S Gessner Rd
Houston, TX 77063

Air Force Offers Experienced Pilots \$50,000 to Extend Their Service

JUNE 07, 2023

Editor's note: This article by Thomas Novelty originally appeared on [Military.com](https://www.military.com), a leading source of news for the military and veteran community.

The [Air Force](#) is offering a bigger bonus -- up to \$50,000 per year -- as it hopes to keep some of its most experienced pilots and retain aviators amid a pilot shortage.

Certain pilots -- including remote piloted aircraft pilots, air battle managers and combat systems officers -- can apply for the Legacy Aviation Bonus Program starting Tuesday and through Sept. 15. Major changes to the program include "an increase in the monetary cap from \$35,000 per year up to \$50,000 per year" for those who are eligible, the [service said in a Monday press release](#).



An F-15E Strike Eagle pilot assigned to the 494th Fighter Squadron conducts pre-flight checks at Souda Air Base, Greece, on July 15, 2022. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. Rachel Maxwell/Air Force)

"Reliable personnel forecasts allow the Air Force to continue executing the warfighting mission," Maj. Gen. Albert Miller, the Air Force training and readiness director, said in the release. "Our experienced aviators are uniquely qualified to succeed in a combat environment, and these incentives are necessary to maintain that talent and competitiveness with our pacing challenge."

[RELATED: [Air Force Will Likely Miss Recruiting Goals, Service Secretary Says](#)]

In recent years, the Air Force has experienced a wide-ranging pilot shortage. Air Force Secretary Frank Kendall said during a budget briefing with reporters in March that the service has been working on that issue from several angles, including bonuses.

"We do have a [pilot] shortage," Kendall said. "We're having to try to improve the efficiency of the pipeline to get more people in. The reserve and Guard equation is a little more complicated, but we do have some shortages there that we're trying to address as well."

To be eligible under the new Legacy Aviation Bonus Program, pilots must have an Undergraduate Flying Training Active-Duty Service Commitment expiring in fiscal 2023 or earlier, according to the press release.

Pilots who already have a contract under a previous aviation bonus program "will not be able to renegotiate for a higher amount in this year," according to the news release.

[MOAA INTERVIEW: [Air Force Secretary Frank Kendall](#)]

The 2023 National Defense Authorization Act also directed the Air Force to create another bonus initiative, called the Rated Officer Retention Demonstration Program.

That program would allow active-duty manned pilots -- with no more than three years, but not less than one year, remaining -- to sign a contract for the maximum monetary amount one to two fiscal years prior to the fiscal year their Undergraduate Flying Training Active-Duty Service Commitment expires, according to the press release.

Continued on Page 5...

'Donut Dollies' Serve Up a Boost to Morale By Don Vaughan



Donut Dollies pose in Da Nang, Vietnam, in 1970. Photo: The Washington Post/Contributor/Getty Images. Top: Joann Puffer Kotcher stands with U.S. servicemembers in the chow line. She served with the Donut Dollies in Vietnam from 1966-67. Photo: Courtesy Joann Puffer Kotcher.

For American personnel serving in Vietnam, one of the most popular reminders of home was a visit from the blue-uniformed young women affectionately known as “Donut Dollies.” The 627 always-upbeat Red Cross volunteers served in Vietnam, boosting morale with a song, a board game, or often just a smile.

Donut Dollies date back to World War II, when teams of female Red Cross volunteers visited soldiers in the field with special clubmobiles that carried coffee and doughnuts. They did it again during the Korean War, at one point turning out a staggering 20,000 doughnuts a day for American soldiers arriving in Pusan.

Donut Dollies logged more than 2 million miles by jeep, deuce-and-a-half, and helicopter, visiting troops in some of the country's most remote and dangerous regions. But it was in Vietnam that Donut Dollies — officially known as Supplemental Recreational Activities Overseas (SRAO) program staff — were most visible. According to an [Armyhistory.org](https://www.armyhistory.org) report, Donut Dollies logged more than 2 million miles by jeep, deuce-and-a-half, and helicopter, visiting troops in some of the country's most remote and dangerous regions.

