



MOAA®

PITTSBURGH CHAPTER

**MOAA Pittsburgh - A Five Star Chapter
Chartered on Veterans Day - 11 November 1965**

NOVEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER



Pittsburgh Chapter Leaders

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SECRETARY

VACANT

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MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

IMPORTANT: MOAA Pittsburgh Chapter Members

The Pittsburgh Chapter of MOAA depends on your support. The Chapter is currently anticipating a shortfall for meeting its financial needs. ***Please consider making an end-of-year donation to the Chapter to continue to support its activities.***

- In 2024, Chapter insurance was purchased, and a Chapter website was created. Both items will be yearly expenses.

VACANT

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thomastallon@verizon.net

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MOAA State Veterans

- The Chapter continues to utilize Constant Contact which enables it to send out a monthly Newsletter to update members on Chapter activities and MOAA initiatives. This is a yearly expense.

- The Chapter pays dues to MOAA Pennsylvania Council of Chapters. This is a yearly expense.

- ROTC/JROTC. The ROTC Liaison attends ceremonies and presents medals and certificates to Cadets on behalf of the Chapter. This is a yearly expense.

- MOAA Heritage Society. Our Chapter joined in 2022 and committed to a donation each year for five years. The first installment was made in 2022, and an additional installment was made in 2024 which also covered 2023. The Chapter will make installments in 2025 and 2026.

- 501(c) 3 IRS Application. The Chapter submitted its application to become a registered 501(c) 3 organization in 2024.

- A table drape was purchased this year that was utilized by the Chapter while participating at the 1st Annual PA VETCON and will be utilized going forward at future public events.

- The Chapter volunteered at the Southwestern Veterans Center by assisting with Bingo and providing snacks and drinks to participants as well as nominal gifts to Bingo winners.

- In 2025, the Chapter is scheduled to participate in this regions United States Army Reserve Command, G-1 Retirement Appreciation Day at the 316th ESC.

- Additionally, the Chapter hopes

**Home Advisory Council
Members and MOAA
Pittsburgh Chapter
Members**

Southwestern Veteran's Center

CW4 (RET) Thomas E. Tallon
thomastallon@verizon.net

Erie Soldiers & Sailors Home

MAJ (RET) Richard J. DiGiacomo
rjdiacomo@zoominternet.net

to add more activities as well as assist at a Bingo event again next year.

If unable to provide a donation at this time, we are asking that you please consider updating what you paid for Membership Dues for 2025. Some members paid in advance at the \$12 rate. If you would please consider paying the additional \$8 (Membership Dues are \$20 beginning in 2025) to bring it up to the \$20 it would be greatly appreciated.

We are also asking **ALL** who receive this Newsletter to please pay the 2025 dues of \$20 beginning in January 2025. As stated above, the Newsletter is an expense to the Chapter and, therefore, the Chapter may have to consider removing those on the Constant Contact List that are not paid Chapter members.

Please make checks payable to **MOAA Pittsburgh Chapter** and mail to:

Marcel Minutolo
1442 Barnsdale Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15217-1308

Please note in the memo section of your check as to what it is for (e.g., Donation, 2025 Membership Dues, Additional Money Towards 2025 Dues, etc.).

If you have any questions regarding the Chapter's finances, please reach out to Marcel Minutolo, Treasurer, at [**minutolom@gmail.com**](mailto:minutolom@gmail.com).

If you have any questions in general, please reach out to Jon Comis, President, at jon.comis@gmail.com or Dan Kysela, Vice President, at kysela.daniel@gmail.com.

Open Positions - Secretary and Membership Chair

The Chapter is still in need of volunteers to fill the positions of **Secretary** and **Membership Chair**. The Secretary position is currently being handled by Dan Kysela (Vice-President) and the Membership Chair is currently being handled by Jon Comis (President) with the position listed as Marcel Minutolo (Treasurer) on the National Website.

