



2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019

April, 2021

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 seven 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).*

A Word from the Chapter President

This past month, we were once again able to join together in person for our Chapter Meeting. It was really encouraging to see the increasing number of our folks who were able to join us. As I commented at the time, the sound of conversation and fellowship that filled the room once again was a very good thing. We look forward to increasing numbers of people being able to join us during the coming months, as we hopefully begin to gain the upper hand on this nasty pandemic. I think we would all agree, this is an event that we will all be glad to put behind us.

It is with a sense of pride in our chapter's membership that I take this opportunity to thank Becky Hutchings for her service as our Chaplain. She saw our chapter through the disruption of the COVID pandemic, and its effects on all our lives, and continued to give us words of encouragement. She continued to serve through a time of upheaval in her own life, as she ministered to her late husband while he battled cancer. We all express our thanks to Becky, for her service as our Chaplain for the past 2 years. Now that she has taken on the role of Vice President of our Chapter, we have turned to another of our members, David Jerome, who has agreed to take on the role of Chapter Chaplain. Thank you, David, for your willingness to serve in this capacity.

Also, we want to take a moment to thank Jerry Nicholson, LtCol, USMC, Ret, for his outstanding service as our Speaker Coordinator, for over two years. It's not easy to keep a fresh outlook on potential topics for us, and find people willing to come out and address our august group. Thank you, Jerry, for your service in this regard. We look forward to enjoying your acquaintance for years to come. This responsibility has now transferred to the capable skills of Chuck Guy. As is noted elsewhere, if anyone has a topic you would like to see discussed, especially if you have someone in mind who would be capable of bringing that topic before us, please let Chuck know. He is always open to suggestion. As we have demonstrated over the past few months, while it is better for audience interaction to have the speaker present in person, that is not always possible, nor always necessary. With the development of newer computer technology and applications, we have found that we are able to accommodate speakers from afar.

We heard at this past meeting that our annual trip to Hammons Field, to enjoy an evening of baseball, may not be possible again this year, due to the pandemic. (Is anyone else tired of hearing that?) While conditions in our community may be improving, baseball operations and the seating of an audience is under control of the St Louis Cardinals. They will be looking at conditions everywhere, and may need to impose restrictions that seem excessive to us. If things change, we will be communicating that to our membership as quickly as we can. Meanwhile, we may have to get our baseball 'fix' in other ways.

We just learned that Honor Flight of the Ozarks, together with National Honor Flight, continues to suspend all scheduled flights, through June 2021. This is based on status of vaccine rollout, group gathering restrictions in the D.C. area, and the National Park Service currently not issuing group gathering permits. Also, Arlington National Cemetery continues to be closed to all visitors, and the Navy Memorial remains closed. We will still support HF, and continue to collect donations, both designated cash, as well as 50/50 proceeds. We will relay more information as it becomes available.

Ron McCall, OEMOAA Chapter President

The Ozark Empire News is published by the Ozark Empire Chapter, which is an affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA). MOAA and its affiliated chapters and councils are nonpartisan.



Legislative Update
April, 2021
OEMOAA Chapter
Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)

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Going forward, with our list of state and federal legislative items (published in February), our chapter members are encouraged to contact their state and federal legislators:

1. Ask for their support for these items (both in committee votes and in general session for final approval).
2. Ask for their support by becoming co-sponsors

3. Inform them that we will be conducting a "virtual" "Advocacy in Action" in May 2021, focusing on the three key and essential MOAA Initiatives.

The state and federal issues can also be found on our chapter website:

<http://www.oemoaa.org/Newsletters/February%202021.pdf>

Sweeping New Law Allows VA to Vaccinate All Veterans, Spouses, 24 March 2021

President Joe Biden on Wednesday signed into law a sweeping new measure that supercharges the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#)' ability to vaccinate millions of Americans. The Save Lives Act will allow the VA to vaccinate all veterans, veteran [spouses](#), caregivers and Civilian Health and Medical Program recipients, regardless of their VA eligibility. However, patients enrolled in VA care will get priority. About half of all 18 million living U.S. veterans are enrolled in VA care, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

"This new law expands options for where veterans and their families can receive the COVID-19 vaccine, ensuring that every veteran, spouse, and caregiver will have access to the protection they need from VA," Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., the chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee said in a statement. "This bipartisan bill follows through on our shared goal of getting more shots into the arms of as many veterans as possible."