To serve in Vietnam, SRAO applicants had to be female, between 21 and 24 years old, college graduates, and single, notes Jeanne Christie, who in 1967 served as a Donut Dolly in Nha Trang, Da Nang, and Phan Rang.

Two intense weeks were spent in Washington, D.C., learning military branches and ranks, what to expect in-country, and more before shipping out.

Participants volunteered for a variety of reasons. Christie, for example, came from a family steeped in community service.

“It was what our family did, so it was an extension of growing up,” she said.

‘A LETTER FROM HOME’

The job of Donut Dollies in Vietnam was to boost morale among U.S. fighting forces, and no American firebase was too far for them to visit. They brought board games, records, treats, and more in an effort to provide weary, homesick servicemembers a few minutes of respite. They also visited with the wounded in base hospitals.

The one thing they didn't do — despite their nickname — was pass out doughnuts.

“People have asked if we gave out doughnuts in Vietnam,” said Joann Puffer Kotcher, who served as a Donut Dolly in Korea and in Vietnam. “In the words of one mess sergeant: ‘No. In Vietnam, it was too damn hot to make them.’”

But she knew their visits made a difference to the troops.

“Veterans tell me my visits were ‘a letter from home,’” she said. “When they saw me, they knew there was someone ‘back in the world’ who cared about them.”

Continued on next page...

'Donut Dollies' Serve Up a Boost to Morale

Continued from previous page...

Danger was a constant for Donut Dollies in Vietnam.

"I assured my family that I wasn't going to be in danger; I couldn't have been more wrong," said Kotcher, author of *Donut Dolly: An American Red Cross Girl's War in Vietnam* (University of North Texas Press). "I was almost killed at least six times. One time, a sniper shot at me and missed. Another time, an ambush missed me."

Three Donut Dollies died in Vietnam over the course of the program.

BRIGHT SPOTS IN DARK TIMES

Understandably, a visit from the Donut Dollies was a special experience for troops, many of whom hadn't seen an American woman in months.

Army 1st Lt. Jim Roberts was serving in Dong Xoai in 1971 when the remote base received an unexpected visit from two Donut Dollies whose helicopter had experienced mechanical difficulties. Roberts wrote about their visit in a self-published book about his time in Vietnam and spent years trying to locate the women so he could thank them "for making a very bright spot in a very dark time." Roberts reconnected with the Donut Dollies via Zoom in 2021.

"Their service is an unknown part of the war for many," Roberts said. "The women are very proud of what they did. They were in a war zone, riding in helicopters and being shot at. They were adventuresome and very brave, and they did a very courageous thing."

Jeff "Doc" Dentice has also spent years searching for the Donut Dollies he encountered during his service as an Army medic with the 25th Infantry Division in Cu Chi.

"What they did in Vietnam went above and beyond to boost morale for the troops," he said. "They often flew in Hueys to firebases in the boonies where the enemy was ever present. They served proudly and deserve a debt of gratitude from our Vietnam veterans."

The Donut Dollies in Vietnam were trendsetters, said Roberts.

"These women weren't part of the Army, but they were in combat," he said. "They were mold-breakers during a time when we didn't realize the mold was being broken. These women are heroes."

Don Vaughan is a military history and culture writer.



Air Force Offers Experienced Pilots

\$50,000 to Extend Their Service *Continued from Page 2...*

The Legacy Aviation Bonus Program won't be offered next year, meaning "the maximum contract amount will only be offered under the demonstration program," the service said.

The Air Force's issue with pilot recruitment, training and retention is not new. The service has struggled with a pilot shortage for nearly a decade, often landing anywhere between 1,500 to 2,000 aviators shy of requirements, Military.com has previously reported.

The new bonus also comes as the Air Force, as a whole, struggles with its toughest recruiting environment in decades.

This past March, Kendall announced at the Air and Space Force Association's conference in Colorado that the service is projecting about a 10% shortfall in active-duty numbers, and the hole will likely be even larger for the Guard and Reserve.

Outgoing Air Force Recruiting Service Commander, Maj. Gen. Ed Thomas, told Military.com in an interview last month that the shortfall will more likely be around 13% on the active-duty side and around 30% in the Guard and Reserve.

