



Bridge View



Charleston Chapter, Military Officers Association of America

May – Issue 05 2026

Published monthly, except July

Web site: www.charlestonmoaa.com

***Join us In May at Gilligan's Seafood Restaurant.
Our presentation will be delivered by members of the Goose
Creek Fire Department, focused on Fire Safety for Seniors and
Disaster Preparedness.***

Place: Gilligan's Seafood Restaurant
219 St. James Ave.
Goose Creek, SC 29445
(843) 818-2244

Date/Time: *Friday, May 22, 2026*

Social Hour 11AM accompanied by a cash bar.

Lunch: 12 Noon.

Menu: Choice between two *seafood* entrees:

Fried Shrimp: Hand-breaded and fried. *Comes with 2 sides* OR

Lowcountry Stir-fry: Grilled shrimp, smoked sausage and shredded cabbage seasoned with mild Cajun spices. Served over a bed of red rice **Does not come with sides**
OR

Those who can't eat or don't enjoy seafood can get a Gilligan's Deluxe Burger, topped with American cheese, lettuce, tomato, red onion, and pickles. **Comes with one side**

Sides options include French fries, coleslaw, or red rice. Choose sides at the restaurant

Tea, coffee, and water are included.

Cost: \$30.00 per person. Make checks payable to Charleston MOAA. Indicate which entrée (s) you choose on your check or ZELLE payment.

Dress: Casual

RSVP: Check to arrive NLT Monday, May 18, 2026, or use ZELLE

Mail to: CAPT Bud Schneeweis, 6 Wappoo Creek Pl, Charleston SC 29412.
Direct questions to Bud at 703.300.0811 or wshneeweis@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](#)

Last month, leaders from the South Carolina Council of Chapters called on each member of the South Carolina Congressional delegation on Capitol Hill.

MOAA's AiA 2026 continued to emphasize grass roots advocacy, including:

- Protecting earned pay and benefits for servicemembers and veterans.
- Supporting legislation such as the Major Richard Star Act and the Military Spouse Hiring Act and
- Engaging members in TRICARE access and health care advocacy.

It was a very hectic day on Capitol Hill for the Members, who were returning from a two-week recess to deal with a DHS funding freeze and calls for Congressional authorization for the war in Iran. Senator Lindsey Graham was the only principal we met in person. He is running for reelection, as are all the Representatives, save Congressman Ralph Norman and Congresswoman Nancy Mace, who are running for Governor. Often, speaking to the right staff is at least equally important as speaking to the Member, though the photo op isn't as good! We missed Congresswoman Mace due to the death of her father, BG James Mace, USA-Retired, a MOAA Chapter member. She went home the evening before our scheduled meeting. We conveyed our condolences to her via her staff.

That's our local report. For more, see the next article about how the AiA Day went MOAA-ride. As always, please communicate your support or concern to your elected officials. They want to hear from you. Use MOAA's Legislative Action Center; it's very easy. [Visit the center today to create or update your account.](#)

Advocacy in Action 2026: MOAA's Mission Continues

For decades, MOAA has stood as a powerful voice in Washington for those who wear and have worn the uniform and their families. From preserving earned benefits to adopting policies to protect and sustain the full force, MOAA exists to serve the uniformed services community in the halls of Congress.

Last week, MOAA executed our signature advocacy event, Advocacy in Action. This year, our advocates went to Capitol Hill on behalf of four critical, bipartisan priorities, the Major Richard Star Act, the Shutdown Fairness Act, the GUARD VA Benefits Act, and the Military CARE Act. Each of these bills represents a key effort to fix real problems affecting servicemembers and their families, and each one is within reach with sustained pressure from constituents like you.

A Record-Setting Campaign

This year's Advocacy in Action delivered results on two fronts – in person on Capitol Hill, and across the country through a coordinated digital campaign. Here's what our community accomplished:

- 160 MOAA volunteers participated in the Capi-

Continued on page 5.

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

Nothing to report this month.



Steve Rowe, Realtor®



Proud MOAA Member



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www.SteveRoweHomes.com srowe@CarolinaOne.com

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

This month's interesting biographical sketch

CWO3 Eric Erwin, USA (Former)

CWO3 Eric Erwin grew up in an idyllic town of Mitchell, Indiana with a population of about 3,000. He was influenced in his childhood by the military service of his grandfather who served in WWI, and his father who served in WWII as a tanker. His influence regarding aviation came from the fact that astronaut Virgil "Gus" Grissom grew up in his hometown and was friends with his father. When he was young, Gus would give Eric his space helmet to wear and run through the house. Eric remembers watching the sky when he knew that Gus would fly over Mitchell as a test pilot near Dayton, Ohio which became Wright-Patterson AFB and its predecessor, 'McCook Field, which is the birthplace of the US Air Force Test Pilot school. Gus would perform an aerial demonstration in his F-86 letting the residents of Mitchell know it was in fact him. He was a WWII and Korean War Veteran, mechanical engineer, and USAF test pilot.

