





Houston Area
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~ Five Star ★★★★★ Chapter ~

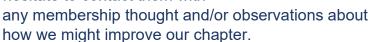
President's Message...

January 2024 Issue

Greetings Colleagues,

It is hard to believe that we are just about done with the first month of 2024. January will see our monthly meeting being held at Space Center Houston. What a great way to kick off the new year!

Our new Chapter officers began their duties this month, so please do not hesitate to contact them with



There are a number of great articles in this edition, and I urge you to read the National Defense Authorization Act piece and get involved with the MOAA Legislative Action Center...I have.

Finally, since we are into a new year, if your membership is up for renewal, please do so. Your dues and Chapter assistance contributions are our life blood.

Respectfully,

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





- President's Message, Robin P. Ritchie, COL, Infantry, USAR (Ret)
- Houston Space Center Monthly Meeting
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January 2024...Chapter Events:

Saturday, January 27th, 2024 @ Noon MOAA HA CHAPTER MEETING

Houston Space Center 1601 NASA Parkway Houston, TX 77058

Tuesday, January 30th, 2024 @ Noon MOAA HA BOD Meeting

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



MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA – HOUSTON AREA CHAPTER

Houston Space Center Monthly Member Meeting Saturday, January 27, 2024 Noon – 2:00 PM Followed by Escorted, Private Tram Tour Cost is \$53.00 per person and guests

We will conduct our January Member meeting at the Houston Space Center.

1601 NASA Parkway Houston, TX 77058

The meeting will start at noon and will be held in the Boardroom. The Space Center will provide a guest speaker. We will also have a catered lunch. It will be provided by Wolfgang Puck Catering, the exclusive caterer to the Center. At 2:00 PM we will be guided to the private trams for escorted tours to several major exhibits.



Because of major financial contributions by several members to augment what the Chapter is contributing to the tour, the cost per member and guest will be \$53.00. This provides admission, lunch, private room, a guest speaker, and private tram tours. The Tram Tour will include Apollo Mission Control, Astronaut Training Facility and the Saturn V Rocket.

Lunches will be provided and include either turkey sandwich or a vegan wrap, chips and water. We have committed 20 members and guests, but can accommodate more. *Please RSVP by January* 15, 2024 and identify if you would like the turkey sandwich or the veggie wrap.

RSVP to: rritchie@earthlink.net or call 713-818-0408.







Army Space Vision Supporting Multidomain Operations

The Army will integrate friendly joint and coalition space capabilities and interdict adversary space capabilities in support of ground force commanders.

The Army's next fight will occur across multiple domains. Successful operations in and through the space domain will be critical to our success. Space has become more important as both enabler and dependency to our Warfighting. Commanders at all echelons have access to, rely on, and can be observed by the space-based assets of allies and competitors alike. Commanders must understand that space capabilities start and end on the ground and be fully aware of their importance in planning and operations. This means that understanding commercial, military, and scientific space platforms directly correlate to our ability to conceal and protect friendly ground forces across the entire battlespace, from home station to assembly areas, and from assembly areas to objectives. Simply put, we will be operating under constant surveillance and must invest in the knowledge and forces to counter threat space systems and enable our own space systems.

Army space professionals, at echelon, will lead the effort to increase understanding and integration of friendly joint and coalition space capabilities into our operations and activities while simultaneously interdicting the adversary's use of space based, and space enabled capabilities. To do this, highly trained Army Soldiers and Civilians must be organized, have the right resources, kit, authorities, and expertise to:

- Integrate friendly joint, coalition, and commercial space capabilities in support of all Army Warfighting Functions to include positioning, navigation, and timing; deep sensing; beyond line-of-sight communications; force tracking; environmental monitoring; space domain awareness; and geospatial information.
- Interdict adversary space capabilities by delivering necessary fires and effects at echelon to protect friendly forces from observation and targeting by counter-satellite communications, counter-surveillance and reconnaissance, and navigation warfare operations.

To fight at echelon in and through space means employing the next generation of tactical terminals to leverage multi-orbit satellite communications services and access space-enabled tactical intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance platforms to meet deep sensing requirements. By fusing the data from multiple space-based sensors, in coordination with the intelligence community, the Army can deliver targetable intelligence to enable long-range precision fires, movement and maneuver, and command and control. These space capabilities, layered with stratospheric, high-altitude balloons and long endurance, semi-autonomous fixed-wing aircraft, can provide redundant and complementary capabilities for the theater to increase resiliency of the U.S. and Allied space architecture in a denied, disrupted, intermittent and limited bandwidth environment. Mobile ground and aerial platforms demonstrate the potential to deliver space interdiction fires to deny adversary access to space capabilities, and disrupt their command and control, navigation, targeting and intelligence collection. Forwardpostured Multidomain Task Forces, employing Army space interdiction forces alongside cyber operations and electronic warfare enablers, will disintegrate adversary anti-access and areadenial systems. Simultaneously, Theater Strike Effects Groups can synchronize and deliver Army space interdiction fires in support of theater targeting objectives.