★★★★★



MOAA Chapter Luncheon
July 1, 2023
1130am - 1330pm
Guest Speaker
John L. Martinec
President, Aero Sys, LLC



Meal Options: Chicken Schnitzel, Pork Schnitzel or Spinach Quiche
Meal includes: Main, sides, dessert and coffee/tea
Cash Bar
Price: \$30.00 per person

Rudi Lechner's German Restaurant
2503 S Gessner
Houston, TX 77063

Please RSVP to Rob Ritchie
Email: rpritchie@earthlink.net
Phone: 713.818.0408

House defense bill would move Mexico under US Southern Command

By [Bryant Harris](#)
June 16, 2023



U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard boarding team members prepare to board a fishing boat in 2013 during a drug interdiction while patrolling in international waters near Colombia and Ecuador in the Pacific Ocean. (Jose Cabezas/AFP via Getty Images)

WASHINGTON — House Republicans are trying to give U.S. Southern Command authority over military relations with Mexico, which currently lies within the jurisdiction of U.S. Northern Command.

The [\\$826 billion Pentagon funding bill](#), which the House defense spending panel advanced along party lines on Thursday, contains a provision that would give SOUTHCOM authority over all military activities related to Mexico within six months after the bill becomes law. Republicans hope that doing so will enable the Defense Department to play a more active role in cracking down on fentanyl trafficking.

“No threat in the world today is claiming more American lives than the fentanyl crisis,” House defense appropriations Chairman Ken Calvert, R-Calif., told Defense News in a statement. “To prioritize

combating the trafficking of fentanyl by Mexican drug cartels, we are transferring Mexico from the jurisdiction of NORTHCOM to SOUTHCOM, which has a long history of successful international and interagency counter drug operations.”

Fentanyl is the leading cause of drug overdose deaths in the United States. Nearly 71,000 Americans died from fentanyl and opioid-related overdoses in 2021 — comprising about 67% of all overdoses — according to data compiled by the National Institutes of Health.

A [January 2020 report](#) by the Drug Enforcement Agency identified Mexico and China as primary sources for fentanyl trafficked into the United States, and said India is emerging as a source for related chemicals.

“Within the whole of government approach to this epidemic, this bill advances the Defense Department’s role in a historic way,” Calvert said. “The subcommittee is providing record-high investments in Defense Department drug interdiction and counter-drug activities.”

Continued on the next page...

 **Veterans
Crisis Line**
DIAL 988 then **PRESS 1**



House defense bill would move Mexico under US Southern Command

Continued from previous page...

A Republican summary accompanying the Pentagon spending bill touts \$1.2 billion in funding for drug interdictions and counter-drug activities. The summary also touts an unspecified funding increase for the National Guard's counter-drug program as well as train and equip programs to help Latin American countries crack down on cartels, "particularly the Sinaloa and Jalisco drug cartels."

The Pentagon last moved a country to a different combatant command in 2021, when it [transferred Israel from U.S. European Command to U.S. Central Command](#) to more effectively coordinate against Iran with Arab security partners.

Still, it's unclear whether transferring Mexico to SOUTHCOM will get buy-in from Democrats when the full Appropriations Committee takes up the defense spending bill before a full House floor vote and final negotiations with the Senate.

"That's not the kind of thing the Appropriations Committee is supposed to be doing," Rep. Adam Smith of Washington, the top Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee, told Defense News. "They don't know what they're doing ... and they shouldn't be doing it."

Smith said there had been no discussion on moving Mexico to SOUTHCOM, even with the House Armed Services Committee preparing to mark up the fiscal 2024 National Defense Authorization Act next week. Policy issues are usually debated in that authorization bill, while appropriations bills typically remain more focused on spending levels and funding specifics.

The draft FY24 defense spending bill also contains several [contentious partisan policy riders that Democrats strongly oppose](#), including an end to [the Pentagon's abortion leave policy](#), an end to transgender medical care for troops, and a ban on diversity and extremism training.

But on fentanyl, some lawmakers have sought to come to a bipartisan consensus regarding the military's role in counter-drug operations in Mexico and elsewhere.