CWO3 Erwin knew he wanted to fly but for the first 2-3 years after high school he worked civilian jobs and then attended Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. Eric then decided he would go into the Army following his family's footsteps. Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University is the world's largest, fully accredited university specializing in aviation and aerospace. Eric completed his college education in 1984, went to Basic Training in Fort Dix, New Jersey. After Basic Training, Eric was assigned to Fort Rucker, Alabama for Flight School. Upon completion of flight school, he was assigned to Fort Campbell, Kentucky where he had an outstanding Regimental Commander, COL Dick Cody who later moved on to become the Commanding General for Fort Campbell. COL Cody was later also recognized for his role in developing Army Aviation in Desert Storm and served as the 31st Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, (US Army General Richard "Dick" A. Cody). Eric admired this commander for his leadership skills and knowledge. After 5 years at Fort Campbell, Eric was honorably discharged and opted to join the Tennessee Army National Guard for an additional 3 years of service. Eric flew both the Cobra Attack Helicopter, OH-6, and the C-12 fixed wing aircraft.

One of Eric's most rewarding assignments was his leadership role as an Aviation Life Support Equipment Unit Commander at the 101st Aviation Regiment in Fort Campbell which focused on training all the capabilities of the Aviation Life Support Vest including the small beacon which would transmit the location of the aviator should they have to eject from the

plane and find themselves in a situation where they needed to be rescued safely. In the recent news, we certainly saw the importance of the training our military aviators receive in their equipment and in specialized SERE (Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape) training. Eric had SERE training as part of his aviator skill set as well.

After his service in the Tennessee Army National Guard, Eric took his wife, Lynn, and family of three back to Indiana where he flew for United Parcel Service Airline for 25 years and retired in 2022. Eric and his wife have three grown children, a daughter



(Erin) and her husband and two grandchildren in Summerville, a son (Kyle) and his wife (great niece of Hiroshi Miyamura MOH recipient) in Phoenix, AZ, with two children and a son (Robert) and

his wife that resides in Indianapolis, Indiana. Eric and Lynn enjoy walking, bicycling, pickleball and going to the many activities of their two grandchildren, from gymnastics to soccer in the Summerville area. Eric also enjoys being an Amateur Ham Operator. Eric and Lynn are members of the First Baptist Church in Summerville. Eric was invited by LTC Dick Gailey to consider joining our chapter and brought him to a luncheon. A big thank you to Dick for extending an invitation to Eric.

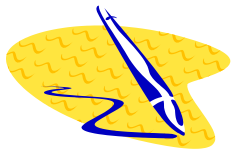
Please welcome Eric and Lynn to our Charleston MOAA Chapter and we look forward to them joining us at our luncheons.



Rest in Peace

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

BG James E. Mace, USA (Ret) passed away 14 April 2026. He is survived by his wife Anne and family.



President's Pen

May is one of those very busy months. It brings us May Day, the National Day of Prayer, Mother's Day, Armed Forces Day and Memorial Day. More about that last one a little bit later in this article.

Bud returned from MOAA National's Advocacy in Action week in Washington with some great news! Your Charleston Chapter has been awarded a 4-Star Levels of Excellence Award for 2025. The Col Marvin J. Harris Communications Award is awarded for each newsletter as well as for our website. We received a 5-Star Award for our Bridge View Newsletter and a 4-Star Award for the website. Congratulations for all your support to our Chapter and making it possible for us to receive these Awards. We will strive for all 5-Star Awards in 2026!

Please put Monday, 25 May 2026 on your calendar. Our very own Lt Col Paul Lassanske, USAF (Ret) has arranged a Memorial Day Program at St. Paul's Anglican Church, 316 West Carolina Avenue, Summerville, S. C. Music will begin at 1100, with the Program starting at 1130. Guest Speaker is Lt Col Alex J. Pelbath, USAF (Ret), Commander of Airborne Special Operations. This program will be recognizing two heroes as well as honoring Memorial Day. I look forward to seeing many of you there. See page 6 for more information about the program.

Would you believe "government shutdown" continues to plague Bud as he tries to line up great speakers for our upcoming luncheons. Bud continues to look for new venues within the Tri-County area for our luncheons as well as ideas for interesting speakers for topics of interest for our members. Please feel free to contact Bud with any ideas that you might have.

