



Ozark Empire News

Ozark Empire Chapter, Military Officers Association of America

2131 West Republic Road, Box 164, Springfield,
Missouri 65807



January, 2025

A Word from the Chapter President

- Here we are at the beginning of a brand new year, 2025. 2024 was quite a year that brought natural disasters, turmoil on a world-wide scale, and our own national election that played out like never before on social media platforms. 2025 gives all of us new opportunities to unite as a people and support our local, state, and national leaders as they strive to lead us.
- Our December meeting was a festive time, held at Twin Oaks Country Club. There were 25 in attendance and our entertainment was provided by Springfield Sound men's chorus, which was warmly received.
- A combination of incoming and outgoing Board members met on December 20th at the DAV Chapter 11, at 2525 E. Division to explore the possibility of holding our future luncheon meetings there. A consensus was reached to move our meetings to this location, as it will best meet our overall needs. All aspects of our members' needs seem to be addressed by the choice of this venue. Our plan at this time, is to hold our meetings at this location for at least the next 6 months. Any member feedback about this decision is welcome. Please bear with us as we navigate the change.
- I would like to personally offer my sincere thanks to Ron McCall for stepping up to serve in the capacity of President of our Chapter for four consecutive years.
- 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.*

13 Active Legislative Campaigns

Support TRICARE Pregnancy QLE in FY 2025 NDAA

MOAA and The Military Coalition (TMC) are working to improve access to prenatal care with a provision in the FY 2025 NDAA that would create a pilot designating pregnancy as a qualifying life event (QLE) under TRICARE.

[Write](#)

Ask Your Lawmakers to Support Important NDAA Provisions

Urge your lawmakers to support key provisions in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that enhance the well-being of servicemembers and their families, including pay raises, improved housing, better child care, and expanded health care benefits.

[Write](#)

Fix the TRICARE Coverage Gap for an FDA-Approved Alzheimer's Treatment

Urge your legislators to address TRICARE's non-coverage of Leqembi, an FDA-approved treatment for Alzheimer's disease.

[Write](#)

Urge Congress to Support a Substantial Pay Raise of our Junior Enlisted Troops

Contact your lawmakers and urge them to support the junior enlisted pay raise in the House version of the National Defense Authorization Act to provide meaningful financial relief for the most vulnerable members of our military.

[Write](#)

Urge Your Legislators to Pay Full Housing Costs for Servicemembers

MOAA seeks to restore the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) to 100%. Our nation expects 100% from servicemembers and we need to ensure they get 100% of their housing allowance by supporting BAH restoration.

[Write](#)

Urge Your Legislators to Support Concurrent Receipt for Combat-Injured

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.

Write

Urge Your Legislators to Support the Military Spouse Hiring Act

Contact your representative and senators and urge them to support the Military Spouse Hiring Act which will incentivize businesses to hire military spouses.

Write

Urge Your Elected Officials To Support Comprehensive VA Health Care

The Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act (H.R. 8371) will expand essential VA services, improve support for caregivers, ensure access to assisted living services, and provide better resources for surviving spouses. Congress must act now to make this legislation a reality for our nation's veterans.

Write

Share Your Story: Impact of TRICARE Pharmacy Network Changes

Will you be impacted when community pharmacies leave the TRICARE network? Please share your story.

Tell

Urge Your Elected Officials to Fix the TRICARE Young Adult Coverage Gap

This bill would expand TRICARE eligibility to young adult dependents up to age 26, bringing TRICARE in line with commercial plan requirements.

Write

Support Improved Access to Maternal Mental Health Care within the Military Health System

Write

Urge your legislators to support the Maintaining our Obligation to Moms who Serve (MOMS) Act, a bipartisan bill that would establish a pilot program to assess the feasibility and impact of providing evidence-based perinatal mental health prevention programs for pregnant and postpartum uniformed service-members and beneficiaries within military treatment facilities (MTFs).

Ask Your House Member to Support the Expanding America's National Cemetery Act

Write

Help MOAA stay in the middle of this important conversation – Contact your House member and urge them to support the Expanding America's National Cemetery Act.

Ask Your Lawmakers to Support the READINESS Act

Contact your lawmakers and urge them to support the READINESS Act to enhance policy protections for military spouses employed by the federal government.

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.

[Your TRICARE Benefit Will Change in the New Year: Here's What to Know](#)

By MOAA Staff

The new year will mark the launch of “T-5” – [\\$136 billion worth of contracts](#) with health care providers to manage the TRICARE program. Here’s how this changeover will affect beneficiaries, what actions you may need to take to ensure your coverage, and other details about 2025 TRICARE program updates, including [costs and fees](#).

(Want more? [MOAA's TRICARE Guide](#) includes detailed benefits explanations, a look at MOAA's health care advocacy priorities, and exclusive resources for Life and Premium members.)

