



Ozark Empire News

Ozark Empire Chapter, Military Officers Association of America
2131 West Republic Road, Box 164, Springfield,
Missouri 65807



April, 2025

A Word from the Chapter President

- We had a good membership turnout at the March chapter meeting. We are scheduled to hold our meetings at the DAV through June 2025. Based on positive feedback, we may negotiate continuing here through the rest of this calendar year (of course as usual, taking the months of July & August off).
- Just a friendly reminder that April's meeting has been moved to the 4th Friday, April 25, 2025, to avoid meeting on Good Friday.
- MOAA is gearing up for Advocacy in Action (AiA), when our state MOAA leaders will be visiting with legislators in Washington DC in April. At the same time each Chapter is encouraged to visit with our state legislators. There are 5 key issues this year: 1) incentivize military spouse hiring, 2) support the passage of the caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement Act, 3) ending the wait for toxic exposed veterans, 4) improve access to care for military families with a digital assistance access program, and 5) continue unaccompanied housing improvements with transparent reporting.
- MOAA has confirmed reimbursements for Legembi and Kisunla are in effect. These are medications approved for early treatment of Alzheimer's Dementia. Beneficiaries whose claims were paid by Medicare but denied by TRICARE should contact the WPS customer service team for assistance in ensuring those claims are now processed under TRICARE For Life. There is no need to submit a corrected claim – simply reach out with details on the affected claims for reconsideration. You can contact the WPS customer service team through the www.TRICARE4U.com portal or by calling (866) 773-0404. Coverage is retroactive to Oct. 23, 2024, the provisional decision approval date.
- Make note of future events and tours that have been scheduled for our membership by Frank Bridges. Be sure to notify Frank if you have not signed up but still wish to attend.
- For all who are Premium or Life members of MOAA, a free Survivor's Planning Guide is available for download. It can be obtained at www.moaa.org.
- As always, our newsletter is freely available on the chapter website: www.OEMOAA.org as well as via email to all members. If anyone wishes to receive this newsletter via US Mail, please make that known to a Board Member or the Newsletter Editor, and we will be happy to accommodate.

Chapter Mission Statement: *To stimulate patriotism in our community and serve those who hold or have ever held a warrant or commission in any of the eight uniformed services, as well as their surviving spouses. The Ozark Empire Military Officers Association of America (OEMOAA) is an affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA). MOAA and its affiliated chapters are nonpartisan.*

[TOP PRIORITY: Military Spouses Can't Wait - Add Them to the Work Opportunity Tax Credit](#)

Military spouses face a 21% unemployment rate, five times the national average, due to frequent moves and challenges tied to military life. Congress must incentivize employers to hire military spouses by adding them as a target group under the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) program.

[TOP PRIORITY: Stop the 34-Year Wait - Deliver Toxic-Exposed Veterans the Care They've Earned](#)

Millions of veterans exposed to toxic substances during their service are forced to wait decades –more than 34 years, on average – before they can access VA care and benefits for service-connected illnesses. Congress must pass legislation to bolster the legal framework for creating presumptive conditions, ensuring toxic-exposed veterans receive timely care.

[TOP PRIORITY: Honor Veteran Caregivers - Pass the Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement Act](#)

Veteran caregivers make profound personal and financial sacrifices to care for aging and disabled loved ones. Congress must pass the Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement Act to provide these caregivers with the education, employment, and retirement support they deserve.

[Stand with Our Wounded Warriors: Advocate for the Major Richard Star Act](#)

Contact your representative and senators and urge them to support the Major Richard Star Act, which would authorize combat-injured veterans to receive their full DoD retirement pay earned for years of service and their full VA disability compensation for lifelong injury.

[Ensure Servicemembers Can Afford Housing—Restore Full BAH](#)

Our troops don't get to choose where they serve—but they should always be able to afford a home. Tell Congress to restore full Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) and support military families.

[Urge Your Representative to Cosponsor the Support Military Families Act](#)

Contact your representative and urge them to cosponsor the Support Military Families Act to ensure military spouses who work for the federal government can keep their jobs and support their servicemembers and families.

[Parity for Surviving Spouses: Increase Dependency and Indemnity Compensation](#)

Bipartisan legislation in the House (H.R. 680) would align Dependency and Indemnity Compensation payments with other federal survivor benefits. Ask your legislators to show their support and make a long-overdue correction to this injustice.

[Urge Lawmakers to Resume CFPB Operations for Servicemembers](#)

Contact your representative and urge them to support the continued work of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) in conducting supervisory examinations for the Military Lending Act (MLA) and resuming work in the Office of Servicemember Affairs, which protects military families from predatory financial practices.