As I mentioned last month, spring is here and

Thank You

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

Current Toys for Tots Fund

\$ 768.17

with that comes our annual ROTC and JROTC Awards ceremonies. Bob McKay is already in the process of scheduling our members to carry the junior and senior JROTC cadets their certificates, medals and cash gifts at each of their school locations. Please let him know which schools you are able to assist with as your schedule allows. If you have not done this in the past, Bob has an outstanding packet of instructions that he gets to you with the certificates, medals and the crisp \$50 bill. He does make it very easy to accomplish the mission!

Please welcome our newest member of the Charleston MOAA Chapter: COL Eric Weidemann, USA (Ret). He and his wife Margie reside in Mount Pleasant. As you see them at a future luncheon meeting, please thank them for joining our Chapter.

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

Ernie

The Citadel Joint ROTC Awards Ceremony 26 March 2026 Mark Clark Hall Auditorium

Bob McKay and I had the honor and privilege of attending the Joint ROTC Award Ceremony at The Citadel on Thursday 26 March 2026. The program began with a Welcome and the arrival of the Official Party. A cadet sang the National Anthem and The Citadel Chaplain gave the Invocation.

MG Jeffrey Jones, Deputy Adjutant General of South Carolina addressed the gathering and relayed experiences from his days as a cadet as well as tidbits of positive learning experiences that the potential graduates could use as their careers begin.

There were thirty organizations presenting awards to cadets from all four classes and all branches of the ROTC program. Obviously, the program had to be organized and executed with perfection to ensure it was completed in a timely manner as any military operation requires.

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) ROTC medals were presented as follows: Cadet Gavin O'Brien, US Army; Midshipman Tan-

Continued on page 6.

tol Hill event.

- **Over 300 in-person office visits** conducted across both chambers.
- **More than 50 meetings** held directly with lawmakers.
- **Nearly 25,000 constituent messages** sent to lawmakers by MOAA advocates from all 50 states ... the most ever during a campaign.

That last number is especially significant. Lawmakers pay close attention to the voices from their districts. When our in-person advocates sat down in congressional offices April 15, they were reinforcing a message those lawmakers already had been receiving from constituents across their districts and states.

That coordination -- digital outreach followed by face-to-face advocacy -- is what tells lawmakers these issues matter to servicemembers, veterans, and families at home.

What's Next

With the release of the president's budget, the National Defense Authorization Act process has begun in earnest, and MOAA is engaged at every level. As the 119th Congress enters its final stretch, we will continue to keep members informed and ready to act as these priorities move through the legislative calendar.

MOAA's council and chapter leaders will also be leading a **Summer Advocacy in Action** event later this year, bringing grassroots advocacy directly to communities across the country. Details are coming soon; in the meantime, connect with your local chapter and prepare to engage.

None of this happens without you. The nearly 25,000 messages sent, the 300 office visits, the direct conversations with lawmakers -- all of them reflect a community that refuses to let these issues be forgotten. Thank you for your commitment to Never Stop Serving.

Rest in Peace Spouses

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

Thankfully, nothing to report this month.

But it is never too late to join the effort. If you haven't yet visited MOAA's Legislative Action Center, please act today. It takes just minutes to send a personalized message to your lawmakers, and in the final stretch of this Congress, every message counts.

The Next Steps: 3 Upcoming Moments That Matter for Your Benefits

The issues at the heart of MOAA's signature spring advocacy campaign will remain at the top of our priority list, but they are far from the only issues involving service-earned benefits on Capitol Hill.

And as the legislative calendar rolls ahead, it's critical that MOAA members remain engaged.

Here's a look at three upcoming touchstones for the 119th Congress and what each could mean for the wider uniformed services community.

Building the NDAA

What: The must-pass FY 2027 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) will be the year's largest legislative vehicle for critical defense issues, to include military pay rates, quality of life reforms, TRICARE changes, and much more.

When: Legislators and staff already have begun crafting the legislation. House lawmakers reportedly are targeting early June for the official NDAA markup session, where much of the final bill takes shape.

MOAA's Role: With Congress passing fewer standalone bills than in previous sessions, the NDAA may provide the only practical path for some MOAA legislative priorities to become law. As negotiations continue and amendments move forward, we will look to key legislators to champion a range of issues, including Advocacy in Action priorities and other benefits protections.

Passing a Budget

What: The administration released its FY 2027 budget proposal in early April, including \$1.5 trillion for national defense and nearly \$490 billion for the VA.

When: The fiscal year ends Sept. 30, giving Congress about five months to pass a budget without relying on a continuing resolution to keep the government open. Lawmakers haven't passed a budget on time since 1997.

