



The Patriot

Richmond Area Chapter - Military Officers Association of America - March 2025



The President's Corner by COL Vince Cammarata



Dear Board and Chapter Members of RAC-MOAA:

I am back in my office having just completed our most recent Board meeting. As I reflect on our work together in support of our Chapter's mission and vision, a number of thoughts are occurring to me. The most important of these thoughts, I believe, involve offering my sincere thanks.....

To our Board members, thank you for your service. You believed enough in our mission to accept a position as a Board member – to become an “owner” of this institution – and to accept all the vast responsibilities that come with that role. This is no trivial commitment and, on behalf of our Chapter, I am grateful for your willingness to serve. Thank you for sharing

your experience and wisdom which strengthens our entire Chapter. Thank you for your financial support. And most of all, thank you for your time. In today's world, all of us are regularly reminded that time is our most precious asset. Because you gladly shared all these valuable resources with our Chapter, thanks.

Next, RAC-MOAA is recruiting new Board Members for the up and coming 2026-2027 term. I realize the new term will commence many months from now, but this recruitment takes time and is not a one and done. This is exciting and rewarding work, but it can't happen without our volunteer members. All board positions are open and available from President to Directors-at-Large. No specific experience is required as your years as a military officer more than fulfill this requirement. If you have any questions about a specific board member role, duties and responsibilities, please reach out to any current board member. We will be more than happy to provide you any information you may require.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and considering being a part of the RAC-MOAA Board. As you consider this invitation to join, I am available to discuss any questions you may have. You can reach me by phone at the number in the newsletter or via my email listed.

TRICARE is Moving to a New Email Platform

In the coming weeks, TRICARE will start sending emails from: tricare@news.dha.mil.

Your existing TRICARE GovDelivery subscription may not transfer automatically to the new platform. Here's how to keep receiving important TRICARE news and information from them:

- Add tricare@news.dha.mil to your address book or safe sender list.
- Resubscribe through our new email platform. A link to resubscribe will be available on tricare.mil/subscriptions soon.

Next Member Meeting is on Wednesday, May 21st!

We will be meeting at the Meadowbrook Country Club for a buffet dinner. More details on page 2.

In This Issue

President's Corner	1
TRICARE Emails	1
MOAA Take Action	1
May 21st Meeting	2
RAC-MOAA Elections	2
Treasurer's Report	2
Membership Report	2
Virginia War Memorial	3
Veterans Benefits Guide	3
Survivor Benefits Bills	3
Legislative Events	4
Legislative Forum	5
Chapter News	6



Click the TAKE ACTION graphic above to see Active Legislative Campaigns

OUR MAILING ADDRESS
Richmond Area Chapter—
MOAA

P. O. Box 985
Chesterfield, VA 23832-9998

Read this newsletter on our webpage at: <https://www.racmoaa.org/Newsletter>

May 21st Annual JROTC Awards Night

The May 21st Member Dinner Meeting is our annual Junior ROTC Awards night with a buffet dinner at Meadowbrook Country Club. We will be honoring the COL Mel Drisko Leader-Scholar Award winners for 2025. The \$1000 Drisko Leader-Scholar Awards will be presented to outstanding seniors who have been accepted for admission to a four-year collegiate institution, with the express purpose of pursuing a career as a military officer through a Senior ROTC or service academy course of study.

Social hour will begin at 5 PM with dinner at 6 PM and the meeting immediately following. The price per person has not been established yet as negotiations with Meadowbrook Country Club are ongoing. The reservations deadline will be Friday, May 16th. All guests are welcome. Dress will be business casual. This event is a highlight for our chapter community outreach with area youth, and we look forward to seeing you there.



2024 Awardees: Cadets Eli Bryant, Olivia Carey, and Megan Reid

HELP WANTED – Upcoming Board Officers' Election

RAC-MOAA desperately needs **YOUR** help! Our chapter can only continue with committed and active members. Board of Directors elections will be conducted again this Fall for President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and two Board Members At Large. New leaders are required for the chapter's ability to continue! The election ballot will appear in the September newsletter, and members will have the options to vote electronically or by mail through November 1st. New officers will serve a 2-year term for 2026-2027.

