

**President's Message**By Frank J. Sparacino
LTC U.S. Army (Retired)

The Advocacy in Action program began in April and we had two districts to cover. I'd like to believe our fellow MOAA Chapters made some impact on encouraging Congressional support on all three Legislative priorities.

To all members and their guests, the 2025 NYS CoC MOAA Annual Convention is at the **Inn at Saratoga**, 231 Broadway, Saratoga, NY 12866 from **28 September – 01 October 2025**.

I encourage members to at least attend a few days if not the entire 4-day event. Rebecca and I will be attending and plan on doing some personal exploring of our own. Sites we plan to visit are the Saratoga National Cemetery and the Saratoga Battlefield.

MOAA Chapter dues are due again this year, please make every attempt to renew your membership so we can support our Chapters initiatives such as the VA tailgate social, ROTC & JROTC awards, and our newsletters. The dues are very economical especially if you pay for 3 years at a time and donations are always appreciated. PS. Chapter dues are in addition to the National membership dues.

If you know of anyone that does not have an email, please have him or her contact us for paper copies. Also, make every attempt to contact me at fjspa26@gmail.com, to update your contact information. It makes it easier for us to reach out to you on upcoming events. Please forward this newsletter to anyone you feel would be interested in MOAA.

The Armed Forces Committee is ramping up for their **2025** events.

An Opening Ceremony will commence on **May 8th at 0945** at the Connecticut Street armory with a Luncheon to immediately follow for those with paid tickets. The Military Ball is on Saturday, **May 10th 6 PM** also at the Connecticut Street Armory. This year is hosted by the US Navy. Tickets are available online **ONLY** at www.wnyarmedforcesweek.com

Finally, our annual meeting, which is also our Christmas Social is on Sunday, 14 December at Classic V on Niagara Falls Blvd. More details in our next newsletter.

Future BOD mtg dates: June 14, September 27, 14 December

Legislative Liaison Report

By BG Tony Caruana, USA (Retired)

This year MOAA National returned to Capitol Hill in person for the Advocacy in Action (AiA) campaign for the 119th Congress. They are asking us to continue the initiative by our legislative team with in-person visits in our legislators' home districts, and by asking our local members and spouses through the MOAA national website at www.moaa.org/AiA.

It is easy to do, and important issues are at stake again. **The Richard Star Act** did not pass last year and was reintroduced again this year as **House Resolution 2012**. Our two local representatives, Congressmen Nicholas Langworthy, District 23, and Timothy Kennedy, District 26 have both signed on as co-sponsors of the new bill. We are grateful for that and hope this year can get the Bill passed after the long legislative process gets done and then it gets voted upon by Congress.

MOAA has improved the **Legislative Action Center**. They now have **four major categories, Key Advocacy Issues, Log Your Interactions, MOAA-Supported Legislation, and Find your Elected Officials**.

We ask you to support the MOAA efforts. By logging into the above home site, you will see three lines in the upper right-hand corner. Click on the spot and it will take you to a list that includes **ADVOCACY**. Then click, **Legislative Action Center**. This will bring you the four major categories listed above. **The Key Advocacy Issues** section is most important. It lists MOAA's Core Mission and the five main Issues with details on each of **Currently Serving, DoD Health Care, Families & Survivors, Retirees& Veterans, and VA Health Care**.

In each there is a **TOP PRIORITY** issue for us to contact our congressional reps. Please adhere to the instructions for sending electronic correspondence to your Senate and Congressional representatives.

Thank you. Our military members, their families, and their survivors will appreciate all our support.

Tailgate Party at VA Hospital

By Stanley Lichwala
CDR U.S. Navy (Retired)

Last November 10 our chapter hosted our 15th Tailgate Party in Freedom Hall at the Buffalo VA Hospital for patients. This year we will once again partner with the Home of the Brave at a date to be determined once the Bills' schedule is announced.

Online Dues Payment

By Stanley Lichwala
CDR U.S. Navy (Retired)
WNY Chapter Treasurer

Over the past few months MOAA National has subcontracted to a specialty web service known as “Cheddar” for handling members ability to pay **CHAPTER** dues in a simple and easy to use way.

You are **HIGHLY** encouraged to use this system – it eliminates a great deal of mail-in payment issues, trips to the bank and is more secure than sending checks through the mail.

1. Go to www.MOAA.org and log in using your login and password. Click on About MOAA, then click on Councils and Chapters. Go to Fast Access Chapter Members and click on Chapter Dues Payment System. Scroll down to New York, click on MOA of Western New York and that will take you to the Cheddar Payment System.

If you do not have a Log-in and Password you may just go to www.MOAA.org and put “Dues” in the search Bar. Click on Online Chapter Membership Dues, Join and Renewal. Then click on “Pay Chapter Dues Online”, scroll down to New York. Click on MOA of Western New York and that will take you to the Cheddar Dues Payment System.



PERSONAL AFFAIRS

By Richard A. Scalfani
CW4 U.S. Army (Retired)

Taps:

There are no deaths to report this period.

Well Wishes:

We pray for a speedy recovery for all chapter members and their family members who are experiencing health issues.

ITEMS of INTEREST:

Thursday, 8 May 2025

Armed Forces Week

Connecticut Street Armory
184 Connecticut Street, Buffalo, NY 14213
Opening Ceremonies @ 09:45 a.m.
Luncheon @ 12:00 noon
\$35 Per Ticket with cash bar at 11:00 a.m.

Saturday, 10 MAY 2025

Connecticut Street Armory
184 Connecticut Street, Buffalo, NY 14213
The Military Ball @ 19:00 (7 p.m.)
\$60 Per Ticket with cash bar at 18:00 (6 p.m.).