Army space professionals are critical to Army Preparedness—to setting theaters, supporting deterrence, and enabling multidomain operations. Forward-stationed Army space organizations conduct continuous operational preparation of the environment during campaigning to help set conditions to defeat layered defenses and open contested theaters in crisis and conflict. These organizations build partnerships with close, highly capable allies to increase interoperability. Positioning Army space operators in theater with cyber and special operations forces allows for convergence, amplifying lethality and contributing to deterrence. Army space integration also supports and spans across all Army Branches and Warfighting Functions to build and navigate the multidomain common operating picture. For example, Army Signal integrates satellite communication services from the Department of Defense and external agencies to establish the networks vital to multidomain operations. The networked enterprise provides force tracking services to ensure joint and combined situational awareness, contributing to information advantage. Additionally, Army Intelligence leverages space-based assets to provide geospatial, signal, and all-source intelligence, enabling the Army and joint space interdiction fires necessary for multidomain operations.

Expeditionary, scalable, and mobile Army space formations, empowered by flexible command relationships at echelon, should move alongside and keep pace with ground combat formations to protect the force and enable the Army to deploy, fight and win decisively against any adversary.

Developing new space capabilities, organizations, and trained professional Soldiers to deliver effects for Army maneuver forces is critical to multidomain operations. Rapid proliferation and tactical application of competitor space capabilities will erode the advantages that ensure U.S. land dominance. To counter this challenge, current and future Army space integration and interdiction capabilities must enable multidomain operations for the Army.

Michael R. Weimer Sergeant Major of the Army Randy A. George General, United States Army Chief of Staff

Christine E. Wormuth Secretary of the Army





TRICARE, Star Act, Arlington Eligibility Among MOAA's FY 2025 NDAA Priorities

By: Mark Belinsky JANUARY 09, 2024



Although the FY 2024 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) became law just a few weeks ago, we're already approaching a critical deadline for the FY 2025 version ... and early action will set MOAA up for success with some of our key legislative priorities.

The annual NDAA includes protections for the pay, benefits, and quality of life of servicemembers and their families, retirees, and surviving spouses. Each year, normally in February, congressional staffers submit their formal written requests for the NDAA. This important early deadline is often the only chance for lawmakers who are not on the Armed

Services committees to officially request NDAA provisions that support their constituents.

The more these lawmakers hear from their constituents, in addition to MOAA's advocacy team, the greater the chance they will push for inclusion of our key priorities in their official NDAA request. Find details on each of these advocacy campaigns below and via MOAA's Legislative Action Center:

- The Major Richard Star Act: Over two-thirds of Congress has supported this legislation that would provide concurrent receipt for combat-injured servicemembers. It is part of MOAA's incremental strategy to achieve concurrent receipt for all, and it is supported across our community of veterans service organizations. Ask lawmakers to include H.R. 1282/S. 344 in their official FY 2025 NDAA request.
- **BAH Restoration Act:** Servicemembers and young military families across the country are facing financial strain, and housing costs play a big role. <u>Ask your elected officials to restore the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) with H.R. 2537/S. 1823 in their NDAA request.</u>
- Arlington National Cemetery (ANC): The bipartisan Expanding America's National Cemetery Act, H.R. 1413, ensures the nation keeps its sacred promise to veterans and their families. ANC eventually will run out of space, and proposed eligibility reductions will end the benefit some veterans and their families have planned on for years. H.R. 1413 will provide a long-term solution to designate the "next ANC" rather than reduce the benefit. Congress must act through the NDAA.
- Respect for Grieving Military Families Act: When a retired servicemember dies, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service recoups the last month of their retirement pay. This action adds terrible financial stress to a grieving spouse. H.R. 3232/S. 1588 would stop recoupment (as well as associated overdraft fees or debt) and prevent the financial shock experienced by many surviving spouses. It should be a part of the must-pass defense bill.
- Military Spouse Hiring Act: Supporting military spouses is critical to sustaining the all-volunteer force. H.R.
 1277/S. 596 would authorize the Work Opportunity Tax Credit to incentivize employers to hire military spouses who
 struggle to maintain employment due to frequent PCS moves. Ask your elected officials to ensure its inclusion in
 the NDAA
- TRICARE Young Adult: H.R. 1045/S. 956, the Health Care Fairness for Military Families Act, will help ensure military kids transitioning to adulthood have the same health care protections as their peers in civilian families. This bill brings TRICARE in line with commercial plan requirements for young adult coverage that have existed for move