Monthly Board meetings are by ZOOM (virtual) and open to any member to observe how things operate. Generous mentors are available to help anyone interested in assisting in any of your areas of interest. Perhaps you are not sure about volunteering for a board officer position but would like to help by serving on one or more committee(s) including membership, communications, legislative affairs, and community outreach. Past President, COL Mark Rich, will chair the Nominating Committee and is willing to address any questions or concerns about board and committee roles. Please contact him at pastpresident@racmoaa.org and seriously consider volunteering. Any current board officer or member can also answer your questions. We need you.

Treasurer's Report

Beginning Balance 01 January 2025:	\$24,306
Receipts	3,307
Expenses	(4,221)
Ending Balance 25 February 2025:	\$23,392
Encumbered Funds	(10,919)
UNENCUMBERED BALANCE	\$12,473

Membership Report

As Of	Regular	Surviving Spouse	Life/Honorary	TOTAL
20 Feb 2025	178	24	4	206

23 members who have not yet paid 2025 dues will no longer receive communications after 31 March 2025 if dues remain unpaid.

Volunteer members willing to assist with Membership are vitally needed. If you are willing to learn and work with our Membership Chair or need to know how to join, please contact CAPT Mary Lou Wassel at 804-551-1878 or by email at: membership@racmoaa.org.

The Patriot

The Richmond Area Chapter (RAC-MOAA) is an independent nonpartisan affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), a member of the Virginia Council of Chapters (VCOC-MOAA), and a non-profit, non-stock corporation registered in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The Patriot is published five times each year in January, March, May, September, and November

Send articles or comments to:

Richmond Area Chapter - MOAA

ATTN: Newsletter Editor

P. O. Box 985, Chesterfield, VA 23832-9998

Email: editor@racmoaa.org

Editor: COL Alan Cunningham, USAR (Ret.)

Virginia War Memorial Livestream Events

Women Pilots Proudly Wearing the Uniform During World War II

Event Details—Date: March 11, 2025, 11:30 am

As the U.S. entered World War II in 1942, it was widely known that America did not have enough airplanes or pilots to fight the war. As factories converted to aircraft assembly, finding enough male pilots for both combat and stateside jobs proved to be a difficult task. In desperation the U.S. created an experimental squadron known as the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) to execute all stateside missions. While they proved their flying skills were equal to their brothers, many practical issues arose (now that women were in service) starting with the biggest question of “What shall we wear?” Join the National WASP WWII Museum’s Executive Director, Lisa Taylor, as she highlights these trailblazing women in service.

All the Virginia War Memorial’s livestreams are free and open to the public, though registration is required. Register early for this ONLINE ONLY event, as there is limited space to listen live! Register at <https://bit.ly/3WNpBiU>.

For more information on this and other events at the War Memorial,
go to: <https://vawarmemorial.org/events/>

2025 Veterans Benefits Guide

The 2025 Veterans Benefits Guide is now available!

Have you applied for VA care, benefits and services? Unsure what else you may be eligible for? Don’t miss out on what you’ve earned—check out this handy reference guide to learn more. The handbook contains a comprehensive listing of VA programs, including phone numbers and websites for easy reference. [Download today.](#)

Bills Protecting the Value of Your Survivor Benefits

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. Additional information can be found [here at MOAA.org](https://www.moaa.org).

Here’s a brief 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 would remove this age restriction. It also would allow survivors to regain TRICARE eligibility if a second marriage ends in death, divorce, or annulment.

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.

Legislative Update

National Level

On Feb. 5, 2025, Congressman Rob Wittman (R-VA-01) joined with Congressman Eugene Vindman (D-VA-07) [introduced](#) the [Support Military Families Act](#), which would exempt military spouses who work for the federal government from the federal return to in-person work mandate, ensuring they can keep their jobs and support their service members and families thereby keeping military families together and experienced staff on the job.

This bipartisan legislation was introduced after the congressmen's offices heard directly from Virginians affected by the federal return-to-work mandate, which would have forced many military spouses to choose between their careers in public service and their families.

On Feb. 13, 2025 Congressmen Wittman and Vindman celebrated the administration's newly issued [guidance](#), which heeded the bipartisan call to exempt military spouses from the federal return-to-work mandate. The guidance was issued in a memorandum from the United States Office of Personnel Management (OPM), dated Feb. 12, 2025.