[Love Lives On: Protect Surviving Spouses' Right to Remarry](#)

Contact your representative and senators and urge them to support the Love Lives On Act to secure the right for surviving military spouses to remarry at any age and retain their benefits

IMPORTANT CONTACTS AND RESOURCES

Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) Telephone Center - Call DEERS at 800-538-9552, Monday through Friday, excluding U.S. federal holidays.

Defense Finance and Accounting Service - The agency that pays military retirees and annuitants can be reached at 800-321-1080, or through AskDFAS online. Visit the [retired military and annuitants webpage](#) for more information about pay matters such as tax forms, pay verification, Direct Deposit, myPay and more.

Federal Long-Term Care Insurance Program - The program provides long-term care insurance to help pay for the costs of care you need if you can no longer perform everyday tasks (activities of daily living) by yourself because of chronic illness, injury, disability or the aging process. For assistance, call 800-LTC-FEDS (800-582-3337) or TTY 800- 843-3557 to speak with a program consultant. You can also visit <https://www.ltcfeds.com>.

Identification Cards - Call 800-525-0102 for location of the nearest issuing facility, or visit the site locator.

Legal Offices - Assists members with preparing wills and powers of attorney, and answers certain legal questions. Visit the Air Force Legal Assistance website at <https://aflegalassistance.law.af.mil>.

Medicare - 800-633-4227 or visit www.medicare.gov.

Social Security Office - Call toll free 800-772-1213; commercial 410-965- 8019; or write to Social Security Administration, Office of Public Inquiries, Windsor Park Building, 6401 Security Blvd., Baltimore, MD 21235. Visit the website www.ssa.gov for more information.

TRICARE Mail-Order Pharmacy Program (Express Scripts, Inc) - In United States, call toll free 800-282-2881; or overseas, call 866-275-4732. Visit www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE/index.shtml for more information.

Veterans Affairs - For benefit inquiries call 800-827-1000; life insurance 800-669-8477; status of headstones and markers, 800-697-6947; special issues such as Gulf War/radiation/Agent Orange/Project Shad call 800-749-8387; GI Bill and education matters call 888-442-4551. Visit the website at www.va.gov.

From our Chapter Travel Agent

Frank Bridges

On all of our tours, please feel free to bring a friend or two. If we start getting larger numbers this may have to be reconsidered.

Our Tour Schedule:

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|--|---------|----------|
| ○ Wilson's Creek | May 10 | 1:30 PM |
| ○ Cardinal's Baseball Game (Tuesday Evening) | June 17 | 7:00 PM |
| ○ OTC Center for Advanced Manufacturing | Sept 16 | 1:30 PM |
| ○ Greene County Emergency Management Center | Oct 14 | 1:30 PM |
| ○ Air & Military Museum of the Ozarks (\$6/Person) | Nov 19 | 1:30 PM |
| ○ Wreath Laying MO Vet Cemetery | Dec TBD | 11:00 AM |

- Frank reports that our next scheduled tour will be to Wilson's Creek Battlefield, on Saturday, May 10, beginning at the Visitor Center at 1:30pm. We are hoping for an even larger turnout to tour the battlefield, learn more about the battle itself, and the efforts to protect and preserve the area.

April US Military History

1803: Louisiana Purchase completed

1861: US Civil War begins, when Major Robert Anderson refused to surrender Fort Sumter, leading Brig Gen P.G.T. Beauregard to fire on the fort

1865: US Civil War ends, with the surrender of Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia to Ulysses S. Grant, at Appomattox Courthouse. This brings to a close the devastating loss of 620,000 American lives.

1865: Abraham Lincoln assassinated

1923: Colonel Jacob Schick receives a patent for Schick razors

1942: Following surrender of Luzon to the Japanese, 75,000 Filipino and American troops begin a 65 mile forced march to a prison camp near Cabanatuan.

1944: While vacationing in Warm Springs, GA, President Roosevelt suffers a stroke and dies, with the Presidency passing to Harry S Truman

1948: Berlin Airlift commences, in response to Soviet blockade of rail, road, and water access to Berlin. At the height of the effort, one plane was landing at Tempelhof Airport every 30 seconds, delivering a total of 2,334,374 tons of supplies, nearly 2/3 of which was coal

1960: USS Triton, a nuclear-powered submarine, completes the first submerged circumnavigation of the globe. This took place between February 24, and April 25, covering 26,723 miles

1963: USS Thresher, nuclear-powered submarine fails to surface following a test dive, 230 miles east of Boston, claiming 129 lives

1970: Apollo 13 suffers a severe malfunction on its journey to the moon on April 13, safely returns to Earth on April 17.

1973: C141 Starlifter dubbed the Hanoi Taxi, makes the first flight of Operation Homecoming. A total of 54 such missions flew out of Hanoi. Each plane carried 40 former POWs. To this day, there continue to be over 1,000 individuals still unaccounted for.