MOAA will monitor this rollout as part of its overarching priority to protect earned benefits for those who serve and have served, and their families. If you are experiencing TRICARE issues related to the changeover, reach out to us at legis@moaa.org; your feedback is critical as we shape our health care advocacy agenda in the new year with the 119th Congress.

Full Story at [this link](#).

10 winter safety tips from the VA

[\(https://news.va.gov/137131/get-ahead-of-winter-emergencies/\)](https://news.va.gov/137131/get-ahead-of-winter-emergencies/)

1. Stay informed. Listen to local officials for weather updates and safety guidance before, during and after storms.
2. Prepare emergency supplies. Keep essential items like food, water, and first aid kits at home and at work.
3. Use heat safely. Use heating devices according to instructions and install a carbon monoxide alarm if you rely on alternative heat sources.
4. Use generators carefully. Place generators at least 20 feet away from doors and windows and shield them from rain or flooding to prevent electrical shock.
5. Avoid unnecessary travel. Stay off the roads during and after storms unless absolutely necessary.
6. Dress in layers when outdoors. If you must go outside, wear warm layers and limit your time outdoors.
7. Watch for cold-weather injuries. Particularly when outdoors for extended time, check for frost-bite symptoms (numbness, pale skin) and hypothermia (shivering, confusion, or drowsiness).
8. Avoid overexertion. Cold weather can constrict blood vessels, which means your body will need to work even harder to shovel snow and walk in deep snow. This can put a strain on your heart and increase the risk of a heart attack. Pace yourself and take breaks as needed.
9. Maintain your car. Routine vehicle maintenance is especially important in winter to prevent breakdowns in severe weather. If possible, switch to snow tires or carry snow chains.
10. Pack a car emergency kit. Include a cell phone charger, blankets, warm clothes, a snow shovel, a flashlight with batteries, jumper cables, water and non-perishable snacks. If possible, keep a full gas tank.

January US Military History

- 1814** – Congress authorizes Army of 62,773 men
- 1825** - Congress approved “Indian Territory” (present day Oklahoma), clearing the way for forced relocation on foot of Native Americans, known as the Trail of Tears March
- 1847** – Samuel Colt wins a contract to provide the U.S. government with 1,000 of his .44 caliber revolvers.
- 1861** – A Union merchant ship, the “Star of the West,” is fired upon as it tries to bring supplies to Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor. This action would become the beginning of the American Civil War.
- 1862** - USS Monitor, the first ironclad vessel, was launched from Greenpoint, NY
- 1863** - President Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation
- 1863** - Second Battle of Springfield, American Civil War, Springfield, MO
- 1865** - House of Representatives passes the 13th amendment, abolishing slavery in the United States
- 1867** - African American men granted the right to vote
- 1889** – The Oklahoma Land Run opens 2 million acres of unused Oklahoma Territory to first come-first serve settlers. Those who left the marshalling point ahead of the appointed time, and staked claims early, became known as “Sooners”
- 1933** – German President Paul von Hindenburg appoints Adolph Hitler as Chancellor
- 1945** - General Douglas MacArthur and the US 8th Army land in the Phillipine Islands, as a first step toward liberation of the Phillipines from the Japanese.
- 1950** – US President Truman publicly announces his decision to support development of the hydrogen bomb, a weapon theorized to be hundreds of times more powerful than the nuclear devices dropped on Japan during World War II
- 1950** - Mary T. Sproul commissioned as first female doctor in Navy
- 1954** – Launching of Nautilus, first nuclear submarine, at Groton, CT.
- 1968** – As part of the Tet Offensive, Viet Cong soldiers attack the U.S. Embassy in Saigon.
- 1969** – Peace talks opened in Paris, leading to the termination of hostilities in Vietnam
- 1973** – A cease-fire goes into effect in Vietnam, at 8 a.m., Jan 28, Saigon time
- 1980** – President Carter announces US boycott of Moscow Olympics.
- 1986** - Space Shuttle Challenger explodes 73 seconds after liftoff.
- 1983** – The ARPANET officially changes to using the Internet Protocol, creating the Internet.
- 1988** – The U.S. accepts the immigration of 30,000 US-Vietnamese children.
- 1991** – Deadlines passes for withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait, leading to Operation Desert Storm
- 2006** - Spacecraft Stardust lands on Earth, after collecting dust samples from comet Wild 2.
- 2009** – Iraq holds provincial elections

Missouri Veterans Commission

4th Quarter Commission Meeting Slides

October 28, 2024

<https://mvc.dps.mo.gov/docs/commission/presentations/oct2024.pdf>

December Meeting Recap



For our December meeting, we convened at Twin Oaks Country Club for dinner. Prior to our meal service, we were entertained by members of Springfield Sound, our local Barbershop chorus. They were with us last year as well, and agreed to return with some new tunes. Their performance was excellent!