Please reach out to Jon or Dan if you have any questions about the open positions and/or if you wish to volunteer for either of these roles. Your assistance would be much appreciated!

Note: You must be a member of MOAA National, and your Pittsburgh Chapter dues must be paid in full in order to hold a position.

DIRECTOR POSITIONS

The Chapter is still in need of volunteers to fill three (3) open Director positions.

As copied from Section 6 of the by-laws, the Directors shall:

a) attend board meetings and serve as a voting member of the board of

- directors;
- b) provide input to the president on issues of chapter management, finances, programs, and special matters;
- c) establish and review chapter bylaws, policies, procedures, and other guiding documents annually and make recommendations for revision as needed;
- d) serve as a greeter at chapter functions; and
- e) perform other duties the president might assign.

We hope that you will consider volunteering to hold one of the open Director positions. **Note: all meetings will be held online (Google Meet).**

Note: You must be a member of MOAA National, and your Pittsburgh Chapter dues must be paid in full in order to hold a position.

Surviving Spouse Liaison

Our Surviving Spouse Liaison, **Oralia Ferretti**, is always ready to answer any questions. Please reach out to Oralia. Her phone number and email address are located in the Pittsburgh Chapter Leader Section.

[Surviving Spouse Corner: A Season to Be Grateful](#)

[Click to view MOAA's Surviving Spouse Resources Website](#)

Holiday Card Collection Program

Update: Carmen DiGiacomo will accept Holiday Cards up until our December 8, 2024, Holiday Party!

Please bring your signed and un-sealed Holiday Cards in packs of ten to our Holiday Party. If unable to, please reach out to Carmen (tippfado@verizon.net) to discuss mailing or dropping-off the cards prior to the deadline. Thank you for participating in this Community Service project!



DECEMBER HOLIDAY PARTY

The next gathering for the MOAA Pittsburgh Chapter will be the Holiday Party being held on **Sunday, 8 December 2024**, at Chartiers Country Club, 601 Baldwin Road, Pittsburgh, 15205. A social hour with a cash bar begins at 1:00 PM (1300 hours). A seated lunch will start to be served promptly at 2:00 PM (1400 hours). Valet parking will be available under the breezeway tunnel.

Since we are still not anticipating that the MOAA National pay-on-line website will be up and running for this event, ***ALL reservations and payments for the Holiday Party will be made by mailing your check (made payable to MOAA Pittsburgh Chapter) to our Events Coordinator, Pat Seda-Rivera. You can also pay Pat by check directly at the door.***

First, you will need to contact Pat with your meal order by phone, (412-704-5070) or by email (julio.moaa@comcast.net) or send your completed order form below with your check to Pat's mailing address listed below:

**Pat Rivera-Seda
602 Cloverview Circle
Pittsburgh, PA 15239-2370**

If you have not attended a luncheon/meeting yet, please try and attend this final gathering of the year. There will be good food, conversation, comradery, a Gift Exchange, and award presentations to honor a few of our hardworking volunteers.

Menu for the 8 December 2024 Holiday Party

Princess Soup

Garden Salad

Roasted Sirloin with Gravy

or

Grilled Salmon with Cranberry Chutny

or

Vegetarian

(Note: Coordination with Chef TBD)

Roasted Winter Vegetables

Mashed Potatoes

Dessert

Cream de mint Parfait

Dinner Rolls with Butter

Water - Iced Tea - Coffee

Reservation Form - MOAA Holiday Luncheon 8 December 2024

Chartiers Country Club, 601 Baldwin Rd, Pittsburgh 15205

Social hour with a cash bar beginning at 1 PM. A seated lunch to be served promptly at 2 PM followed by the program. Adjournment by 4 PM when the club closes.

