



Charleston Chapter, Military Officers Association of America

March - Issue 3 2025

Published monthly, except July

Web site: www.charlestonmoaa.com

Lunch with your Chapter Mates

Join your friends for a great burger or other entrée! We will enjoy each other's company at *Bohemian Bull* in Mount Pleasant. There is no speaker this month, and no need to choose your entrée now. You will order from the *limited* MOAA Charleston Chapter menu the day of the luncheon. You still must make a reservation and submit payment by check, VENMO or at the door.

We will be inside, so there is no need for parkas or blankets this time!

Place: Bohemian Bull
2668 Hwy. 17 N
Mt. Pleasant, SC 29466
(843) 654-9141

Date: Friday, March 28, 2025

Time: Social Hour 11:00 AM, accompanied by a cash bar.

Lunch: 12:00 PM.

This is a good Hamburger Place. The burger menu is inside on page 6. If you want something other than a burger with sides, your choices are:

Fiesta Chicken OR Blackened Salmon

Cost: \$25.00 per person. Make checks payable to Charleston MOAA. *Indicate your choice of chicken or salmon on your check. If you want a burger, no need to decide until the day of the luncheon!*

Dress: Casual.

RSVP: Check to arrive NLT Friday, March 21, 2025.

Mail to:

CAPT Bud Schneeweis, USCG (Ret), 6 Wappoo Creek Pl, Charleston SC 29412

For questions or additional information, please call 703.300.0811 or email wschneeweis@verizon.net

Check out our interesting member biographical sketch on page 3.

Legislative Summary

Submitted by: Bud Schneeweis



CAPT, USCG (Ret)

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

It's been difficult to keep your head above water while trying to follow what's happening in Washington DC these days. Executive Orders upon Executive Orders keep tumbling out of the White House. Congress recently passed the outline of a budget - not a budget per se, but a target for where cuts will be needed. Negotiations will be contentious. Meanwhile, the Senate has approved almost all of President Trump's nominees for high office as it continues to work its way down its worklist.

Elon Musk's DOGE (Department of Government Efficiency) group continues to cut entire agencies to the bone and firing thousands of government workers, without any apparent strategy that is presented to the public. Meanwhile, the U.S. is massively reorienting its foreign policy. Whether you agree with everything that's been taking place not, it's been a hyperactive time in government. We'll do our best to keep you informed and to let you know when to engage with your representatives.

These MOAA-Backed Bills Protect the Value of Your Survivor Benefits

Bipartisan legislation reintroduced this month in both the House and Senate would help protect and modernize survivor benefits, ensuring they keep pace with other federal programs and allowing survivors to retain benefits after remarriage, regardless of age.

MOAA supports both the Love Lives on Act and the Caring for Survivors Act, both of which address longstanding issues with survivor benefit eligibility and calculation. Here's a look at each piece of legislation.

Love Lives on Act

Surviving spouses who remarry under age 55 risk losing Survivor Benefit Plan payments and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC). This bill (S. 410 | H.R. 1004) - introduced in the Senate by Sens. Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) and Raphael Warnock (D-Ga.) and in the House by Rep. Richard Hudson (R-N.C.) - would remove this age restriction. It also would allow survivors to regain TRICARE eligibility if a second marriage ends in death, divorce, or annulment.

The Senate version had 25 cosponsors as of Feb. 26. The bill has the support of 40 advocacy organizations alongside MOAA, to include Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) and the American Legion.

"Military service is family service, and our country owes a great debt to the surviving spouses of fallen servicemembers," said Moran, who serves as chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. "As Gold Star spouses heal from their loss and choose to remarry, they should not have to worry about losing their survivors' benefits provided by the VA and DoD."

Continued on page 5.

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

Mrs. Pat H. Ishmael, SurSp



Steve Rowe, Realtor®

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For every referred Client I donate \$100 to the MOAA Scholarship Fund!

This month's interesting biographical sketch

LTC Ellen C. Beckmann, USA (Ret)

LTC Ellen Beckmann is a native of Charleston, born and raised on the Peninsula of Charleston, South Carolina. After High School graduation, Ellen attended the College of Charleston for one year and then worked for 5 years in Banking. A cousin, an Air Force nurse, talked about her experience in the Air Force, so Ellen decided to check into it and ultimately joined the US Army at age 30 for an active-duty career that spanned from 1969 until 1993 when she retired.

