



Ozark Empire News

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



March, 2025

A Word from the Chapter President

- Our meeting on February 21 was well attended in spite of the severe cold temperatures and snow accumulation during that week. We gained useful information about hospice care and services that are offered to veterans. Details later in this newsletter.
- A Key Issues paper will be forthcoming regarding Advocacy in Action (AiA). At that time our legislative liaison will plan to meet with the field offices in our district(s).
- MOAA announced the reopening of the Committee Module and Near Real Time Report (CM/NRT) in support of council and chapter leaders. Many months of updating and testing have gone into returning this important functionality. This will be rolled out in stages. As soon as our chapter has access, Ron McCall will update our online membership information.
- MOAA's mission is to improve the lives of those who serve and their families. As a MOAA member, surviving spouses have opportunities to connect with kindred surviving spouses in addition to receive information about benefits and programs that might be new to them. A great example of the support MOAA provides is the [MOAA Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter](#) and the [Surviving Spouses and Friends Facebook group](#), which unites military survivors from different war eras. Through these avenues, a surviving MOAA spouse has ample opportunity to relate to like members with similar backgrounds. Local chapters also can provide a spouse with a tangible sense of community and connection.
- 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.*

As the new Congress convenes, legislation must be reintroduced, reviewed, and reassessed. MOAA is actively tracking key issues, and new calls-to-action will be available soon—stay engaged and up-to-date by checking out <http://www.moaa.org/>.

[Ask Congress to Address the Hazardous Unaccompanied Housing Conditions Rampant in the Military](#)

Thousands of servicemembers live in unsafe, substandard military housing due to years of underfunding and lack of oversight. Congress must require DoD to publicly report the condition of unaccompanied housing and ensure funding is used for necessary improvements.

[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.

[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.

[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.

[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 TRICARE Communication Update

TRICARE is moving to a new email platform. In the coming weeks, we'll 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 us:

- 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.

We look forward to staying in touch with you!

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.

10 winter safety tips from the VA(<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.

March US Military History

- 1789** – The first session of the U.S. Congress is held in New York City as the U.S. Constitution takes effect.
- 1863** – The first Army Medal of Honor is presented to PVT Jacob Parrott of the 33rd Ohio Infantry. Four others are so honored this day as well
- 1865** – General William Sherman and his forces occupy Fayetteville, N.C.
- 1939** – Georgia finally ratified the Bill of Rights, 150 years after the birth of the federal government. Connecticut and Massachusetts, the only other states to hold out, also accepted the Bill of Rights in this year
- 1941** – Lend-Lease Bill becomes law, when signed by President Roosevelt.
- 1942** – War Relocation Authority is created to “Take all people of Japanese descent into custody, surround them with troops, prevent them from buying land, and return them to their former homes at the close of the war.”
- 1942** – Philippine Islands abandoned to Japanese forces by Gen Douglas MacArthur
- 1944** – The U.S. Eighth Air Force launches the first American bombing raid against the German capital.
- 1948** – The first successful tornado forecast predicts that a tornado will strike Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma. The 1948 Tinker Air Force Base tornadoes were two tornadoes which struck Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma on March 20 and 25, 1948.
- 1961** – Elvis Presley (26) performed live on the USS Arizona, a fund raiser for a memorial. Col. Parker, Presley’s manager, came up with the brilliant idea to have Elvis Presley give the benefit concert in the 4,000-seat Bloch Arena next to the entrance to Pearl Harbor
- 1962** – After requesting the evacuation of a seriously injured crewman, the Russian merchant vessel Dbitelny transferred the patient to the Coast Guard LORAN station on St. Paul Island in the Bering Sea. Meanwhile, a Coast Guard aircraft flew a US Navy doctor and a hospital corpsman there to perform an emergency operation. Afterwards, the injured man was flown to Elmendorf Air Force Base, where he was admitted to the US Air Force hospital.
- 1973** – Two months after the signing of the Vietnam peace agreement, the last U.S. combat troops leave South Vietnam as Hanoi frees the remaining, admitted, American prisoners of war held in North Vietnam (total: 591 released)
- 2001** – A US Navy fighter dropped an errant 500-pound bomb in Kuwait that hit an observation post and killed five Americans and one New Zealander. Cmdr. David Zimmerman was later reprimanded and relieved of command.
- 2004** – In Madrid, Spain, a series of bombs hidden in backpacks exploded in quick succession at 3 stations, blowing apart four commuter trains and killing 202 people and wounding over 1,450
- 2006** – USS Winston Churchill engages pirates off the coast of Somalia, killing one, capturing 12, after the U.N. Security Council on March 15, encouraged any naval forces near Somalia to take action against suspected piracy.
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Ms Trisha Keltner, representing Compassus, spoke with our members about their services. She shared that her father was in the Marine Corps, so she was raised in a military family, but did not fully appreciate the many responsibilities and sacrifices of military members, until she took her position with Compassus, and began to meet with veterans on a regular basis and hear their stories. She brought along a number of their personnel, who also shared some of their experiences. They feature a “We Honor Veterans” program, which gives any veteran with whom they have contact, a real feeling of appreciation and respect for their service and sacrifice. They also are a credentialed hospice provider, and regularly work with the local VA home and VA hospital. They are always looking for volunteers, giving them an opportunity to sit with veterans and hear their stories, provide whatever assistance may be needed, and just be a friend.