The above provisions of the law were identified by our Mid-Missouri Chapter (MOAA), Columbia, MO. MOAA national assisted with tracking this issue with VA. This is the type of action that can be accomplished when we mobilize all our MOAA resources at the state and federal levels. A special THANKS to all who assisted.

****Here is a link to the most recent MOAA Advocacy News: [MOAA - News Listing](#)**

Legislative Update (Cont'd)

MOAA “Advocacy in Action”:

The transition from Storming the Hill branding to “*Advocacy in Action*” addresses a new social sensitivity to the term “storming” and marks a pivot to leveraging technology and extended engagement coming in May 2021.

For members unable to travel, the virtual meetings facilitated their participation. This generated over 19,000 letters across every congressional office and 253 virtual meetings to ensure 100% contact. This May, we will rely on lessons learned last year to make our *Advocacy in Action* campaign even more successful. The MOAA Advocacy in Action website, along with the point papers and instructions will facilitate planning and preparation – this site should be up by mid-March.

Our three topics this year address the currently serving, veterans and recent retirees, Guard and Reserves, and their families.

Topic #1: Toxic Exposure – TEAM Act (Toxic Exposure in the American Military)

When most people hear about toxic exposure, they think of Agent Orange and Vietnam. The problem extends to those in uniform today. One of the more recent and impactful examples are from burn pits in Afghanistan and Iraq. Additionally, there are exposure risks from fire-fighting chemicals and contaminated drinking water to name a few. We seek the basics: expanded health care for those who were exposed, the creation of an advisory council, and to reauthorize the Agent Orange authorities which expired in 2015. This issue hits more than the servicemembers – it is a direct impact to the families who are or will be the caregivers.

Topic # 2: TRICARE Young Adult (TYA)

Military kids face unique challenges – the average military kid will move six to nine times during their school years and experience repeated family separations. Yet, current law leaves military kids transitioning to adulthood without the same health care protections afforded to families with commercial plans. Ensuring health care access and affordability is particularly important during the current pandemic. As COVID-19 impacts higher education pathways and makes it more difficult for young adults to find jobs, we must ensure military families who have sacrificed so much in support of our nation have the same health care protections for their young adult children as their civilian counterparts covered by commercial plans. H.R. 475, *The Health Care Fairness for Military Families Act of 2021* addresses this inequity and supports our military families.

Topic #3: Basic Needs Allowance

This allowance helps our most vulnerable servicemembers that face food insecurity—mostly junior enlisted military families. An automatic subsistence allowance for servicemembers whose gross household income (not including BAH) is below 130% of the federal poverty line is needed. This recurring struggle is exacerbated by COVID-19 layoffs which impacted spouses’ contribution to the household income. While a small number of servicemembers qualify for SNAP, there are many military families that do not qualify for the program as BAH is considered income; so, they turn to food pantries instead. Armed Forces YMCA reported a 400% increase in grocery demand at their food pantries on and near military installations during the pandemic. Commanders in the field will appreciate these efforts to take care of their troops.

Planning and preparation:

As MOAA prepares point papers and supporting materials, your Missouri Council of Chapters is engaging our Chapters and chapter members to promote participation. Chapters should verify you will have coverage for all members of congress in your area (state and/or districts). Updates will be provided along the way via the MOAA Newsletter or emails. You will have all the information you need by April to start making appointments with members of congress throughout the month of May.

John D. Hathcock
Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.)
Legislative Affairs Chair, OEMOAA Chapter
Cell: 417.230.9187
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Sign Up for MOAA “Newsletter” and Legislative “Calls to Action”

*We encourage all chapter members and spouses to always, please stay alert, and respond to MOAA **Calls to Action** at least monthly, preferably weekly! Yes, two votes per household are better than 1.*

Signing Up for the MOAA “Newsletter” and Legislative “Calls to Action”:

- **Newsletter:** Sign up for the MOAA Newsletter. <https://www.moaa.org/> Check “News & Info” on Menu, then, on drop-down menu, check “Newsletters”