1983: Space Shuttle Challenger made its maiden voyage, carrying the first US female astronaut, Sally Ride

1989: Battleship USS Iowa's Number 2 gun turret explodes while on maneuvers northeast of Puerto Rico

1990: Space Shuttle Discovery places Hubble telescope into orbit, with an orbital period of 97 minutes

1995: A massive explosion at the Alfred P Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City kills 168

2001: US Pentagon destroys its last canister of napalm

2003: Baghdad falls.

2009: Captain Richard Phillips of the MV Maersk Alabama, who was abducted by Somali pirates, is rescued at sea by the US Navy

2014: A shooting spree at Fort Hood, Texas, leaves four dead, including the gunman, and 16 others injured.

March Meeting Recap



Ms April Eilers, Communications Representative from the Fayetteville VA Hospital, graciously agreed to come to Springfield, to address our chapter meeting. She shared several interesting things with our membership. First, she is able to reach out and connect with a large number of veterans in the Fayetteville catchment area, despite not having a marketing budget. Her office sends out emails to those who opt-in to this, three times per week. They can be reached at www.va.gov/fayetteville-arkansas-health-care. Their ER is open 24/7, and they claim an average door-to-doctor time of just 10 minutes. They also have Telehealth Urgent Care available at 800.691.8387, Option 3.

She reports that her office has sustained no recent staffing cuts, and in fact, has recently hired new personnel.

She notes that each VA healthcare facility has a Patient Advocate, who stands ready to assist eligible beneficiaries in getting quality care.

Following the VA presentation, Chuck Guy spoke briefly, expressing his sincere gratitude for the Chapter's donation to Champion Athletes, in memory of his recently departed wife, Connie. We continue to remember Chuck as he journeys through this phase in his life. Several of our

members have started gathering informally on the first Monday of each month, for what we're calling Coffee With Chuck. These gatherings are being held at Panera Bread, on South Campbell, at 10am. We welcome any and all who wish to come, for some relaxed conversation. This activity is not associated with MOAA. Just a casual time to chat among friends.

• Recent Chapter Member Activities



On March 25, a contingent of 8 chapter members, along with two spouses, visited the headquarters of Convoy of Hope. There, we were met by Lauren Donaldson, daughter of the founder Hal Donaldson, and given a guided tour. This started with a video, produced in their own in-house studio, of Hal telling his story about some of the events in his own life that led to the formation of Convoy. We were then able to view the Distribution Center, where supplies are always on the move, either into the facility, or outbound to where the needs are at the moment. We also were able to see a representative sample of some of Convoy's rolling stock, consisting of specialized trucks, as well as mobile command post trailers, mobile shower trailers, and other sorts of specialized vehicles that they use to help accomplish their

mission, that of delivering emergency food and water supplies, with the help of local churches and other local volunteers, to areas affected by various types of disasters.

We were also made aware of Volunteer opportunities, within the Convoy facility, every Tuesday and Thursday evening. Interested individuals may find more information and links to sign up, on the Convoy website, www.convoyofhope.org,

All in all, this was a very informative excursion. A big Thank You to Frank Bridges, for arranging and coordinating this event. We look forward to more such visits, thanks to Frank's efforts.

This tour and others are representative of an effort to provide our members with information about how they can become more involved in our community, in service to others.



Chaplain's Corner

By Becky Hutchings

Here we are in April, one quarter of the year is already gone. Does time really fly? Sometimes it feels that way, but in reality, time continues to move along at a constant rate.

We celebrate different points in time throughout our lifetime. Most of us are from the Christian faith and we will celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ on Good Friday, April 18, 2025 and Easter, April 20, 2025. Some of us participate in Lent, which started on Ash Wednesday, March 5, 2025 and will end on April 17, 2025.

What is Lent? (Taken from: dynamiccatholic.com). Lent is an invitation to rearrange your priorities—to focus on what matters most and leave behind what matters least.

Lent is the season where the Church prepares for Easter. Starting with [Ash Wednesday](#), Lent spans 40+ days until [Holy Thursday](#). In the fourth chapter of Matthew, Jesus spends 40 days in the desert, fasting, praying, and preparing for his mission. Lent is our opportunity for that same focus.

Lent is our invitation to take our spiritual life seriously. Lent is the perfect time to form life-giving habits and abandon self-destructive habits. Lent is your chance to discover the abundant life Jesus invites us to at Easter.

The Significance of Lenten Colors

Purple: Purple is the primary color of Lent, symbolizing our need for repentance. It also represents the purple robe that Pontius Pilate placed on Jesus before he was crucified and reminds us of the royalty of Jesus as King. Late in the Lenten season, your parish might cover every statue or painting with a deep purple cloth.