NAME OF
MEMBER: _____ RANK: _____

Choice of: Roasted Sirloin _____ or Grilled Salmon _____ or
Vegetarian _____

GUEST: _____

Choice of: Roasted Sirloin _____ or Grilled Salmon _____ or
Vegetarian _____

PRICE: **\$50** per person

RSVP to Pat (412-704-5070) or by email to (julio.moaa@comcast.net) by Thursday, December 5, 2024, with entree selection for each attendee.

If mailing your check, please mail it no later than Friday, November 29, to allow enough time for Pat to receive it by December 5, 2024.

Make checks payable to **MOAA Pittsburgh Chapter** and return to:

**Pat Seda-Rivera
602 Cloverview Circle
Pittsburgh, PA 15239-2370**



HOLIDAY PARTY ACTIVITIES:

Gift Exchange - You must bring a wrapped gift in order to participate in the Gift Exchange. Upon arrival, please show Pat Seda-Rivera that you brought a gift, and she will issue you a ticket. Once you have your ticket, please place your gift on the designated gift table. A raffle will be held after dinner among those that brought gifts and have a ticket.

50/50 Raffle - A different color ticket will be issued to those participating in the 50/50 Raffle. The number will be called at the end of the Holiday Party.

Sing-A-Long - Our ROTC Liaison, LTC (RET) Chuck Chasler, will be passing out Holiday Song Sheets for participation in a caroling sing-a-long.

Awards Presentations - There will be one MOAA National and three PACOC Leadership Awards presented to our members. This ceremony will take place before lunch is served.



Chapter Liability Insurance and 501(c) 3 Status

As noted previously, the Chapter acquired Liability Insurance from USAA in June 2024. Once the Chapter's 501(c) 3 status is approved by the IRS, the Chapter will have in place the requirements to apply for grants from MOAA National and acquire tax-free purchases. Having the ability to apply for these grants will assist our Chapter to do more for our veterans in the community and hopefully help to grow our Chapter's community outreach efforts which corresponds with our motto of **"NEVER STOP SERVING"**.

See more details on the Community Outreach Program Link below.

[2024 Community Outreach Grant Program - MOAA Charities \(smapply.us\)](https://smapply.us)

Military Officers Association of America

**THE 2024 ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE MEMBERSHIP**

Friday, Oct. 25 | Alexandria, Va.

PHOTO: WIKI/SHATEVA/GETTY IMAGES



Admiral James Stavridis (Ret), former Supreme Allied Commander of NATO presenting LTC Pentecost with a signed copy of his latest book, *The Restless Wave*.

LTC (RET) Bill Pentecost volunteered to represent our chapter at MOAA's National Meeting held on October 25, 2024 in Alexandria, VA.

Bill met with the new Chairman, General Thomas Waldhauser, USMC (Ret), the General Counsel, Maj. Gen. Joseph Lynch, USAF (Ret), our Pennsylvania Council (PACOC) Secretary, Colonel Nancy Anderson, USMC (Ret.) and the meeting's guest speaker, Admiral James Stavridis (Ret), former Supreme Allied Commander of NATO.

Bill also discovered that there is a new Virtual JAG Chapter where JAG Officers can serve with the virtual chapter and simultaneously with their home chapter. He spoke with and gathered information from the national JAG and virtual membership coordinators.

[MOAA - MOAA Welcomes New Judge Advocate Virtual Chapter](#)



VA U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System

INFORMATION FROM THE VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System's VSO roundtable discussion on **Thursday, Oct. 24, at 2 p.m.**

VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System

Leadership Update
October 2024

Innovation Presentation

- VAPHS is one of 34 VA medical centers that are a part of the VHA Innovators Network.
- VHA will hold its 10th annual Shark Tank competition this month

Flu Shots and COVID Vaccines

- Influenza Vaccine – AKA “Flu Shot”
- Available on 9/23 at all VAPHS locations
- Recommended every year
- High doses for those 65 and older
- COVID-19 Vaccine
- New booster recently approved
- Decrease risk of severe diseases, hospitalization & death
- Recommended for: everyone ages 6 months & older
- Most patients – 2 months after last dose
- RSV Vaccine
- Recommended for:
 - § Adults 75 years of age and older
 - § Adults 60-74 years of age and older who are at increased risk of severe RSV disease
 - § Scheduled in primary care

Wheelchair repairs

- VA has partnered with Scootaround, a personal transportation solutions company, to provide repairs to VA-issued custom wheelchairs, powerchairs, or scooters.
- Veterans can now submit repair request by phone or online to Scootaround for fast and efficient repairs.
- Scootaround will reach out and arrange a time and location to complete the repair once the repair request is submitted.

