



Ozark Empire News

Ozark Empire Chapter, Military Officers Association of America
2131 West Republic Road, Box 164, Springfield, Missouri 65807
<http://www.oemoaa.us>



June 2018

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).*

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings, OEMOAA members. There are a couple of key items in the 17 May 28 MOAA Newsletter that are worth noting in our Newsletter.

The first, is the call to action regarding sequestration. Unless current law is changed, sequestration will return next year (2019) and automatically trigger deep cuts to the Defense Department. These severe cuts will exhaust our resources and capabilities in immeasurable ways—the toll on our military and their families will likewise be incalculable.

The second key issue is the Open Pit burning. This is the first proposed legislation to address the burn pit issue within DoD and would mandate DoD responsibilities regarding accountability at several checkpoints before a servicemember leaves service. H.R. 5671 - The bill seeks to address a problem experienced by many veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan who have been exposed to open burn pits and other toxic chemicals while deployed and who have themselves later become afflicted with rare cancers and other health issues. These veterans, when addressing their health issues with the VA, have been consistently told it is - like was said for many years with regard to veterans exposed to Agent Orange - not supported by science. I personally have experience days of respiratory irritation after the burning in these pits and have no idea of what the long-term consequences will be of exposure to the fumes generated from these pits. The VA sent a notice to those of us who served in SW Asia to register into a database but I found getting on the website impossible and frankly had forgotten about it until this recent notification in the MOAA Newsletter.

The Burn Pits Accountability Act would evaluate the exposure of U.S. servicemembers and veterans to open burn pits and toxic airborne chemicals by:

1. Requiring the Secretary of Defense to record whether servicemembers have been “based or stationed at a location where an open burn pit was used or exposed to toxic airborne chemicals, including any information recorded as part of the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry,” in Periodic Health Assessments (PHAs), Separation History Physical Examination (SHPEs), and Post-Deployment Health Assessment (PDHAs).
2. Enrolling any servicemember who meets the above criteria in the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry, unless he or she opts-out.
3. Requiring the secretary of defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to share information relating to exposure of burn pits and toxic airborne chemicals recorded in PHAs, SHPEs, and PDHAs.

Please take time and get behind these two action items, don't delay, do it today!

Finally, I have included a free webinar site regarding Understanding Your Options with VA Burial Benefits on the last page of this Newsletter. You can get to this link on the MOAA website, Events, Career and Education Events section.

Military History in June

- **1943:** The "Tuskegee Airmen" of the 99th Pursuit Squadron fly their first combat mission against Axis forces on the island of Pantelleria, off the coast of Tunisia.
- **1944:** Just after 2 a.m., some 13,000 American and British paratroopers and glider troops begin landing behind enemy lines in France. 2,000 Allied aircraft bombard German positions in preparation of the invasion.
- **1965:** Air Force astronauts Edward H. White II and James A. McDivitt blast off aboard Gemini IV. White will become the first American to "walk" in space - enjoying the experience so much he had to be ordered to return to the capsule.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE – NATIONAL LEVEL

The big Legislative news in Missouri remains the possible demise of the Missouri Association of Veteran Organizations (MAVO). The Missouri Council of Chapters MOAA is moving forward with our own version of the National Organization's "Storming the Hill". COL John Hathcock from Branson among others, is leading the charge to establish this new organization model. More to come next month. This session of the Missouri Legislature again failed to allow a bond issue to build another Veterans Home. My guess, they don't want to deal with an increase in operations and maintenance funding. They did pass a few Bills that were positive for Veterans, generally where there was no cost or very little. They authorized employers to give Veterans priority for jobs but the employer is not required to do so. Additionally, there was a Bill to give Veterans certain breaks on startup business, among other.

On the National level, MOAA is still pushing for an end to the pay reduction for medical retirees where service earned retirement is offset by VA Benefits. The President has requested DoD to commence with the 13th Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation. The action could go "south" for the military. MOAA is working hard with all parties to keep or pay and benefits protected. There is still talk of Compensation Reform which tends to mean cuts. All of the above are at the MOAA Call to Action site. I have responded several times in the last month with the latest responding to 8 Calls to Action. Please take the time to go on line to MOAA and do Calls to Action!

LTC Frank Bridges, USA Retired., OEMOAA Legislative Chairman

"Always Respond to Calls for Action"

ANNUAL CARDINALS BASEBALL GAME

We are going to attend a Springfield Cardinal baseball game on 17 July, a TUESDAY, and sit in the "Roost". The food, non-alcoholic drinks and ball cap are free with the price of the \$26.00 ticket. We still have 8 tickets which will be for sale at the June meeting or you can contact Frank Bridges at 573-308-7272 or frankbridges@frankbridges.com and reserve your tickets. We are working to get Ron McCall to sign the National Anthem and maybe one of our members will get to throw out the first pitch.

"PLEASE BUY NOW!"