Wreaths Across America Missouri Veteran's Cemetery

Four members of our Chapter, Carl Boswell, Steve Vanderhoof, Brian Spangler and Frank Bridges attended the Wreath Laying event on December the 14th. There were hundreds of folks at the activity in the rain and drizzle. The event featured a Bagpiper; an honor guard; and the playing of Taps. Unfortunately, one tractor trailer load of wreaths broke down on the way. However, Brian did get to lay 6 wreaths, Steve was able to visit his father's grave. All in all it was a special experience for all those who were able to attend.

Missouri State University Fall Commissioning Ceremony

The Commissioning Ceremony was held at 2:00 PM in the Plaster Student Union for three new Second Lieutenants. It is always a pleasure to see young, patriotic Americans prepared to serve their Country in harm's way. The new Lieutenants were Connor R. Esry, Marshfield, Missouri; Adam T. Jurgensmeyer, Wardsville, Missouri and Jessie A. Lucero, Waynesville, Missouri. This Ceremony was unique for the thirty or so such ceremonies that Frank Bridges has attended. LT Lucero graduated Magna Cum Laude, then was pinned by his wife and mother. His mother, a National Guard First Sergeant, Retired, rendered his first enlisted salute. This is a tradition from the 1700's in which the Lieutenant presents the enlisted person a Silver Dollar. How many young men can call their mother to attention?

Past Presidents Status

Asking any OEMOAA chapter member that has information concerning the below listed Past Presidents, please let Frank Bridges know, frankbridges@frankbridges.com. We are trying to complete and update our historical files.

1986 - LTC Gayle Stephens; 1988 - COL David Morris; 1998 - COL H. L. (Bud) Burkes, USA; 2000 - CWO4 James R. Murphy, USA; 2001-2 - CAPT Danny Tervol, USMC; 2005-6 - MAJ James Echols, USAF.



Chaplain's Corner

By Becky Hutchings

Good-bye 2024 and Welcome 2025. Here's hoping that you were able to enjoy this entire holiday season with family and friends. During the month of December, our church celebrated Advent; hope and faith, peace, love, and joy. It is such an uplifting time to review the divine attributes we can develop as we grow closer to God.

It's that time of year when many folks make New Year's resolutions. Some common things might include: losing weight, changing an unhealthy lifestyle, developing a better habit, saving more money, or paying off debt, to name a few. While I certainly need to lose a few pounds as a knee replacement is in the near future, there are other things that compete for front and center. Being a better citizen and having compassion for those around me who are less fortunate are most important.

“Jesus exemplifies God's compassion in His preaching, providing others with paradigms of compassion, illustrated in the parable of the Good Samaritan when compassion is shown for the wounded traveller and in the Lost Son when the father was so moved with compassion that he ran to meet his son”. (Taken from: <https://www.compassion.com>).

Albert Schweitzer said, “ The purpose of human life is to serve, and to show compassion and the will to help others”. (taken from: [brainyquote.com](https://www.brainyquote.com)).

As we enter into 2025, let us pause, before the busyness of this life enter in, to reflect on those around us, and be a light to people that may feel only darkness and despair. A simple smile or compliment can make someone's day. Join me in starting small and establishing a new habit. We cannot change the entire world, but we can impact our circle and community for the better.

May you be encouraged and blessed.

For our January Chapter meeting, we will convene at DAV Hall, Chapter 11, located at 2525 E Division St, Springfield. This is located directly across from Downtown Airport, between Glenstone and US 65.

Our menu this month will again be a catered buffet, consisting of GF Chicken Lasagna, or meat loaf, green beans, salad, and dessert. Cost will be \$20 per plate.

Future Tours and Cardinal Game

Frank Bridges will have sign-up rosters at all coming meetings for the below tours and game.

Convoy of Hope Tour, Tuesday, March 25th at 1:30PM

MSU Observatory Tour, April 22, 23 or 24th (Cloud Dependent), time TBD

Wilson's Creek Tour, Saturday, May 10th at 1:30 PM

Cardinal Baseball Game, Thursday, June 17th at 7:00 PM

Please let Frank know of any other ideas for tours! Those tours would likely be in the Sep to Nov time frame.

January 2025 Meeting

DATE: Friday, 17 January 25

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

TIME: 1100 – Social Hour
50/50 voluntary donations, to support Honor Flight of the Ozarks. Drawing at the close of the presentation.
1200 – Meal

MENU: Luncheon Meal, options as outlined on page 8

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

Program: Ashley Reynolds, “Scams and Prevention”

RSVP: By Monday, 13 January
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

MMED 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

Jan 17: Ashley Reynolds, KY3, Scams & Prevention
Feb 21: Kavan Stull, “President Harry Truman, WWI”
Mar 21: April Eilers, VA Fayetteville
Apr 25: Amber Allen, Alzheimer’s Association
May 16: Kevin Weaver, The Warrior’s Journey
June 20: Amber Allen, “Wits Workouts”
June 27: Springfield Cardinals Game

Quotes from Yogi Berra:

The Future ain’t what it used to be.

If you don’t know where you’re going, you might end somewhere else

You can observe a lot by watching

Why buy good luggage? You only use it when you travel

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.