Congressman Wittman stated: "I'm proud that our bipartisan *Support Military Families Act* helped spotlight this critical issue."

Congressman Vindman stated: "Our bipartisan Support Military Families Act directly led to this action that treats the spouses, who sacrifice so much for our nation, with dignity and respect and supports the readiness of our military."

Lt. Gen Brian T. Kelly, USAF (Ret), President and CEO, Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), stated: "MOAA thanks Representatives Vindman and Wittman, along with OPM officials and the wide network of grassroots stakeholders, for their work toward this solution. The federal government's designated position as an 'employer of choice' for military spouses is a strategic one that should continuously be capitalized upon. These protections directly improve overall military readiness and sharpen our warfighting ability while setting the stage for more outreach from public sector employers toward this untapped group of talented workers."

State Level (Virginia)

On 5 December 2024, RAC-MOAA hosted its **17th Annual** Legislative Forum at 0730 and 1500. Thirty-two attendees participated in the two sessions: this included nine legislators and/or legislative staff members. Invited legislators included Virginia Delegates and Senators representing districts within RAC-MOAA's operating territory. The purpose of the Forum was to present the five legislative initiatives put forth by the Joint Legislative Council (JLC) of Veterans Service Organizations. The JLC is comprised of twenty-six Virginia Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs); MOAA is among those twenty-six organizations. Links to the five JLC initiatives are provided below.

[JLC 2025-01 Verification of Veteran Status](#)

[JLC 2025-02 Stop Unscrupulous Firms from Exploiting Veterans](#)

[JLC 2025-03 Virginia National Guard Tuition](#)

[JLC 2025-04 Suffolk State Veterans Cemetery Expansion](#)

[JLC 2025-05 Women Veterans Day](#)

Distinguished participants in the Legislative Forum included the Commissioner of Virginia's Department of Veterans Services (DVS) (Charles Zingler), Deputy Commissioner of DVS (Steven Combs), and Chair of the JLC (William Aramony). After the Forum, Commissioner Zingler sent an email to RAC-MOAA and invited legislators commending all for a successful Forum and for their participation.

Pictures of participants in the Legislative Forum are included on Page 5.

During the 2025 General Assembly, Chapter members attended several weekly meetings of the General Assembly Military & Veterans Caucus (GAMVC) to monitor progress of the five JLC initiatives. Each weekly GAMVC meeting included the distribution and discussion of a "Bill Matrix" tracking bills of importance to active, reserve, retired military, and veteran personnel. The status of each JLC initiative as of 2/13/25 is provided in the table below. Final outcomes for the 2025 JLC initiatives will be reported in a subsequent newsletter. The picture above includes MOAA Board Members CAPT Hardy Josephson, USN (Ret) and LCDR Wayne Sine, USNR (Ret) visiting with Delegate Hyland "Buddy Fowler" to thank him for serving as chief patron of a bill addressing JLC 2025-01. The picture was taken shortly after Josephson and Sine attended a GAMVC meeting at the Virginia Capitol on 1/22/25.



JLC Initiative	Status in Senate as of 2/13/25	Status in House as of 2/13/25
2025-01	In Finance & Appropriations Committee	Passed
2025-02	Failed	Failed
2025-03	Passed	Passed
2025-04	Included in Governor's Budget	Included in Governor's Budget
2025-05	SJ250 Agreed to by voice vote	Referred to Committee on Rules

MOAA Legislative Forum, 7:30 AM Session, December 5, 2024



Attendees Left to Right

First Row: LTC Owen Waltman, LCDR Wayne Sine, LTC Ken Ruppar, COL Mark Rich, MAJ John Nahm

Second Row: CAPT Mary Lou Wassel, Alexis Bowles-Fryar (VNG), COL Monti Zimmerman (VCOC), Rick Raskin (VFW), LTC Curt Powell

Third Row: Bill Aramony (Chair of JLC), COL Vince Cammarata (President of RAC-MOAA), John Downs (MOAA Central VA Chapter), Meg Graham representing Delegate Carrie Coyner.