Initially, Ellen was sent to Fort McClellan, Alabama where all women were sent to Officer Candidate School and enlisted women were sent for basic training. The Army at that time brought women into the Women's Army Corps or WAC. The WAC was disbanded on 20 October 1978 and all WAC units were integrated with the male units. After Fort McClellan, Ellen was sent to Fort Benjamin Harrison for a month of system analyst training and then to a permanent duty station in Washington, DC working in the Military Traffic Management Terminal Service. Fort Benjamin Harrison was an active-duty post for the Army from 1903 until 1991. Although the base has officially been inactivated, there is still a significant military presence in the area, including the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, several US Army Reserve units, and the US Military Processing Station (MEPS).

Ellen's next assignment as a newly pinned Captain was to assume responsibility of a company of 400 with 200 women in AIT and 200 civilians at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. This was her most challenging assignment but also the most rewarding as the average age of the women in AIT was 19 ½. These young women didn't have many life experiences at that young age and mentoring and counseling was a big part of the job in addition to the technical training.

Again, in 1973, Ellen was sent back to Fort Benjamin Harrison for another 3-month training course and then shipped overseas to Heidelberg, Germany for two years. Her next assignment was to receive more training for 6 months at Fort Eustis, Virginia and then was assigned to Fort Lewis, Washington for 4 years. Ellen was the CDR of the 9th Division



Data Center. While at Fort Lewis, she attended Command General and staff college with the local Reserves. During her assignment at Fort Lewis, she had cancer and feels the military gave her outstanding care and

has had no issues since that time. She was given the opportunity to be medically discharged but she didn't want that option but wanted to be treated and continue her military career which she did.

Her next assignment took her to Hawaii for 3 years where she worked at the command Headquarters for an Admiral at the Marine Base. Ellen was assigned to the HQS, CINPAC. Ellen was sent

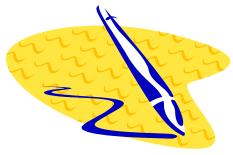
Continued on page 6.



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

Happy Saint Patrick's Day!!!



A special "Thank You" to CPT Linda Caldwell, President, South Carolina Council of Chapters for taking time out of her busy schedule to visit the Charleston Chapter and install our 2025 - 2026 Officers and our 2025 - 2027 Director. This was especially welcomed, because her husband, one of my Citadel classmates, just had surgery and was recovering. Thank you, also to CAPT Bud Schneeweis, COL Beverly Brockman, CDR Dave Farley, Col Ron Kennedy and Col Rudy Smart for their stepping up to the plate and filling very important positions in your Chapter. A very special "thank you" to Diane Kennedy, Ron's wife, as a spouse stepping up to fill the position of Director of Hospitality. As you know, everyone gets a smile and warm greeting from Diane each and every meeting we have!

The second time around was well worth the

Thank You

**Lt Col Edward D. Knowles Toys for
Tots Benefits Program
29th Year**

Current Toys for Tots Fund

\$ 695.28

wait in January. As many of you remember, our September meeting was cancelled due to the tropical storm approaching our area. We were fortunate to be able to cancel our meeting as well as the luncheon at no cost to the chapter thanks to the support staff at the Fleet Reserve at Goose Creek. Even though we had ordered all the food and cancelled at the last minute, we were not charged.

Crystal Bovell, Executive Director, Meals on Wheels of Summerville, agreed to come back last month to address our luncheon. She is and was the real deal! She gave an outstanding presentation and even recognized some of our members who have supported her organization over the years.



Now, with that said, we as officers and board members, need your support and assistance to fill some vacant positions on the board. Our newsletter Editor position as well as our Personal Affairs Director are still open. Please consider contacting Bud, Dave Farley or Bob McKay, our nominating committee, to offer your services.

Unfortunately, we still have twenty (20) members of our Chapter that have not renewed their membership dues for 2025. MOAA National requires that we remove them from our roster list as of the 31st of March. We plan to send our FINAL REMINDER post cards to those members this week and hope that they renew before we have to drop them from our roster list.

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

Ernie

Caring for Survivors Act

DIC benefit rates for survivors of those who die in the line of duty, or of veterans who die of service-connected ailments, have been only minimally adjusted since 1993. They now rest at 43% of a 100% disabled veteran's compensation; this bill would raise that rate to 55%, resulting in about \$450 more per month and matching the compensation percentage offered by similar federal programs.