Or go directly to this link: <https://www.moaa.org/content/tmn/the-moaa-newsletter/>

- **Calls to Action:** Please stay alert for any “Calls to Action”. <https://www.moaa.org/> Check “Advocacy” on Menu, then, on drop-down menu, check “Legislative Action Center”

Contact your Federal elected officials by using the following link: <http://takeaction.moaa.org/?0>

WHEN COMPLETING “CALLS TO ACTION” **PLEASE LOGIN TO THE MOAA WEBSITE**, WHICH WILL ALLOW YOU TO ENTER OUR **OZARK EMPIRE CHAPTER #** IN THE BLOCK AT THE BOTTOM OF THE LETTER PRIOR TO SENDING. THE CHAPTER # IS: **MO05** (MO is “alpha character” and 05 is “numeric” zero 5).

Phone calls matter; Emails matter; Online petitions matter; In-person meetings, when practical, matter. We want to ensure our elected representatives receive local constituents concerns for maximum national impact. (call them via MOAA’s toll-free Capitol Switchboard: 1-866-272-6622).

CONTACT YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

The Honorable (name), U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510 • Phone: (202) 224-3121

The Honorable (name), U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515 • (202) 225-3121

Always feel free to contact me if you need any additional specific details or have any questions. Email: john@linegroup.com or Mobile: 417.230.9187 Thank you, John Hathcock

Chaplain’s Corner

By David Jerome

It is a pleasure and an honor for me to serve as the Chaplain for OEMOAA. While we all obviously have a great deal in common, we may nevertheless be somewhat diverse in how we worship. Please know that I understand and respect any differences that may exist.

Since we were last together, we have gone from one season to the next. Spring has indeed sprung. We went from below zero weather with an uncommon amount of snow fall just a few weeks ago, to warmer weather, growing grass, and an anticipation of being out and about more than we have been in the last several months.

Before our opening prayer on March 19, we referred to Mark 8: 27 – 33. That passage is commonly referred to as Peter’s Confession of Christ. Up to that point, it is not clear whether or not the disciples had viewed Jesus as Christ. Like Thomas, there may have still been some doubt as what Jesus was really all about. In Mark 8: 27 Jesus asked, “*Who do people say that I am?*” Keep in mind, by this point people knew Jesus pretty well largely because of his ministry and the miracles that he had performed. In Mark 8: 28, the disciples took turns answering Jesus, “John the Baptist, Elijah, one of the prophets.” Jesus wanted to know what his closest followers thought. In Mark 8: 29 Jesus asked, “*But who do you say that I am?*” My friends, I cannot think of a question that is more important in all of Christianity than that one asked by our Savior. Peter finally understood what Jesus’ passion was all about. Christ was focused on what he had to do in Jerusalem, Christ was focused on you and me.

As we go about our daily lives, and we enjoy this beautiful new season God had given us, let us remember to answer the question that Jesus asked of his disciples some 2,000 years ago. Let us remember who he is, and why he came to earth in the first place. Please go to Him every day, my friends. Do not be afraid. He died for our sins, so that we may have life eternal with our Heavenly Father. Blessings, to all.



Good times! After an informative presentation, John Landon was presented a MOAA Mug, in appreciation. He then was glad to be able to draw the winning 50/50 ticket.

March Meeting Recap

Our speaker in February was John Landon, a Willard Police Officer with 28 years of law enforcement experience who also teaches Criminal Justice classes at OTC- Ozarks Technical College. He gave us a very informative talk on the history of OTC, its programs and its impact on the Springfield regional area.

OTC was founded in April of 1990 as Heart of the Ozarks Community Technical College with the support of 13 regional Counties. It opened in September 1991 with 1,198 students and the first commencement was in May of 1992 with 54 graduates and 41 GED recipients. The school then became OTC in October of 1994.

OTC serves students in multiple programs such as general education transfer AA degrees, AAS degrees, certifications in technology, health occupations, GED certificates through the High School Equivalency program which has 350 students, and ESL- English as a Second Language with close to 150 students. OTC also serves the regional business and industrial sectors through its programs that offer continuing education and training opportunities for their employees. OTC also serves approximately 1,000 veterans per year through its Upwards Bound program.