MOAA's Role: Not only will MOAA continue to advocate for the full funding of national defense and veterans programs, but we will continue to urge Congress to break the cycle of continuing resolutions, which result in wasted resources, misaligned funds,

and financial uncertainty for servicemembers and their families. We will also push for passage of the Shutdown Fairness Act, an Advocacy in Action priority that would protect military servicemember pay during federal funding lapses.

Election Season

What: Voters will go to the polls to determine who holds every House seat and one-third of Senate seats for the 120th Congress.

When: Election Day is Nov. 3, but campaign season is in full swing in many parts of the country. After a lame-duck session, the new Congress will begin Jan. 3, 2027.

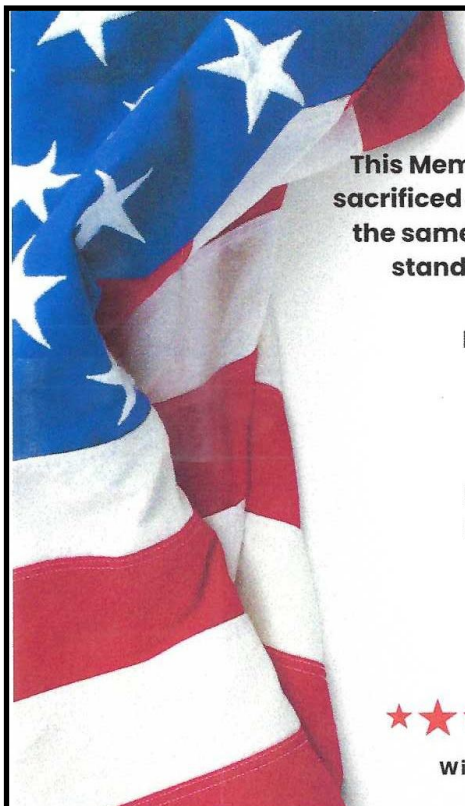
MOAA's Role: MOAA does not endorse candidates, but it's no secret that lawmakers on the campaign trail are more likely to listen to constituent concerns as they court votes. Members who engage their legislators on MOAA priorities - either through our Legislative Action Center or in person in their home districts - can show the importance of these issues as supporters of the uniformed services community head to the ballot box.

Keep up with the legislative timeline, and learn how you can help grow MOAA's influence on Capitol Hill, by visiting our advocacy news page.



ner Long, US Navy; Midshipman Lance Thacker, USMC; and Cadet Jordan DePaul, US Air Force. Each of the cadets is scheduled to be commissioned, graduate and enter their respective service for branch training.

A great program with outstanding support from the school as well as all of the outside organizations presenting awards. I recommend we continue to support this effort in the future.



MEMORIAL DAY

25 May 2026

This Memorial Day, we honor the fallen - men and women who sacrificed all - so we could live free. May their example call us to the same devotion to duty, love of country, and willingness to stand for what is right with faith, integrity, and courage.

MUSIC: 11:00 AM PROGRAM: 11:30 AM
St. Paul's Anglican Church
316 West Carolina Ave., Summerville

Guest Speaker
LtCol Alex J. Pelbath, USAF (Retired)
Commander of Airborne Special Operations

Honored Wreath Bearers
CDR Rick Martier, USN (Ret)
CWO4 Jimmy Huggins, SCANG (Ret)

★★★★ **Sponsored by Charleston Chapter** ★★★★★
Military Officers Association of America
With LtCol Paul Lassanske, USAF (Ret) Program Director

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.

Last Name _____ First Name _____ MI _____
 DOB _____ Rank _____ Service _____ Spouse's Name _____
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 Phone Number _____ Email _____
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 How do you want to receive your newsletter US Mail (B&W) or E Mail (Full color)

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We now accept payments through Zelle® for dues, lunches, and donations for Toys for Tots and Scholarship funds. Please follow these simple steps:

Step 1: Log in to your bank or Zelle® app. Use your bank's mobile app, online banking site, or the Zelle® app if your bank doesn't offer it directly.

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

Step 3: Enter your payment details.

- Amount: Enter the correct amount for your payment.

- **Memo (important!):** Please include what the payment is for:
 - Annual dues
 - Luncheon/food choices
 - Donation - Toys for Tots or Scholarship Fund

This memo helps us credit your payment correctly.

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- Please double-check the email address before sending – Zelle® payments cannot be canceled once sent.

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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 - 204
Regular Members—159
Honorary Members - 4
Surviving Spouse Members - 40
Special Members—1
Members receiving the newsletter by email 130

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

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*For your gift in support of
Chapter programs:*

*LTC Ellen C. Beckmann, USA (Ret)**
Col Norman W. Smith, USMC (Ret)*

**Are you looking for more
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.**