Sens. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, and Tim Kaine, D-Va., have teamed up to introduce legislation that would require the Pentagon to deepen security cooperation with the Mexican military to combat fentanyl trafficking. Reps. Stephanie Bice, R-Okla., and Salud Carbajal, D-Calif., have introduced the same bill in the House.

They introduced the legislation in June after a growing chorus of Republican lawmakers and presidential candidates called for Congress to pass military authorization for the president to strike drug cartels in Mexico.

Rep. Dan Crenshaw, R-Texas, introduced the bill that would authorize military force in Mexico in January. It currently has 20 Republican co-sponsors, including two who lead panels on the House Armed Services Committee: Reps. Mike Waltz of Florida and Jack Bergman of Michigan.

All the leading Republican presidential candidates have advocated using military force in Mexico against drug cartels, including former President Donald Trump, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, former Vice President Mike Pence, former Gov. Nikki Haley and Sen. Tim Scott, R-S.C.



Blue Ribbon Beer Run

By Kipp Hanley

Army Sgt. Rick Duggan was nervous. The 20-year-old infantryman from the 1st Air Cavalry Division had just set up an ambush zone close to the demilitarized zone near North Vietnam when he was called back to the perimeter by his superiors. No one got called back unless something was wrong.

But instead of receiving bad news, the Manhattan native was handed a Pabst Blue Ribbon beer by John “Chickie” Donohue, his neighbor from the working-class neighborhood of Inwood. Seeing Donohue dressed in his madras shirt and white jeans so far from home was shocking.

“I just froze,” Duggan said. “I couldn’t believe I was seeing what I was seeing.”

These kids in my neighborhood were dying left and right ... I had to do something. That surprise soon turned to a sense of fear.

Duggan’s superiors told him Donohue was his responsibility, so the two had to return to the ambush zone as darkness approached. That evening, Donohue hunkered down with the rest of Duggan’s outfit, at one point hugging a grenade launcher as a brief firefight ensued during the course of the night. Luckily, there were no American casualties, but Duggan knew Donohue had to get out of the area since his unit was leaving.

“I had to hitch a ride on the helicopter, assuming it was going to a place from there that was good for me,” said Donohue, who was working as a merchant mariner at the time. “... The closest place from there was Quan Tri airfield. ... Anywhere south was good for me.”

MAKING GOOD ON HIS PROMISE

Donohue’s harrowing journey to Vietnam became known as “The Greatest Beer Run Ever,” and it has been captured in a book, documentary, and major motion picture. It all started after Donohue’s roommate, Bobby Pappas, had been shipped off to Vietnam. Donohue, who had served in the Marine Corps from 1958-64, was tossing back a few beers at Doc Fiddler’s pub one November night in 1967.

When the conversation turned to the war protests in Central Park, bartender George Lynch told patrons somebody ought to go to Vietnam to buy the American boys some beers. So, Donohue announced that he would do it, made a list of friends to see, and a few days later hopped aboard a merchant ship named Drake Victory carrying ammunition to Vietnam.

The boat needed an oiler, which Donohue was certified to do by the U.S. Coast Guard. He was confident he could make it to Vietnam, having traveled there before — ironically on a ship laden with American beer. But Donohue wasn’t so sure he could see all his friends he set out to see.



The story of John “Chickie” Donohue’s trip to Vietnam is told in the 2022 movie “The Greatest Beer Run Ever,” available on Apple TV+. Photo: Courtesy Apple TV+. Top: John “Chickie” Donohue. Photo: Courtesy John Donohue.

Tom Collins, the younger brother of one of Donohue’s friends, was serving as an Army police officer in Quy Nhon in the central highlands. Duggan was an infantryman stationed at the time in the Quang Tri province near North Vietnam, and Pappas was a radio operator at an ammunition depot just outside of Saigon.

“I didn’t think it was crazy,” Donohue said. “I thought it was possible — probably not probable, but possible. While these kids in my neighborhood were dying left and right and funeral masses were being held every few weeks, I had to do something. I was trained as a Marine, and a war was going on.”

Continued on the next page...

Blue Ribbon Beer Run *Continued from previous page...*

FIRST ROUND

Collins was working as a bank teller in 1966 at age 20 when he was drafted.