Most importantly, OTC works with 21 area high schools through its Career Center and Middle College programs to help approximately 530 high school students graduate with a high school diploma, while at the same time, earning college credit towards a two-year degree. These are students that might not have gone on to a higher level of education, and in some cases, may have dropped out of high school without achieving a diploma.

Today, in its 30th year, OTC serves over 11,000 students on 7 regional campuses and in 2022 the Plaster Center for Advanced Manufacturing will open. OTC makes a major contribution to our community by offering life-changing educational opportunities across a broad spectrum of interests, that would otherwise not be available.

Thank you, John, for a very interesting, informative program. I'm sure that I speak for our membership as a whole, when I say that we now have a much fuller appreciation for Ozarks Technical College, and the impact that it makes on our community

April 2021 OEMOAA MEETING

In keeping with Greene County and Springfield mandates Twin Oaks requires that when entering the building a face mask must be worn and used within the building and in our room. The exception to mask wearing will be when we are seated at our tables. Table seating will, as much as possible, be limited to six/table. Normal bar service in the room will be provided and drinks should be brought back to the tables. This requirement means that when we open the meeting members should have their mask on for the pledge, singing, and going through the buffet line, etc. We will have our normal podium/mic and the speaker should be able to maintain a 6 ft. distance and may present without a mask.

Buffet Service Continues with the April 16, 2021 Meeting

The 16 April buffet will include 2 entrees; Chef's choice entrée, one with meat, and one without, vegetables, dinner rolls, normal table beverages and assorted salads complimented with Chef's choice dessert.

We will walk through the buffet line as presented by the Twin Oaks staff, in our room while masked. The price will be \$27; which as always includes the meal gratuity. RSVPs are especially important and must be made to LtCol Pickett, no later than noon, Monday, 12 April. Payment is at the event by check (payable to OEMOAA) or cash. The bar will operate in our room as usual.

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

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

1961: Bay of Pigs invasion

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

1990: Space Shuttle Discovery places Hubble telescope into orbit

2001: US Pentagon destroys its last canister of napalm

2003: Baghdad falls.

April 2021 Meeting

DATE 16 April 2021 – 3rd Friday

Location – Twin Oaks Country Club (Oak Room)

PLACE: Twin Oaks Country Club

1020 East Republic Road
Springfield, Missouri 65807

TIME: 1815 – Social Hour (Drinks can be purchased from their bar; for example: house wine \$6/glass; domestic beer \$4; liquor varies.) 50/50 voluntary donations, to support Honor Flight of the Ozarks. Drawing at the close of the Speaker's presentation.

1900 – Dinner/Program

MENU: Dinner Buffet. See details on Page 6

COST: \$27.00 (includes gratuity)

SPEAKER: David Jerome: Examining War and Conflict Around the World

RSVP: By noon, Monday, 12 April 2021

To: LtCol William Pickett, USAF, Retired

417-888-0135 or cathyquilt@earthlink.net

LtCol Pickett will acknowledge ALL reservations received within 24 hrs. If you do NOT receive a confirmation, please contact Bill.

2021 OEMOAA Monthly Schedule

All meetings on 3rd Friday, Twin Oaks Country Club, Oak Room, unless otherwise noted)

2021 OEMOAA Meeting Dates:

16 April, Speaker: David Jerome

21 May: Lt Mike Lucas, Sgt Ryan Russell, SPD

18 June: TBA

No Meetings in July, August.

17 September

19 November

15 October

10 December (2nd Friday)

Speaker Schedule – being developed by a very dedicated and capable staff. If anyone knows of a person or topic that you would like to see presented at one of our monthly OEMOAA meetings, that would be of interest to our group, please let Col. Chuck Guy know. He is always open for good suggestions.

ELECTED CHAPTER OFFICERS

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mrtaf@gmail.com

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Someone asked me recently: "Did you get a hair cut?"

"No," I responded, "I got them all cut."

When you ask me what I am doing today, and I say

"Nothing," it doesn't mean I am free. It means I am doing nothing.

My luck is like a bald guy, who just won a comb!

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 Bill Pickett (cathyquilt@earthlink.net) anytime and he will send you the form by return email. Please return completed forms to Bill 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.