LOCAL TOURS

The only tour that anyone showed an interest in was one of the new Wonders of Wild Life. Chuck Guy checked into that for us and found that they don't do tours. Apparently, it would just take too long. The bottom line is that we aren't planning any tours. Sorry!!

OEMOAA MEMBERSHIP

To our OEMOAA members, we say a very special **THANK YOU.**

More than 90 percent of our members (100 percent of our Auxiliary Members) have paid their 2018 OEMOAA dues. Contact our Secretary/Treasurer Lieutenant Colonel William Pickett, USAF Retired, at 417-888-0135 or at cathyquilt@earthlink.net to catch up.

If you receive this newsletter and are not a member but want to join, contact our Membership Chair, Major John Allen, USA Retired, at 417-888-2097 or jallen39@mediacombb.net

WHY JOIN MOAA?

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is the country's leading organization protecting the rights of military servicemembers and their families. Those who belong to MOAA not only lend their voices to a greater cause, but they also gain access to extensive benefits tailored to the needs and lifestyles of military officers. MOAA members proudly hail from every branch of the uniformed services. To them, we have made the same promise that they have made to their country:

Never Stop Serving.

APRIL SPEAKER

Our speaker in May was Jana Fornelli the Program Manager for Special Olympics of SW Missouri in Joplin. Jana has been with Special Olympics for over 12 years, having been a vice president in the Kansas City area before assuming her present position. Jana gave us the history of Special Olympics from when it started in Chicago almost 50 years ago to its worldwide presence today.

Special Olympics offers opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities to participate in 30 different sporting activities with 21 of them year-round. Presently, there are over 15,000 athletes statewide who meet in local, district, regional and State competitions. Of Missouri's 115 counties, 107 have Special Olympics programs. These activities are opportunities for athletes to learn and develop physical skills as well as teamwork which lead to friendship, as well as a sense of accomplishment and self-esteem.

Special Olympics is supported by key partnerships with statewide businesses and organizations, including the annual Missouri Law Enforcement Torch Run and the annual Polar Plunge. On-line gifts and donations account for much of their budget of over \$7,000,000. For information on Special Olympics programs and opportunities to help go to www.somo.org. The Special Olympics State Summer Games will be held at MSU June 1-3 where over 1,700 athletes, coaches and families will attend. Many volunteers are needed for this event and any assistance be it time or a contribution will be greatly appreciated. You can sign up by visiting their link at www.somo.org/summergames and clicking on the volunteer tab."

At right, OEMOAA President, Colonel Phil Samples, USAF Retired, thanks Jana Fornelli for her presentation regarding her role as Program Manager, Southwest Area, Special Olympics of Missouri

Article and photo by COL Chuck Guy, USA Retired



MEETING Schedule for 2019

Following the last board meeting Bill confirmed all meeting dates for 2019 with Twin Oaks. Since we do not meet in July and Aug, all 2019 meetings (except Dec 2019) will be on the third Friday in Oak Room B. Our 2019 Christmas meeting will be on the first Friday of December, 12/06/19 at Twin Oaks (Mulligan Room both sides). Please mark your calendar so you don't miss any meetings.

12-month forecast: 3rd Friday 1/18/19; 3rd Friday 2/15/19; 3rd Friday 3/15/19; 3rd Friday 4/19/19; 3rd Friday 5/17/19; 3rd Friday 6/21/19; NO MEETING JULY/AUGUAST; 3rd Friday 9/20/19; 3rd Friday 10/18/19; 11/15/19 and Christmas Party on the 1st Friday 12/06/19.

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.



MSU Award Day Ceremony

On 3 May Bryan Hutchings and Frank Bridges attended the Missouri State University's Award Day Ceremony held in Plaster Student Union on campus. There was a variety of awards and recognitions presented to include the Association of the United States Army Award. In the picture, Bryan is presented the Military Officers Association of America Award presented to Cadet Kadence Fees.

Photo by Frank Bridges.



Missouri State Commission Ceremony

On 18 May Bryan Hutchings and Frank Bridges attending the Missouri State Commission Ceremony held outside Strong Hall on campus. The Ceremony included the swearing in; the pinning of the new Second Lieutenant; and the First Salute. Once that was completed, Frank presented each Lieutenant with his Gold Bar. This Bar had been in the Military Science Department's Display Case for up to four years. When each Cadet is contracted one bar in a black jewelry box is placed one of three shelves, Freshman, Sophomore or Junior. It moves up each year until the Cadet is Commissioned. Frank has been providing the Bars and Boxes for a few years. Once the Commissioning is complete the Ozark Empire Chapter presents the Top Cadet with a Ceremonial Saber provide by USAA through MOAA. This year's top Cadet was Christopher L. Shortt seen in the picture receiving the Saber from Frank Bridges. As you can see his name is not descriptive of his size.

Photo by Bryan Hutchings.