After training at Fort Bragg, N.C., Collins, who was a specialist 4th class when he later got out of Vietnam, went to Quy Nhon, serving as a police officer in the 127th Military Police Company. He rotated his time between road and town patrols and assisting with convoys and POW camps. One day, he was on an ammunition boat on the Gulf of Tonkin when he saw on a tender a familiar face that he couldn't believe was in Vietnam.

"I am looking at this guy, and I said, 'I know this guy. Where do I know this guy from?'" Collins said. "Let's face it, you're not expecting someone from your neighborhood to show up. He comes along the side of the ship and says, 'Collins' little brother?' And I said, 'Chickie Donohue? What the hell are you doing here?' He said, 'I came to bring you a beer,' and I said, 'Holy s---, you are out of your mind.' "

Seeing a friend from the neighborhood in such an unexpected place was a pleasant surprise for Collins, who said that beer "went down like a glass of water." After a few Pabsts and a night at a local bar, Donohue asked if he could take Collins to visit Duggan, an elementary and high school friend from the neighborhood who lived in the same building as Donohue's family.

The story, which Donohue repeatedly used throughout the trip, was they had to go visit their brother and let him know about their recently deceased stepmother. Collins' superiors weren't having it, however.

"The first sergeant looks at Chickie Donohue, and looks at me, and looks at Chickie Donohue, and says, 'I don't know what the hell you're up to, but Collins is going nowhere,'" said Collins, laughing.

SECOND ROUND

Before Donohue could meet Duggan, he accidentally ran into Kevin McLoone, a friend from Long Beach, N.Y.

Donohue was walking down the side of the road when he spotted his buddy driving a jeep toward An Khe, a town not far from where Donohue originally made port. A Marine who served in Vietnam from 1963-65, McLoone was helping the war effort as a civilian by installing scrambling systems in U.S. helicopters to make it difficult for the North Vietnamese to intercept radio frequencies the military was using.

McLoone stopped his jeep when he heard Donohue yell his name. He pulled over, downed a few beers on the side of the road, and then drove Donohue to a nearby air strip where he made his way north to see Duggan.

"He has a very distinctive voice," said McLoone, who left the Marine Corps as a lance corporal. "I stopped the jeep and said, 'What are you doing here?' And he told me he was bringing beers [to his friends] to boost their morale."

LAST CALL

After his sleepless night with Duggan, Donohue eventually sweet-talked his way down to Saigon.

Pappas was working for the Army Corps of Engineers as a civilian when he was drafted. He had received three draft deferments — the last one for his wedding day — before finally shipping off to Vietnam in the fall of 1967.

The newly married Pappas had just learned Donohue was in the country after getting a letter from Donohue's girlfriend. However, he didn't know all the hoops he had to jump through to see the rest of his buddies.

Continued on the next page...



Judith Thomas
Surviving Spouse Liaison
MOAA Houston Chapter
719-331-8485 (cell)
jthomas482@aol.com

Surviving Spouse Corner:

JUNE, 2023

The “Survivor Link” has excellent information for Surviving Spouses. You can read the June issue by clicking on the link below. At the end of the newsletter is a space where you can enter your email to receive future issues. If you have questions about Surviving Spouse benefits or concerns, please contact me at jthomas482@aol.com.

[Click Here for Survivor Link - June 2023](#)

Blue Ribbon Beer Run *Continued from previous page...*

The two managed to share drinks on several occasions at the NCO club and officers’ club despite the start of the Tet Offensive, which was responsible for an explosion at Pappas’ ammunition depot. Luckily, Pappas survived, and Donohue eventually made it home safely in late March.

Ironically, Donohue had told Pappas during his going-away party that he would be over in Vietnam to have a drink with him at Christmastime. Turns out, he was off by only a month.

“I just thought, Yeah, sure,” said Pappas, who left the Army as a sergeant. “I didn’t know what he had done with the other guys, so I didn’t think it was any big deal.”

CURTAIN CALL

Today, the men are retired, living up and down the East Coast.

