



Western New York Chapter Fall 2025 Newsletter
A Veterans' Service Organization

P.O. Box 472
North Tonawanda, NY 14120

Jo Anne Lichwala, Editors
Michael Zuffoletto
Website: wnymoa.org



I want to thank the Board members for all their hard work this past year in supporting our Chapter. Collectively members supported the

VA tailgate party, JROTC/ROTC programs, the MOAA's National Scholarship Fund, the Armed Forces Committee, and most importantly MOAA's Advocacy in Action (AiA) initiatives. I am asking each member to go on moaa.org, sign in and click on "write" for each initiative. Your letter is automatically generated, just click and send. A lot of information is there and may answer some of your questions. Past board minutes are also posted on our Chapter Website www.wnymoa.org.

Our biggest challenge each year is **recruiting** additional members. There are over 8,500 MOAA members in NYS but only 550 belong to a local Chapter. For our Chapter to survive, I am challenging each member to bring in **one** new or former member to our annual meeting on December 14th at Classics V. We all know someone who has served or is serving that would make a good prospect.

The MOAA 2025 Annual Convention at Saratoga, NY was a great success this past September. Six NYS Chapters totalling 70 attendees. Presentations from the National MOAA CEO, LTG Brian Kelly and Senior Director Frank Micheal were informative as well as a special guest, MG Joseph Taluto,

President's Message

By Frank J. Sparacino
LTC U.S. Army (Retired)

who spoke about GWOT and the military museum in Saratoga.

I wish to congratulate our Council for all their work in putting this event together. Everyone enjoyed the educational tour of the Saratoga battlefield and lunch was provided at one of the VFW Posts.

Kudos to the hospitality team AGAIN, outstanding job!

If you know of anyone who does not have an email, please have him or her contact us for paper copies. Please 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 its 2026 May events which are hosted by the Army this year. Anyone with interest in joining their committee contact me for further information.

Save the Date, the **Annual Meeting**, which is also our Christmas Social, is **December 14, 2025**. Please make every attempt to join us at Classics V at 2425 Niagara Falls Blvd at 1130 for lunch and a brief meeting. Senior Director Frank Micheal is scheduled to attend and meet our members. This is the first time he is visiting Buffalo so let's give him a warm welcome. See attached flyer.

OPT-OUT – Please See Editor's Note for Details



Legislative Liaison Report

By BG Tony Caruana, USA (Retired)

Proposals to end an unjust pay offset faced by tens of thousands of combat-injured veterans and to improve access to care at military treatment facilities are among the more than 1,500 amendments lawmakers will consider as part of the must-pass defense legislation. House lawmakers proposed over 900 amendments to the FY2026 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), while the Senate faces more than 600. Not all of these proposals will make it into the final chamber-passed bills or receive floor attention, but the sheer volume underscores the magnitude of the task ahead.

The Senate is expected to set up its version of the bill later this September after an 84 to 14 vote on September 2nd invoking closure, which will allow debate on the legislation. The House is likely to begin work on the NDAA soon, setting up a busy stretch for both chambers as the bills move along through the legislative process and take one step closer to being signed into law.

MOAA National had asked us to meet in August with our local Congressional representatives to stress their support needed to help these bills pass.

On August 20, we met in Congressman Tim Kennedy's office, and on August 23 we met in Congressman Nick Langworthy's office.

In both offices we presented the major MOAA issues needing support:

The **Richard Star Act, (H.R. 2102)** which would eliminate an unjust compensation offset for medically retired combat veterans or ensure the bill's language is included in the FY 2026 NDAA. Both of our 2 representatives have co-sponsored the bill already.

The **Military Spouse Hiring Act (H.R. 2033)** which will incentivize businesses to hire military spouses.

The **Access Parental Care for Military Families Act (H.R. 4381)** and the **TOTAL Care Act (H.R. 1699)** propose to designate pregnancy as a TRICARE qualifying life event and aim to enhance efficiency in obtaining OB-GYN care. Both are in the House Armed Services Committee's chairman's markup of the FY 2026 NDAA.

LTC Frank Sparacino, his spouse, LTC Rebecca Sparacino, also a MOAA member, and I met with Dr. Walt Koch, Congressman Kennedy's Deputy District Director and Senior Military Aide. The three of us plus COL Bob Pecoraro met with Congressman Nick Langworthy's Senior Caseworker at his Williamsville office.