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TRICARE, Star Act, Arlington Eligibility Among MOAA's FY 2025 NDAA Priorities

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than a decade by eliminating monthly premiums for TRICARE Young Adult coverage. <u>Ask your lawmakers to use</u> the NDAA to close this coverage gap.

[RELATED: Report Highlights Need for MOAA's Work to Preserve Health Care Access]

How You Can Help

Grassroots advocacy is effective early in the year, and MOAA needs more of its members to be engaged through the <u>Legislative Action Center</u>. Of MOAA's more than 363,000 members, only 21,000 have signed up so far. The resource allows you and your family and friends to send a preformatted message, which you can edit and customize, to your representative and senators in Congress.

You can register for the <u>Legislative Action Center</u> from your smartphone for an easy and convenient way to engage. MOAA members and their families and networks can also use the Capitol Hotline at (866) 272-MOAA (6622) to call their elected officials toll-free. When using the hotline, be sure to ask to speak with the military legislative assistant or legislative director. If neither staffer is available, ask to schedule a follow-up phone call when they are available.

These two ways of engaging on advocacy issues are considered more effective than the postcards and tearout letters MOAA previously sent to its members.

Call or email MOAA's Member Service Center for help or more information on our legislative priorities at (800) 234-MOAA (6622) or msc@moaa.org.★



Attention Veterans who are over 65 and have Medicare or Disabled Veterans who receive Medicare Benefits

The Veterans Choice Act allows you to coordinate your VA and Medicare benefits and receive up to \$125 back on your Part B Medicare Premium that will increase the amount you receive on your monthly Social Security Check without affecting any of your VA benefits. So you can continue to use VA and receive these benefits

Plans also have the following other benefits that you have earned

\$0 premium and no co-pays for a private doctor of your choice

\$2000 / year of dental benefits plus 2 cleanings and 1 x ray / year \$200/ year for vision benefits \$1400 for hearing aids

\$60 / quarter on non Rx items like Vitamins or other non Rx items

Please contact Michael Schlichte at 281-773-3465 <u>mikeschlichte@hotmail.com</u> to learn more about these benefits you have earned because of your service



Scan Here to learn more



A soldier fires a rifle during a night M4 qualification at Fort Liberty, N.C., on Dec. 4. (Photo by Sgt. Benjamin D. Castro/Army)

Could the All-Volunteer Force Withstand a Full Year Without a Budget?

By: Kevin Lilley DECEMBER 27, 2023

As MOAA hails the annual passage of a <u>defense authorization bill</u>, our work on behalf of those who serve and have served, and their families, as part of the 2023 year-end cycle is far from over ... as Congress has yet to allocate a dollar to pay for what's in the new legislation.

And yet, inaction on the many improvements to compensation, benefits, and quality-of-life issues included in that bill somehow

ranks low on DoD's list of problems connected to a lack of a full-year budget. While no appropriations mean no new programs, it also forces planners to scramble to maintain existing ones, leading to severe cuts and billions in misaligned funds.

And because of a bipartisan budget deal triggering sequestration if the budget isn't complete by Jan. 1, more billions would vanish from DoD coffers. While this money would be restored after a deal is in place, there's no guarantee such a deal will materialize. The longer it takes to reach a deal, the less time DoD will have to adjust programming to incorporate the funding — leading to more waste.

[ACT NOW: Ask Your Lawmakers to Pass a Budget]

The math is staggering: In 2021, DoD estimated a full-year continuing resolution would've cost the department <u>more than \$40 billion</u>. And that estimate didn't include any sequestration-related cuts, which would further reduce DoD budget toplines by between \$26.5 billion and \$36.5 billion, according to a Senate Appropriations Committee fact sheet.