Fourth Row: Chuck Zingler (Commissioner, Virginia Department of Veterans Affairs), Kevin Hoffman (VNG) by phone

MOAA Legislative Forum, 3:00 PM Session, December 5, 2024



Attendees Left to Right:

First Row: COL Mark Rich, LCDR Wayne Sine, LTC Ken Ruppar, MAJ John Nahm, LTC Craig Pinsker

Second Row: Rick Raskin (VFW), COL Monti Zimmerman (VCOC), Delegate Amanda Batten, Luke Sweeny (representing Delegate Betsy Carr), Bill Aramony (Chair, JLC)

Third Row: Gerardo Aguilar Castillo (representing Senator Ghazala Hashmi), COL Vince Cammarata, Dara Hechter (representing Virginia Dept of Veterans Services), Russell Woodlief (VNG), Senator Lashrecse Aird

Fourth Row: Zachary Wood (representing Delegate Mike Cherry), Steve Combs (Deputy Commissioner Virginia Department of Veterans Services), John Downs (MOAA Central Virginia Chapter), Emmaline Herring (representing Senator Schuyler VanValkenburg), LTC Owen Waltman

Chapter News

Chapter Contacts - 2025

Elected Officers & Directors

President	COL Vincent Cammarata	804-338-8975
1st Vice-President	CAPT Mary Lou Wassel	804-551-1878
2nd Vice-president	LTC Craig Pinsker	804-301-1222
Past President	COL Mark Rich	804-706-6650
Secretary	LTC Terry Moore	804-739-8112
Treasurer	LTC Owen Waltman	804-796-1113
Director-at-Large	MAJ John Nahm	804-839-5635
Director-at-Large	CDR Cliff Noe	804-931-7894
Director-at-Large	LtCol Curt Powell	703-999-5816
Appointed Editor	COL Alan Cunningham	804-307-7815

Appointed Directors

Member Services	CAPT Mary Lou Wassel	804-551-1878
Legislative Affairs	LCDR Wayne Sine	804-363-5406
Youth Programs	LCDR Wayne Sine	804-363-5406
Personal Affairs	Vacant	
Transition Services	CAPT Hardy Josephson	804-883-5955
Publicity	MAJ John Nahm	804-839-5635
Auxiliary Affairs	Mrs. Rosemary Salcedo	804-938-9945
Hospitality	LTC Terry Moore	804-739-8112
Special Programs	LTC Owen Waltman	804-796-1113
Chaplain	LTC Ken Ruppard	804-639-0179
Webmaster	MAJ John Nahm	804-839-5635

Chapter Database or E-mail Address Corrections ([Login to the Website](#) to make Updates is Preferred)

Please make the following changes to the RAC-MOAA Membership Database and/or my e-mail address:

Request you add Zip Code Plus 4. The Plus 4 is needed by the Postal Service and gives you faster mail delivery. It saves the editor time having to look it up for mailings. Thanks, keeping us informed of address changes saves money.

No March Meeting this Year!

Due to multiple factors, the March 2025 meeting that was planned as a St. Patrick's day Sunday Brunch has been cancelled. Our next scheduled meeting will be in May for the Junior ROTC Awards night at the Meadowbrook Country Club, 3700 Cogbill Rd, Richmond, VA 23234. See page 2 for further information about this annual event to honor the winners of the COL Mel Drisko Leader-Scholar awards for outstanding senior ROTC cadets. More information will be forthcoming in the May issue of The Patriot.

COL Mel Drisko Leader-Scholar Awards Contribution

I wish to contribute \$ _____ to support the *Drisko Memorial Leader-Scholar Awards Fund*. This fund provides monetary awards for senior-year JROTC cadets who have demonstrated the leadership and scholastic ability to pursue collegiate degrees and careers as military officers.

Enclose check payable to RAC-MOAA & put Leader-Scholar in comments. *All contributions are tax-deductible.*

Print Name and Rank: _____



Military Community Assistance Program (MCAP) Contribution

I wish to contribute \$ _____ to support the Military Community Assistance Program (MCAP). This fund provides money to support one or more of the following initiatives: Virginia Veterans Services Foundation; the VA National Guard Foundation; The Fisher House at Richmond VAMC and Sitter-Barfoot Veterans Care Center; The Spinal Cord Injury Unit Recreation Services; USO; and other worthwhile military and veterans' organizations of Virginia.

Enclose check payable to RAC-MOAA & put MCAP in comments. *All contributions are tax-deductible.*

Print Name and Rank: _____