Red: On Palm Sunday, the priest wears bright red vestments during Mass. This foreshadows Jesus' death on the Cross.

White: On Easter, priests wear white vestments and many parishes will fill the entire altar with white lilies. White represents the joy of Jesus' resurrection.

I love the symbolism during Lent. Perhaps we can all take a moment to reevaluate our spiritual lives and our personal relationships with one another. I heard one pastor say that our relationship with God is upward and that should then be directed outward toward our fellow men (and women).

Have a most blessed Easter and enjoy the fact that our Savior has risen!

Be blessed and encouraged!

For our April Chapter meeting, we will again convene at DAV Hall, Chapter 11, as we have since the first of the year. This has proven to be a good location and seems to meet with everyone's approval. The building is located at 2525 E Division Ave, Springfield, directly across from Downtown Airport, between Glenstone and US 65.

Our menu this month will again be a catered buffet, consisting of two entrée choices (including a gluten-free option), salad, dessert, and beverage. Cost will be \$20 per plate.

Coffee With Chuck (CWC) will be on the first Monday of the month at Panera Bread, on South Campbell. September will be an exception as the first Monday is Labor Day. We will usually be situated at a large table, immediately to the left upon entering. One of our topics of discussion this month will be ideas for increasing our chapter membership and participation..

At this gathering we plan to discuss format and in particular, whether we want a guest for 15-30 minutes for some of the meetings.

April 2025 Meeting

DATE: Friday, 25 April 25

PLACE: **DAV Hall, Chapter 11**
2525 E Division Ave
Springfield, MO

TIME: 1100 – Social Hour

50/50 drawing, to support Honor Flight of the Ozarks.

Drawing at the close of the presentation.

1200 – Meal

MENU: Luncheon Meal, options as outlined on page 6

Cost: \$20/plate. (NOTE: 50/50 Drawing, and Donations for Honor Flight of the Ozarks will also be accepted)

Program: Amber Allen, Alzheimer's Association

RSVP: By Monday, 21 April

To: LtCol Dean Smith, USMC, Retired

417-761-1816 or das1302@icloud.com

LtCol Smith will acknowledge ALL reservations received. If you do NOT receive a confirmation, please contact him directly.

ELECTED CHAPTER BOARD OFFICERS

PRESIDENT: Becky Hutchings

1ST VICE PRESIDENT: Anthony Willis, Colonel, USAF, Retired

2ND VICE PRESIDENT: Frank Bridges, LtCol, USA, Retired

SECRETARY/TREASURER: Dean Smith, LtCol, USMC, Retired

IMMED PAST PRESIDENT: Ron McCall, Capt, USAF, Retired

APPOINTED CHAPTER OFFICERS

CHAPLAIN: Becky Hutchings

LEGISLATIVE CHAIR: Anthony Willis, Colonel, USAF, Retired

AWARDS COORDINATOR: Frank Bridges, LtCol, USA, Retired

SURVIVING SPOUSE LIAISON: Becky Hutchings

AMBASSADOR: Chuck Guy, Colonel, USA, Retired

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR: Chuck Guy, Colonel, USA, Retired

WEBMASTER: Keith Oxby, W/O British Navy

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Ron McCall, Capt, USAF, Retired

2025 OEMOAA Monthly Schedule

Chapter monthly meetings will be held on the 3rd Friday, unless otherwise noted.

2025 Dates

May 16: Kevin Weaver, The Warrior's Journey

June 20: Amber Allen, "Wits Workouts"

June 27: **Springfield Cardinals Game**

Summer Break – July & August

Sep 19: Jennifer Henderson, VSO Briefing

Oct 17: Great Southern Bank, "Fraud Avoidance"

Nov 21: Missouri State Parks

Dec 5: Twin Oaks, Mulligan Room, TBA

Jan 2026: Kavan Stull, Harry Truman in WWI

Quotes from Yogi Berra:

The Future ain't what it used to be.

It ain't the heat, it's the humility

When you come to a fork in the road, take it.

I never said most of the things I said

We encourage all eligible members to also join our National organization, Military Officers Association of America. Information regarding membership options can be accessed at www.moaa.org

Our chapter maintains a presence on Facebook. We strive to keep this page current with information about chapter activities and opportunities. Members can access that page by following this link: www.facebook.com/groups/712416736284579

OEMOAA NAME TAGS

Some members and their spouses prefer a solid plastic name badge with a magnetic clasp. The member cost is \$10 per badge, payable in advance. Order forms will be available at the next two meetings. You can also email Dean Smith (das1302@icloud.com) anytime and he will send you the form by return email. Please return completed forms to Dean at a meeting with the \$10 per badge fee. Nametags will be ready at the next regular dinner meeting. Yes, the name tags with the pin clasp will continue to be provided at no cost.