Saturday, 17 MAY 2025

Buffalo and Erie County Naval and Military Park
1 Naval Park Cove, Buffalo, NY 14202
WNY Armed Forces Day 5K @ 08:00 a.m.
sponsored by Russel J. Salvatore
\$30 Registration Fee

For tickets to the luncheon and dinner as well as registration for the 5k go to [WNY ARMED FORCES WEEK 2025 site](#).

In general, VA health care is *potentially* available to anyone who served on active duty. Guard and Reserve members may also qualify if they were called up on Federal Executive Orders (active-duty training may not qualify). Eligibility is based on several factors, including when and where the veteran served, service-connected disabilities, whether an injury or illness occurred while on active duty, income, and other factors. If there is any doubt about your eligibility status, just apply. You may be approved for some form of VA medical care benefits.

Many military veterans aren't aware they are eligible for VA health care benefits. The common misconception is that veterans can only use VA medical care facilities if they have a service-connected disability. Veterans with a service-connected disability rating can use VA medical centers, but health care benefits aren't only limited to those individuals.

There may be limitations on the [type of health care](#) you may be eligible for, and some medical care may require a co-pay or other associated cost, depending on your VA Priority Group, the nature of your coverage, and the medical care you receive.

Call 1-877-222-VETS (8387), Mon-Fri, 8:00 am – 8:00 pm EST for more information.

VA to Expand Care, Services for the Elderly:

The [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) is planning to expand several programs that allow senior veterans to age in their homes or live in home-like settings as alternatives to elder care facilities.

VA officials announced they will expand the Home-Based Primary Care and Veteran-Directed Care programs, which provide medical care and caregiver services to housebound older veterans, and its [Medical Foster Home program](#), which provides housing and services to veterans who otherwise would be in nursing homes.

The expansion is needed, said officials with the VA's Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care, to ensure that the department can support a growing number of veterans eligible for nursing home care. By 2039, the number of elderly veterans is expected to double from 2 million to 4 million.

"These evidence-based programs allow veterans to age-in-place, avoid or delay nursing home placement and choose the care environment that aligns most with their care need. Since 1999, the [Department of Veterans Affairs has been required](#) to provide nursing home services to veterans who qualify for VA health care and have a service-connected disability rating of 70% or higher, or are considered unemployable and have a disability rating of 60% or higher. This care is provided through rough short- or long-term nursing home facilities, respite care, VA community living centers, private assisted living facilities, state veteran's homes and the Medical Foster Home program.

Medical foster homes are places where veterans live full time in a home setting with a caregiver licensed to provide 24-hour support, meals, housing, help with daily living and companionship. The program places veterans in houses belonging to or managed by caregivers that are licensed by their states as assisted-living facilities.

To be eligible for the program, veterans must be enrolled in VA health care and have a complex disabling medical condition that requires coordination of care across VA services and is severe enough to need a nursing home level of care.

Because medical foster homes are not considered institutional care, the VA cannot pay the cost directly. The veterans can use their VA disability compensation, Social Security income and savings to pay the cost, which covers room and board and support.

The VA has faced challenges increasing the number of Medical Foster Homes because of the rigorous regulations and requirements of the facilities and caregivers.

The process for becoming a home provider is rigorous: They must pass a federal background check, complete 80 hours of initial training and 20 hours of additional training each year, and maintain certifications in first aid, CPR and administering medications.

Home caregivers must live on-site, are required to provide around-the-clock supervision and care for their veterans, and have relief staff for when they go on vacation or need to conduct other business.

Veterans in the Medical Foster Care program must also use the VA's Home-Based Primary Care program, which provides a team of health professionals to treat veterans in their homes. A VA study found that this type of home-based care yielded a 31% reduction in hospital admissions for veterans in the program and 59% drop -in VA in-patient hospitalization days.

VA officials said that more veterans have elected to use the in-home medical care and caregiver programs during the pandemic, as well as the Medical Foster Care program, to reduce their risk of contracting COVID-19 and to have more flexibility in medical treatment.

More information on these programs is available at the "VA's Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care " website.

"Warfare": A film to see.

A movie that puts the carnage, horrors, boredom and trauma of war on film. The lasting impacts of combat continue to be hard for many who endured traumas during the Global War on Terror's 20-plus years.

Though "Warfare" captures just a 95-minute window of it, the film manages to get right what so many others get wrong.

War is, remembered for friendships, for unnatural hellishness in brief, but idle moments and for the immense weight carried by the young people who endure the cost of it.

This film is worth seeing to better understand why the U.S. military should be always strong enough to prevent them from occurring.

Editor's Note

JoAnne Lichwala

On Sunday, October 27, 2005 our own Board Member Father Mike Zuffoletto (Commander, Chaplain Corps, USN-Ret.) was honored by the Federation of Italian American Societies of Western New York at the God, Family, Country celebration. A Mass at St. Anthony's Church was followed by a luncheon at Classics V. Congratulations to Father for this richly deserved recognition.

OPT-OUT – To unsubscribe to receiving the newsletter by email contact Capt. Mike Concannon at mconcannon.tha@gmail.com.

*2025 EVENTS CALENDAR***May**

- 8 Armed Forces Week Opening Ceremony and Luncheon
- 10 Military Ball
- 11 Mother's Day
- 26 Memorial Day

June

- 14 Flag Day
- 15 Father's Day

July

- 4 Independence Day

September

- 1 Labor Day
- 28–Oct. 1 NY COC Annual Convention

October

- 13 Columbus Day
- 31 Halloween

November

- 4 Election Day
- 11 Veteran's Day
- TBD Tail Gate Party at the VA Hospital
- 27 Thanksgiving Day

December

- 14 Annual Meeting and Holiday Party
- 25 Christmas