In September 2022, they came together to relive their magical moment at the Toronto Film Festival screening of “The Greatest Beer Run Ever.” After the movie, the lights went out and the spotlight shone on them, eliciting a five-minute standing ovation from the crowd. It was a far different reception than many Vietnam veterans had received after the war.

“They were never appreciated or apologized to for the treatment they received when they came home,” Donohue said. “I hope, if anything, [moviegoers] get that [I] appreciated what they did.”

Collins certainly did.

“There are not many Chickie Donohues around,” Collins said. “He could’ve stayed home, drank in the bar, and never put his foot in Vietnam, but he did. And that is something that I will always respect him for.”

Kipp Hanley is MOAA’s staff writer.

★★★★★

Veterans to See Cost-of-Living Boost to Their Benefits

JUNE 16, 2023

The President signed S. 777, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2023 into law.

Public Law No: 118-6 (06/14/2023)
Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2023 or the Veterans' COLA Act of 2023



This act requires the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to increase the amounts payable for wartime disability compensation, additional compensation for dependents, the clothing allowance for certain disabled veterans, and dependency and indemnity compensation for surviving spouses and children. Specifically, the VA must increase the amounts by the same percentage as the cost-of-living increase in benefits for Social Security recipients that is effective on December 1, 2023. The bill requires the VA to publish the amounts payable, as increased, in the Federal Register.

The VA is authorized to make a similar adjustment to the rates of disability compensation payable to persons who have not received compensation for service-connected disability or death.

The VA adjusts veterans' monthly disability compensation amounts based on the yearly change in the cost of living as determined by the Social Security Administration (SSA). Later this year, SSA will announce the exact percentage of increase. The COLA adjustment will be effective December 2023, and will be reflected in January 2024 compensation payments. ★

University of Houston Army ROTC Scholarship Fund

Recently, Army ROTC Cadets Nancy Meza and Oliver Harper were recipients of the MOAA Houston Scholarship Fund. Each received \$750.00. Cadet Harper could not be present for the photo. Congratulations to both well deserving Cadets.

This is a great example of the Houston Chapter's ongoing support to our military community.





Celebrating Our Flag and Our Freedom

**“Speak and act as those who are going to be
judged by the law that gives freedom.”**

James 2:12

We celebrated Flag Day this week. Our American Flag is a symbol of our freedom. Those of us in the MOAA and all veterans understand quite well what it has cost to be able to enjoy our freedoms. Flag Day was apparent in our communities by all the flags posted around the cities in which we live. One of the “good deeds” that the Boy and Girl Scouts perform is to put out all of those flags. One of the new understandings of our 21st Century is the fact that our Scouts are often remunerated for the service of storing and posting those flags. That remuneration is not necessarily a good or bad thing. It is indicative of the great adventures in which those scouts can participate. They get to go on cross-country trips to great national treasures that many of us didn't have a chance to visit until well into our adult years. These young men and women will become some of our American leaders in the near future.

Freedom is the foundation of our country. God has chosen to give mankind freedom in order that His love can be given to us and chosen by us. He wants our love for Him to be our choice not his. His choice is to love us unconditionally. When we seek God's precepts, His truth and his laws, we are guided by the words He has spoken and those truths become a part of our lives. His Spirit, our conscience and our heart help us to stay on the right path. His truth becomes our guidance. Freedom is not unconditional however. It comes with limitations. We are not free to do anything we want to do. That would bring chaos and anarchy. That is why we have government, laws and responsibility for our actions. God also limits our choices even though His love for us is unlimited.

James chapter 2:12 says, “Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom.” That law is the free gift of love and eternal life that Jesus offered us by sacrificing his life for our sin on the cross. Understanding and believing that Jesus, God's only son died for your sin and mine and asking for His forgiveness is the acceptance of that free gift. His punishment on the cross redeemed us from the bonds of death and hell and gave us the opportunity to receive eternal life. That is God's promise. Once we ask for and accept that promise we can experience the freedom James explained above. The remainder of our lives becomes an expression of gratitude for his grace, love and forgiveness.