The bill also allows more survivors who have cared for a disabled veteran to claim DIC benefits. Current law requires a veteran to have been totally disabled by a service-connected condition for at least 10 years in order for a survivor to qualify for DIC. The Caring for Survivors Act would reduce this to five years.

Reps. Jahana Hayes (D-Conn.) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-Pa.) introduced the House version of the legislation (H.R. 680) on Feb. 6, while Sens. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) and John Boozman (R-Ark.) introduced Senate legislation (S. 611) on Feb. 18.

"Unfortunately, the outdated rules governing Dependency and Indemnity Compensation mean many surviving families do not receive the full benefits they are entitled to," said Hayes, adding that the bill "ensures the federal government keeps its promise to fallen servicemembers by supporting their families."

Supporters alongside MOAA include Disabled American Veterans (DAV), the Elizabeth Dole Foundation, and the National Military Family Association.

MOAA on the Hill: Key Veterans' Priorities Outlined During Joint Hearing

Cmdr. René Campos, USN (Ret), MOAA's senior director of Government Relations, testifies Feb. 26 before a joint hearing of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs committees in Washington, D.C.

Rest in Peace Spouses

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

Thankfully, nothing to report.

Last year's passage of expansive improvements to caregiver programs showed what Congress could accomplish with broad stakeholder support ... but more work to help this often-overlooked part of the military community is needed, MOAA told lawmakers during a Feb. 26 hearing.

"These caregivers sacrifice their own futures - giving up financial security, career advancement, and personal well-being - to care for our nation's heroes," said Cmdr. René Campos, USN (Ret), MOAA's senior director of Government Relations, in front of a joint hearing of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs committees. "Yet when caregiving ends ... many are left struggling to rebuild their lives."

Congress can address this issue by reintroducing and passing the Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement Act, which would:

- Allow caregivers access to retirement planning, employment assistance, and bereavement counseling services.

- Reimburse caregivers for some professional licensure costs.

- Continue health care coverage for caregivers who are no longer eligible for VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC).

- Require a series of studies on barriers to caregiver employment, establishing a caregiver retirement plan, and other topics of concern.

"This act fulfills our nation's promise to those who sacrificed so much," Campos said.

Ending the Wait

Campos also stressed the need to reform VA's approach to caring for toxic- exposed veterans, which has resulted in an average delay of more than 30 years from a service-connected toxic exposure to receiving earned benefits.

A 2024 report by MOAA and Disabled American Veterans (DAV) proposed a series of improvements to this process, to include a new classification system for exposures and a clear outline of the steps needed to establish a presumptive condition, including timelines for VA decisions designed to speed the process. These improvements would continue the progress made on this issue via 2022's MOAA-supported Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act.

MOAA's testimony came alongside testimony from the Jewish War Veterans of the USA, Minority Veterans of America, National Association of County Veterans Services Officers, National Association

to Norfolk, Virginia to the Command General and Staff College for 6 months. After this assignment, she was assigned to the Pentagon in the DCSLOG for 3 years and then back to Frankfurt Germany where she was promoted to LTC and retired from active duty in 1993.

After Frankfurt, Germany, Ellen was assigned to Fort Monroe, as Director of Information Management responsible for sustaining base operations supporting 12 General Officers in the Training and Doctrine Command and retired at the conclusion of this assignment. Ellen's most challenging job in Fort Monroe where she had initially 300 civilians and 100 military personnel and the military had three great Reduction in Force (RIF) cycles where her staff was reduced to 100 civilians and 30 military at the end. Initially, the 12 General Officers she reported to wanted the same output but she met with them and explained to have the output she would need funds added to her budget. Their expectations changed and some allocated additional budgeting for her to accomplish their requirements.

During LTC Beckmann's service, she completed her 4 - year degree in Health and Physical Education, then later earned her Master's Degree in Systems Management. After retirement, she earned an additional Master's Degree from The Citadel as a Reading Specialist and volunteered to help students both in her church and other areas with this training and education.