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Charles Q. "CQ" Brown Jr., USAF, outlined some of the damage a full-year CR could do in a recent letter to Congress, calling such a situation "<u>historically costly</u>." Many of the issues raised in <u>Brown's letter</u> mirror top MOAA legislative priorities – it's a strong indication of the fallout these critical programs would face if lawmakers can't reach an agreement:

- **Personnel:** A year without a full budget would trigger a \$5.8 billion personnel shortfall, Brown wrote. Programs designed to improve recruiting and retention would suffer, and PCS moves would stall, leading to an array of problems for military families.
- **Construction Projects:** No new budget means no new buildings, ending all manner of modernization efforts as DoD looks to address horrendous barracks conditions, among other concerns.
- **Readiness:** Ships would face delayed or canceled maintenance, munitions contracts would be jeopardized, and procurement and modernization efforts would suffer Brown's letter notes particular threats to the nuclear triad and Indo-Pacific initiatives.

[RELATED: Join MOAA's Legislative Action Center]

MOAA's Role

A yearlong CR could erase many of the advocacy gains made possible by the ongoing grassroots support of MOAA members across the nation. MOAA will continue to work on both sides of the aisle, in both chambers of Congress, to ensure lawmakers live up to the "support our troops" banner many have raised proudly.

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Could the All-Volunteer Force Withstand a Full Year Without a Budget? Continued from previous page...

As constituents of these legislators, you can help us make a difference – <u>send a message today</u> and make it clear the time for grandstanding is long over, and a deal must be made to ensure the continued strength of the all-volunteer force.

If you've already sent that message, send another with your personal story of service to reengage with your House member or senator. Or reach out to your lawmaker via MOAA's toll-free congressional hotline, 1-866-272-6622, and encourage them to take a leadership role not only in fixing this year's budget debacle, but in ensuring future sessions fund the government in a timely fashion.

[RELATED: As Servicemembers Spend the Holidays Deployed, Work Remains at Home]

The true cost of this delay is coming into focus – tens of billions of dollars wasted, all funds that could be used for much-needed quality-of-life improvements, or to shore up existing retiree benefits, or to keep construction and procurement projects on pace. Let your lawmakers know this irresponsibility can't be tolerated, especially as our force faces recruiting challenges and an ever-growing list of global threats.

<u>Take action today</u>, and stay tuned to <u>MOAA's advocacy news</u> for the latest updates on this and other issues.★



An officer stops to eat C-ration food on a search and destroy operation south of Bien Hoa Air Base, Vietnam, 7th August 1965. Photo: Bettmann/Getty Images.
Sgt. Ed Densen, Company B, 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment (Wolfhounds), 25th Infantry Division, opens a packet of C-ration cocoa during search and clear operations near Fire Support Base Kien, approximately 15 kilometers southeast of Nui Ba Den, Vietnam, on Aug. 21, 1970.

The First Battlefield Bag Lunch

By Lt. Col. Patrick J. Chaisson, USA (Ret)

American astronauts orbiting the moon in 1968 may have enjoyed modern freeze-dried meals, but back on Earth, then-Capt. Rick Butterfield and his fellow soldiers stationed in South Vietnam were stuck eating heavy canned rations introduced during World War II.

Butterfield, who retired as a colonel after 33 years of service, recalled how troops often went without rather than carry these bulky provisions on jungle reconnaissance missions. "Given a choice between ammo and food, we starved," he told Military Officer before he passed away in 2022.

Fortunately, the U.S. military developed a lightweight, dehydrated field ration for its forces fighting in Southeast Asia. Officially named Food Packet, Long Range Patrol, it became known as the LRP (pronounced "lurp"). LRP, which first appeared in 1967, was meant for use by such elite units as the Navy's SEAL teams and Army Special Forces.

More portable than the canned Meal, Combat, Individual ("C-rat"), this new field ration became an instant hit. "I loved LRPs," said Bob Ochsner, a Special Forces lieutenant who served in South Vietnam's Mekong Delta region. "The beef tasted like beef, and the chicken like chicken."

Given a choice between ammo and food, we starved. Each meal weighed 11 ounces and came in a waterproof canvas envelope. Menu items included chili con carne, chicken stew, spaghetti, and beef hash. An accessory package contained toilet paper, coffee, creamer, and cardboard matches as well as fruit, chocolate, or an oatmeal bar.

One dehydrated LRP required a pint and a half of water to reconstitute. This presented a challenge, Ochsner said, in places like South Vietnam where "pure water was at a premium." He and his troops always took several extra canteens and purification tablets with them whenever they went on patrol. There was also a Vietnamese LRP, according to Master Sgt. John Conley, USA (Ret), who served with the 407th Radio Research Detachment from 1970-71. This "Packet Indigenous Ration" (PIR), he said, included "shrimp and fish with a supplemental bag of freeze-dried rice." Conley said he preferred the PIR, as it tasted better and had more calories than the American version. **

Rainy-Day Dilemma: Know When to Tap Into Emergency Funds

By: Kevin Lilley DECEMBER 27, 2023



Establishing an emergency fund can prevent financial pressures from causing full-on disasters ... but only if you use the money you've saved when you need it.