As good leaders we don't flaunt our good behaviors and choices. But we share our lives, our attitudes and our faith by the ways we live and serve. We learn and are taught humility and that God honors our humility and is given honor when we do good. Living by faith is not necessarily easy but it does offer the freedom and peace that only God can provide. Scripture tells us that when we do our good deeds He'll keep track of them. Jesus tells us we will be rewarded in heaven. (Not necessarily by our peers here on earth.) Some of our peers have told us that we should do all our labors as if God is watching us. He is.

~ David Essells, USAR, MAJ, RET

2023 Officers

President

Robin P. Ritchie, COL, USA (Ret.)
713.818.0408
rpritchie@earthlink.net

Vice President

Daniel M. Gutierrez, MAJ USA (Ret.)
281.543.1527
danielgutierrez1751@gmail.com

Secretary

Frank A. Tricomi, COL, USA (Ret.)
314.330.6936
fttricomi@earthlink.net

Treasurer

Surviving Spouse MOAA Liaison
Judith Thomas
formerly Mrs. Billy Thomas, LTG USA
(Ret.)
719.331.8485
jthomas482@aol.com

Military Organizations Liaison

Eugene Tulich, Captain USCG (Ret.)
281.376.0061
gene42@flash.net

Chapter Chaplain

David Essells, USAR, MAJ (Ret.)
817.682.1054
artychap@yahoo.com

ROTC/ROTC Affairs Liaison

Rollins J. Collins, LTC USA (Ret.)
704.213.2334
rollins.collins93@gmail.com

Chapter Representative to TCC

Daniel M. Gutierrez, MAJ USA (Ret.)
281.543.1527
danielgutierrez1751@gmail.com

Chapter Newsletter Editor

Kathy Frank
713.203.5058
kathyfrank23@gmail.com

*We need YOU...
to remain a
MOAA HA Member!*



Debating whether to renew your chapter membership?

Talking to a potential new member?

Benefits to belonging to a chapter:

- Camaraderie and Connections: when you attend chapter functions, actively serve on a committee, or take a prominent leadership role, you forge lasting ties with other MOAA members.
- Community Involvement: Membership provide opportunities to contribute to your community in a variety of ways, from providing scholarships to local students, to supporting causes that support wounded warriors and their families.
- Legislative Advocacy: We advocate for the entire military community-all ranks. Members play a critical role in advancing legislation in both Austin and Washington, D.C. This grassroots advocacy is key to MOAA achieving its legislative goals.

Chapter dues reminders will be emailed/sent out in November to those members needing renewal. We are on a calendar year for our chapter dues.

Annual renewal is \$30 for one year, \$20 for each additional year paid with renewal. Surviving Spouse \$15 initial membership; \$10 annual renewal.

Membership Application on the last page!

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM

MOAA's Core Mission

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is the country's leading organization protecting the rights of uniformed servicemembers and their families. MOAA's constituents proudly hail from every branch of the uniformed services. To them, we have made the same promise that they have made to their country: Never Stop Serving.

MOAA's greatest mission is to improve the lives of those who serve and their families, which is achieved largely through the tireless advocacy efforts taking place in our nation's capital. For more than 90 years, MOAA has supported legislation that benefits the uniformed services community and has remained equally vigilant when fighting to stop legislation that threatens our livelihood. The larger our numbers, the greater our voice. For more detailed legislative actions see [MOAA | Take Action Center \(quorum.us\)](https://www.quorum.us)

Name: _____
(Please print) Last First Initial Rank

Branch _____ Status _____ MOAA Nat'l ID _____ *

Spouse's First Name: _____ Tel. for Directory _____

Home Address: _____

Email: _____

Dues: Regular Membership – \$30 first year; annual renewal \$30 (Discount for multiple years if paid with renewal: \$20 for each add'l. year **paid with renewal**)
Surviving Spouse – \$15 first year; annual renewal \$10 (same discount for multiple years)

Chapter Assistance Fund

\$100.00 \$50.00 \$25.00 Other _____

Make check payable to MOAA-HA and mail to:

MOAA-HA
PO Box 18372
Sugar Land, TX 77496



For more information, call COL Robin Ritchie, 713-818-0408

**If not a MOAA national member, another benefit of chapter membership is the opportunity to become a national MOAA member at the BASIC LEVEL for free! If you would like to do so, please indicate here:*

YES NO

Signature: _____