Ellen enjoys spending time with a group of high school friends in her area. She enjoys reading and exercising. For many years, she enjoyed bus travel tours with friends and now enjoys travel on trains in both the US and Canada. She is a member of Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church. She has traveled in all 50 states and all the provinces of Canada. LTC Beckman is a strong supporter of the Charleston MOAA Organization and a constant benefactor to our scholarship program and Toys for Tots as she states she knows how important it was for her to have the funds to advance her education and in turn advance her career. She wants to see others have that same opportunity.

LTC Beckmann has commitments on our usual fourth Friday luncheon in our MOAA organization but will plan to join us when she can. Please welcome LTC Ellen Beckmann when she can be with us. She is a selfless servant both in her community and for the years of service for her country. Thank you for choosing to be a long-term supporter and member of the Charleston MOAA Chapter!

of State Directors of Veterans Affairs, D'Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families, and Wounded Warrior Project. A previous panel Feb. 26 included representatives from the American Legion.

MOAA also addressed the need for Congress to:

Pass full appropriations for the current fiscal year and to ensure VA funding was in place for FY 2026 by Oct. 1. "Predictable, sufficient funding is vital to sustaining VA's health and benefits systems, meeting the growing needs of veterans and their families, and fulfilling congressional mandates without disruption," Campos said.

Improve transition services for veterans by reintroducing and passing the TAP Promotion Act, which would include veterans service organizations such as MOAA in the transition process.

Continue its work to serve women, minority, and other underserved veteran populations, to include passing legislation designed to improve VA's menopause care services and its work with military sexual trauma survivors.

Many of the MOAA-supported bills designed to address these priorities and others will be introduced in the coming weeks. Visit MOAA's Legislative Action Center to see the latest legislation and learn how you can send messages of support to your lawmakers.

MOAA Charleston Limited Menu for Bohemian Bull

Fiesta Chicken

Grilled Chicken topped with corn and black bean salsa and jack cheese

Blacken Salmon

Blackened Salmon topped with chimichurri sauce.

Cheeseburger

Crispy bacon, lettuce, tomato, pickles, American cheese, mayo & ketchup

Gettin' Smashed Burger

Two smashed patties, American cheese, pickles, thinly sliced onion, and

burger sauce.

Black & Blue Burger

Blackened burger patty, jalapenos, bacon jam, blue cheese, arugula, and

tomato.

Sides

Fries, Boho Side Salad or Cilantro Lime Rice

Charleston Chapter MOAA ☐ Membership Application ☐ Renewal ☐ Change of Address. Chapter Dues: \$10.00 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.

Last Name _____ First Name _____ MI _____
 DOB _____ Rank _____ Service _____ Spouse's Name _____
 Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone Number _____ Email _____
 Member of National MOAA? Please provide your membership number _____
 Your status : ☐ Retired ☐ Active Duty ☐ Reserve ☐ National Guard ☐ Former Officer ☐ Surviving Spouse Dues for Year (s) _____
 How do you want to receive your newsletter ☐ US Mail (B&W) or ☐ E Mail (Full color)

VENMO PAYMENTS

Venmo payments can be made to the Charleston Chapter, Military Officers Association of America, by scanning the QR code below or by using the user name: @CharlestonMOAA.

Please indicate the purpose of the payment in the app's notes section:

- Chapter membership dues
- Lunch - provide names and menu choices
- Toys for Tots Fund
- Scholarship fund

Please email questions to our treasurer, Ron Kennedy, at charlestonmoaa@gmail.com.



Charleston Chapter, Military...
 @CharlestonMOAA



OFFICERS and BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT	BG Ernest D. Brockman, Jr., USA (thru 2026)	843-743-4379	ebrockman@att.net
1st VP PROGRAMS	CAPT Bud Schneeweis, USCG (thru 2026)	703-300-0811	wschneeweis@verizon.net
2nd VP MEMBERSHIP	COL Beverly R. Brockman, USA (thru 2026)	704-300-8739	brockman1982@att.net
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EDITOR			
SCHOLARSHIP/Web Site	Col Rudy Smart, USAF	843-834-0474	r2smart1@gmail.com

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 - 224
Regular Members—176
Honorary Members - 4
Surviving Spouse Members - 43
Special Members—1

Members receiving the newsletter by email 137

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 2025. 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.

We are continuing to keep our dues at \$10 for Regular Members and no additional charge for spouses of Regular Members. The dues are \$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.

RECRUITING UPDATE - I respectfully 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:*

*LTC Ellen C. Beckmann, USA (Ret)*****

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contact information?**

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