The meetings were well received, and we hope our representatives will support all our bills.

We also need our members to get involved in contacting our representatives. More voices help us to keep our issues under consideration. You can get engaged by logging into MOAA's website and the



Legislative Action Center where you can send messages on all of the above acts to your representatives!!

PERSONAL AFFAIRS

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

Formatted: Font: Times New Roman, Underline, Font color: Red



TAPS

MAJ Susan L. Novak, USAF (Ret.)
Died: May 4, 2025

Well Wishes:

To all chapter members and their family members who experiencing health issues we pray for their comfort and speedy recovery.



Items of Interest

Gray Area Retiree Spotlight: What You Need to Know About the Reserve Component Survivor Benefit Plan (RCSBP).

Whether you are still drilling, in the Gray Area, or receiving your retired pay, it is important to understand how RCSBP benefits your loved ones and what you need to do if you go through a life changing event.

It is critical that you notify your Branch of Service of any changes if you are still in the gray area, or DFAS if you are already receiving your retired pay. Some changes have a one-year time limit, and once that time limit is reached, the change is permanent. For example, If you get married, you have one year from the date of marriage to add your new spouse or decline coverage if you previously had a spouse. After one year, the election defaults to your election when you first became eligible and it cannot be changed. Likewise, if you gain your first child, you only have one year to add child

coverage, otherwise children will be excluded from future coverage.

Please know that if you gain an additional child and already have child coverage, the new youngest child will automatically be covered and there is no change in cost. However, you do still need to notify DFAS and your BOS of the new child. If your marriage ends due to the death of your spouse or divorce, you must let DFAS and your BOS know about that as well so the premiums can be adjusted and coverage type changed

NextGen ID Card: This is a reminder to get a new ID Card now.



Passed by Congress in 2005, the REAL ID Act enacted the 9/11 Commission's recommendation that the Federal Government "set standards for the issuance of sources of identification, such as driver's licenses." The latest information indicates the Department of Homeland Security will start Real ID Act enforcement on 7 May 2025.

This will affect what forms of ID/documentation people can use to access certain federal facilities, board domestic commercial

flights or individuals visiting military installations.

Even after the Real ID Act is in effect, there is **no** change for military base access for individuals (military retirees/dependents/surviving spouses) who already possess military, or DoD issued credentials; non-DoD personnel without base access credentials will be the largest demographic affected by REAL ID requirements. If you don't have the NextGen ID card, but an "old style" ID card (DD Form 2, DD Form 1173, DD Form 1173-1 or DD Form 2765 (blue, pink or tan ID)) you will still be able to access a base for now! It's important for military retirees/dependents/surviving spouses to know, at some time in the future, these old forms of ID will **not** be valid to access a military installation, and you will **need** issuance of the NextGen ID card. This will be true even if your old ID card has an INDEF expiration date on it - the ID will still be **invalid**.

There are several ways to make an appointment to get a new ID card. **(1).** You can visit the RAPIDS ID Card Office Locator website to find the closest office and either call them to make an appointment or **(2).** schedule your own appointment using the website. <https://idco.dmdc.osd.mil/idco/> To make an appointment using this site select the "ID Card Office Locator & Appointments" block. **(3).** You **may** be able to renew your ID card online and have it mailed to you, no waiting in line! You select the



“Family ID Cards” block on the website at the link above. Below are the requirements to renew a card online:

- Sponsor must be a CAC holder or have a DoD Self-Service Logon username/password
- Must be requesting a renewal of an active USID card
- Sponsor and Cardholder must have email addresses listed in DEERS that they have authorized DoD to use for contacting them
- Sponsor’s personnel status must extend at least 30 days into the future
- Cardholder has a photo saved in DEERS taken in the last 12 years
- Cardholder’s mailing address is present in DEERS and is in United States or Overseas.
- USID cards cannot be shipped to PO Boxes

Did You Know?

We recognize the laws and regulations governing military annuity pay are complex and can be difficult to understand. In each issue of the DFAS Survivor SBP Newsletter, we will share a few helpful tips for survivors.