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. As for our next tour at **Convoy of Hope March 25th at 1:30 PM**, when you approach the “HUGE” new headquarters, you will see a set of double doors, sort of in the center, that is where you enter. I have chatted with our tour guide and she will have four wheel chairs available for anyone who can’t walk very far. I volunteer to push one! The tour will take somewhere in the range of an hour. They also have a sack bar and gift shop, and she encourages us to visit them. So...come early!!

Directions to Convoy of Hope: Go west on James River Expressway; to the first exit past Sunshine, which is Rt MM; go right (North) onto Brookline Ave; take the first left onto Carnahan St and it turns into Convoy Dr. Follow this to the entrance to Convoy of Hope. I used these directions and went straight there.

Our Tour Schedule:

- MSU Observatory	April 22, 23, or 24	Clear Sky, Time TBD
- Wilson’s Creek	May 10	1:30 PM
- Cardinal's Baseball Game	June 17	7:00 PM
-Emergency Management Center	Oct 14	1:30 PM
Wreath Laying MO Vet Cemetery	Dec TBD	11:00 AM

NOTE: We may add others!

Our March speaker is April Eilers from the VA Hospital in Fayetteville. She will be talking about what VA can and can’t do for us. If you a specific question or issue, please have copy to give her. As you may know, a good way to resolve any problem with VA, or others, is to contact our Representative or one of our Senators.



Chaplain's Corner

By Becky Hutchings

What about this wild Missouri weather! The drastic changes we've experienced have wreaked havoc with my sinuses and general feelings of well-being. However, spring is on its way. Based on the equinox, the first day of spring will land on Thursday, March 20.

In my musings I recalled those spring days of childhood when I laid in the grass searching for that elusive four-leaf clover. And it seemed to my child's mind that it took hours as I carefully moved my fingers over the patches of clover until I met with success! And oh! How exciting was that rare find! As a proud member of the senior category, I would not consider laying on the grass today, without a foolproof plan on how to get fully upright! Although as a child there was something magical about the four leaf clover-maybe it might, could it, possibly bring with it a leprechaun sighting?

Closely aligned with spring, comes St. Patty's Day. There are many tales of folklore that surround that illustrious figure we call St. Patrick, the Patron Saint of Ireland. He actually used the 3 leaf clover (shamrock) in his teachings, rather than the four leaf clover, that later became a good luck symbol. The color that was originally associated with St. Patrick was blue. Green became the official color during the 18th century when the shamrock became the national symbol. Of course then there's that pinching thing if green is not worn on St. Patrick's Day. It was thought wearing green made one invisible to leprechauns.

Patrick was born in the 4th century in Britain and emigrated to Ireland when he turned 16. His parents weren't particularly religious, but Patrick became very interested in Christianity after he moved to Ireland. He was credited for converting many to Christianity. St. Patrick's Day is celebrated on March 17, the date of his death.

(Taken from: <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/celebrations/article/st-patricks-day>).

Well, I never had a leprechaun sighting, but I still wonder....?

Whether or not you are planning to celebrate St. Patrick's Day, this narrative will hopefully spark that inner child who is filled with wide-eyed wonder. As for me, I will drag out the crockpot and fill it with corned beef and get that cabbage and butter potatoes cooking too! (I may be wearing green, even though it's not really my color)!

Remember to spring forward on Sunday, March 9 (yes, lose an hour of sleep). Enjoy spring! Oh, and 'Top o' the mornin' to ya!'

May you be encouraged and blessed.

For our March Chapter meeting, we will again convene at DAV Hall, Chapter 11, located at 2525 E Division Ave, 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 two entrée choices (including a gluten-free option), salad, dessert, and beverage. Cost will be \$20 per plate.

Coffee With Chuck (CWC) will usually be on the first Monday of the month at Neighbors Mill on East Independence. September will be an exception as the first Monday is Labor Day. When you enter the front door, our room is immediately to the left. The snacks and coffee are toward the right back corner. Erin Engelmeyer from Senator Hawley's Office will be our guest for part of the meeting. I suggest that if you have an issue for her, please have a written copy to give her. I know that she wants to talk about the Library of Congress soldier interviews. Also, she is aware that she doesn't, "get the whole meeting".

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.

March 2025 Meeting

DATE: Friday, 21 March 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 6

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

Program: April Eilers, Fayetteville, VA Overview

RSVP: By Monday, 17 March
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

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**

Summer Break – July & August

Sep 19: TBA

Oct 17: Great Southern Bank, "Fraud Avoidance"

Nov 21: Missouri State Parks

Dec 5: Twin Oaks, Mulligan Room, TBA

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.