This message highlighted guidance offered by Lila Quintiliani, MOAA's program director for financial benefits education and counseling, during a recent appearance on *Militarily Speaking*, a podcast produced by Armed Forces Bank with a focus on military life and finances.

The episode, recorded as the threat of a government shutdown loomed near the end of last fiscal year, included advice from

Quintiliani on how to manage your finances before or during any loss of income. One step neglected by many facing financial difficulty: Actually using the money you've set aside for such situations.

"We kind of have a psychological block against touching that," Quintiliani said during the interview. "I've seen people get into debt because they didn't want to touch their emergency fund, but that's exactly what it's for."

[RELATED: Would a Government Shutdown Affect Your Income? Here's How to Prepare]

Tapping into savings may be uncomfortable, but it can be a much better option than seeking emergency funds from "nefarious places," Quintiliani said.

Other options include speaking with creditors and banks to find out what assistance is available, as well as accessing service-specific resources such as <u>relief societies</u> and family readiness centers on military installations.

[RELATED: The MOAA Foundation's Crisis Relief Program]

Other advice offered during the interview for those facing financial problems:

- Prioritize expenses to meet basic needs and key financial obligations.
- Take stock of retirement account contributions, and consider scaling them back to address immediate needs.
- Rethink debt payments, prioritizing minimum payments over paying down balances to avoid deeper financial difficulty.

While the imminent threat of a shutdown passed in September, negotiations on Capitol Hill continue ... and even if the government remains open in the new year, servicemembers and others with federally connected income should be prepared for the cycle to repeat itself in the coming months and years.

"This is not really new, and I would say that it's kind of evergreen advice – that you should always be ready for this, because unfortunately, it's kind of the way things are right now," Quintiliani said.

Quintiliani also covered MOAA's advocacy and charitable efforts on the podcast, which launched in 2021. See more episodes at this link, and get more financial guidance from MOAA's experts at MOAA.org/Finance.

MOAA's Financial Calculators

Whether you're planning for retirement, buying a home, managing your investments, or more, these tools can help you make informed decisions. ★

Chaplain's Corner...



I WAS THINKING

I celebrated my 75th Birthday last month. Occasionally I'm a bit late out of the starting gate. A couple years back I realized that I was in my eighth decade of life. That was when I realized that our first year of life, each decade and Century began at zero. Therefore in 2000 we began the 21st Century. Now we are already half way through January 2024. Next year we will finish the first guarter of this Century! Time really does fly!

Each year I try to read through the Bible. So my reading always begins with Genesis and Matthew. In Matthew Chapter 5 Jesus gives his disciples and friends the Beatitudes. In Matthew 5:3-12 Christ tells us that we are blessed. And he tells us how we will be blessed.

Blessed are the poor in Spirit For theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek For they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst For righteousness for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful For they will obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are Persecuted because of righteousness For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

If we ask others about their blessings, we will receive many answers. Usually, "I have good health; a fine family; We get along great with our friends!" Our religion deals with our spiritual side of life. Nearly all religions deal with who we are as part of humanity and the universe. They deal with our ethical, moral and spiritual side of eternity and how we fit in with life, eternity and the universe. Jesus in the Beatitudes is no different in that sense. God cares about who we are and why we are here. Each of our faiths deal with those spiritual issues.

The Beatitudes give us the goal of deciding how we will deal with our lives and our attitude toward life. It matters how we deal with others. God cares about that. He cares about those things and people that we deem important; our goals, our lives and our responses to circumstances and events in our lives. Our faith, regardless of our religion, gives us opportunities to decide how we think and react. The Beatitudes, both as literature and spiritual direction, is one writing and teaching which allows us to center our lives on faith and move forward with guidance, love and hope. Other faiths also give us those opportunities, as well, to reflect and grow the relationships around us. Let us enjoy this new year. God Bless You All.

~ David Essells, USAR, MAJ, RET

2024 Officers

We need <u>YOU</u>... to remain a MOAA HA Member!



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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 December 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)

(Pleas	e print)	Last		First	Initial	Rank
Branch	າ		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 addt'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 183 Sugar Land	372 I, TX 77496				MOAA® filitary Officers Association of America
For mo	ore informat	ion, call COL R	obin Ritchie, 7	713-818-040		
	al MOAA m	ember at the BA				opportunity to become a please indicate here:
Signat	ure:					