VA Update from MOAA - Senate Approves Big Changes to VA Health Care

The VA Mission Act was easily approved by the Senate with a vote of 92-5 on Wednesday. The bill, which previously passed the House by a vote of 347-70, will next go to President Donald Trump to become law just ahead of Memorial Day. The bill prevents a gap in care for veterans who use the VA Choice program, which runs out of funding on May 31. The \$51 billion in the bill includes about \$5 billion for Choice, which allows veterans to seek care in the private sector if they're facing long wait times or live more than 40 miles from a VA facility. That \$5 billion will keep Choice funded for about a year until it is replaced.

JUNE 2018 MEETING

DATE: 4th Friday, 22 June 2018

PLACE: Twin Oaks Country Club (Oak Room)
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.)
1900 – Dinner/Program

MENU: Buffet w/2 Entrees (Chef's Choice) (one entrée will be
seafood or meatless for Lent); 2 Sides; Small Salad
Bar; Bread/Butter; Dessert; Assorted Beverages
(water, tea, coffee)

COST: \$21.00 per person (includes meal gratuity)

SPEAKER: Major Steve Presley, USA Retired, President of
Support the Troops Coalition: "Heroes' Homecoming USA"

RSVP: By 1200 hours, Thursday, 10 May 2018
To LtCol William Pickett, USAF, Retired
417-888-0135 or cathyquilt@earthlink.net

LtCol Pickett will acknowledge ALL reservations received.

ELECTED CHAPTER OFFICERS

PRESIDENT: Phil Samples, Colonel, USAF, Retired
417-742-5125 pls.rxd@gmail.com

1ST VICE PRESIDENT: Chuck Guy, COL, USA Retired
520-820-7339 chuckguy0765@gmail.com

2ND VICE PRESIDENT: Jerry Nicholson, LtCol, USMC, Retired
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SECRETARY/TREASURER: William Pickett, LtCol, USAF, Retired
417-888-0135 cathyquilt@earthlink.net

IMMED PAST PRESIDENT: Frank Bridges, LTC, USA, Retired
573-308-7272 frankbridges@frankbridges.com

APPOINTED CHAPTER OFFICERS

AWARDS COORDINATOR: Bryan Hutchings, Major, USAF, Retired
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SURVIVING SPOUSE LIAISON: Margaret Maulin, LCDR, USN, Retired
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WEBMASTER: Charley Hawkins, CAPT, USN, Retired
417-883-6937 charley65804@gmail.com

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR: John Allen, MAJ, USA, Retired
417-888-2097 jallen39@mediacombb.net

LEGISLATIVE CHAIR: Frank Bridges, LTC, USA, Retired
573-308-7272 frankbridges@frankbridges.com

NOMINATIONS CHAIR: Steve Vanderhoof, COL, USA, Retired
660-886-0205 svanderhoof856@att.net

AMBASSADOR: Michael Murphy, COL, USA, Retired
417-883-9474 06mmurphy@gmail.com

AMBASSADOR: David Reed, CDR, USN, Retired
417-840-6600 dreed7272@live.com

2018 MEETINGS & SPEAKERS

22 June – 4th Friday

Location: Twin Oaks Country Club (Oak Room B)
Speaker: Major Steve Presley, USA Retired, President of
Support the Troops Coalition: "Heroes' Homecoming USA"

July – NO MEETING

August – NO MEETING

21 September – 3rd Friday

Location: Twin Oaks Country Club (Oak Room B)
Speaker: Major Kavan Stull, USAR Retired, (Four State
MOAA Chapter) "The Great War in 25 Acres"

19 October – 3rd Friday

Location: Twin Oaks Country Club (Oak Room B)
Speaker: To be determined

16 November – 3rd Friday

Location: Twin Oaks Country Club (Oak Room B)
Speaker: To be determined

13 December – 2nd Thursday

Location: Twin Oaks Country Club (Mulligan Room)
Program: Christmas Party (menu/price to be determined)

18 January 2019 - 3rd Friday

Location: Twin Oaks Country Club (Oak Room B)
Speaker: To be determined

15 February 2019 – 3rd Friday

Location: Twin Oaks Country Club (Oak Room B)
Speaker: To be determined

THE MOAA NEWSLETTER

MOAA headquarters has launched *The MOAA Newsletter*, which consolidates many of their current online newsletters into one easy-to-read, personalized communication. You can customize the content you receive and determine how often you want to hear from them: weekly, biweekly, or monthly. Keep an eye out for future announcements. If you were forwarded this email, please [click here](#) to join MOAA and receive further communications. © MOAA, 2018

Understanding Your Options with VA Burial Benefits

Jun 07, 2018 to Jun 07, 2018 Online Event

Free Webcast MOAA invites you to join our Veteran and Survivor Services experts for a free webinar that will discuss the options on burial benefits along with allowances available for eligible Veterans and their loved ones. What we'll cover Preparing for... **REGISTER** **SEE** **DETAILS**