- When you fill out an IRS Form W-4P and submit it via myPay, askDFAS, mail, or fax to DFAS Military Annuitant Pay, we will withhold federal income taxes from your annuity payment. Every January, we will issue a 1099-R statement needed to complete your tax return.
- Surviving spouses maintain their eligibility for Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) until death as long as they do not remarry before age 55. If a spouse annuitant remarries before age 55, annuity payments are suspended. However, if the marriage of an annuitant (who remarried before age 55) later ends for any reason, their eligibility for the annuity is reinstated and effective on the first day of the month the marriage ends. The annuity payments will restart once DFAS receives and processes the notification and documents. *Please note: child annuitants may not marry at any age and remain eligible for SBP.*
- DFAS recognizes various types of third-party representation for annuitants who need help managing their account. However, one type of representation DFAS does not recognize for annuitants is a Durable Power of Attorney (DPOA). Currently, DFAS is authorized by law to accept a DPOA for retiree accounts only. A detailed explanation of third-party representation can be found at <https://www.dfas.mil/annthirdparty>.
- SBP child annuitants between 18 and 22 years old must regularly certify their status as an unmarried, full-time student to continue receiving SBP annuity payments. For both high school and college students turning 18 and over 18, we now use the annual DD 2788 School Certification Form as the only required form for annual certification. Learn more at <https://www.dfas.mil/schoolcerts>.

• There are several ways to change your address, including two online options available 24/7. The easiest and most convenient way to update your address is in myPay. You can also request an address update using our askDFAS online tools. Find out more on the Quick Tools webpage: <https://www.dfas.mil/raquicktools>. If you don't have a myPay account, you can call our customer care center at 800-321-1080. If you'd like to send a written request, you can send it by mail, fax or by uploading it using our askDFAS online upload tool. Be sure to include your full name, Social Security Number and the member's Social Security Number.



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 host our 16th Tailgate Party and partner with the Home of the Brave on **November 9** when the Bills host the Dolphins.

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.

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.

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



UPCOMING EVENTS

October

- 13 Columbus Day
- 13 U.S. Navy Birthday (1775)
- 26 National Day of the Deployed
- 31 Halloween

November

Military Family Month

- 2 Daylight Savings Time Ends
- 4 Election Day
- 9 Tail Gate Party at the VA Hospital
- 10 Marine Corps Birthday (1775)
- 11 Veteran's Day
- 18 Navy Chaplain Corps Birthday (1775)
- 27 Thanksgiving Day

December

- 1 Civil Air Patrol Birthday
- 2 Armory Christmas Party
- 7 Pearl Harbor Day/Genesee Valley Chapter Annual Meeting & Luncheon
- 13 National Guard Birthday/Army-Navy Football Game
- 14 Annual Meeting and Holiday Party
- 15 Hanukkah
- 20 Space Force Birthday
- 25 Christmas
- 28 Anniversary of the Army Chaplain Assistant/Religious Affairs Specialist

January, 2026

- 1 New Year's Day
- 19 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day



***MOAA WNY Chapter Annual Meeting / Holiday Party
Sunday, December 14, 2025***

***Classics V
2425 Niagara Falls Blvd
Amherst, New York 14228***

***FREE Unlimited Fruit and Wine Punch /CASH Bar 11:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
One hour of Assorted Cheese Display***

***Buffet Lunch served at 12:30 pm
The buffet includes Chef Salad, Pasta Salad, Parmesan-crusted Chicken, Roast Beef
served with Rolls,***

Garlic Smashed Potatoes, Pasta Marinara, and Glazed Carrots.

For dessert Chocolate Tuxedo Cake

Lunch Donation - \$40 per person (includes gratuity) See below for reservations

***Send this form and a \$40 check per attendee (made out to MOAWNY) to:
LTC Frank J. Sparacino at 3216 Celena Ct, N. Tonawanda, NY 14120
(check must be received by 3 December 2025)***

Questions contact: fjspa26@gmail.com

Please provide the following information for attendee/s:

	Rank/Prefix		
MEMBER First & Last Name	/		
GUEST First & Last Name	/		
Branch of Service			
Street Address			
City	State	Zip	
Phone Number			
Member Email Address			
Amount Enclosed			



Western New York Fall 2025 Newsletter