My HealtheVet login update

- In 2025, Veterans will have 2 secure sign-in account options for all VA websites and apps: Login.gov and ID.me.
- The My HealtheVet- specific logon will not be used after January 31, 2025.
- The DS logon option will not be used after September 30, 2025.
- Veterans will still be able to use the My HealtheVet health portal – they will just need to sign in to it with a Login.gov or ID.me account.
- Learn more or get assistance with the transition by calling the My HealtheVet office at 412-360-6838.

Upcoming Events

- **Midweek Encouragement Prayer Service:** Every Wed. (except for federal holidays) H.J. Heinz III Campus Chapel | Contact Chaplain John Davidson at 412-822-1591
- **Limb Loss Group and Forum:** H.J. Heinz III Campus, Building 71 lobby| Nov. 20, 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.|
- **Virtual Health Teaching Kitchen:** Nov. 20 1 p.m. | 412-822-1251
- **Veterans Town Hall:** H. J. Heinz III Campus, Learning eXchange | Dec. 9, 2 p.m.

VBA Pittsburgh Regional Office

Meet with a Benefits Counselor

<https://va.my.site.com/VAVERA/s/>

Federal Benefits Booklet

https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book/2023_Federal_Benefits_for_Veterans_DePENDENTS_and_Survivors.pdf

Stay Connected

- Open for in-person or virtual service Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Call: 412-395-6160 or email for virtual appointment: PCU.VBAPIT@VA.GOV.
- <https://va.my.site.com/VAVERA/s/>
- <https://www.benefits.va.gov/pittsburgh/>

VA Press Room

• <https://news.va.gov/press-room/va-proposes-new-legal-services-grant-program-to-help-veterans-upgrade-their-military-discharge-status-and-increase-access-to-earned-benefits/>

How to Protect Your Benefits

- www.vsafe.gov
- File a claim for benefits: <https://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/Applying.asp>
- VA Regional Offices: <https://www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/offices.asp>
- Get help from a VA accredited attorney, claims agent or VSO representative: <https://www.va.gov/get-help-from-accredited-representative/>
- Verify accreditation using the Accreditation Tool : <https://www.va.gov/get-help-from-accredited-representative/find-rep/>
- VA accredited representatives FAQs: <https://www.va.gov/resources/va-accredited-representative-faqs/>
- VA representation Form: <https://www.va.gov/find-forms/about-form-21-22/>
- Learn more about the Direct Payment Fee Agreement: [direct-payment fee agreement](https://www.va.gov/direct-payment-fee-agreement/)
- VA Decision Reviews and Appeals: <https://www.va.gov/decision-reviews/>
- Report Claims Predators: www.vsafe.gov or call 833-38V-SAFE.

[For Members interested in attending the December 2024 VAPHS' Town Hall Meeting, please see below.](#)

Join us for our next Veterans Town Hall on Monday, December 9, at 2 p.m. Get important VA updates and hear from VAPHS leadership and representatives from VBA's Pittsburgh Regional Office and the National Cemetery of the Alleghenies. Our town hall is part of our ongoing effort to hear from you and use your feedback to improve VA care.

Attend in person, online or by phone:

- In person in the Learning Exchange in bldg. 71 on the H.J. Heinz III campus, 1010 Delafield Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15215.
- Join online via Webex
 - Webinar number 2826 924 5247
 - Webinar password iZfBnkh2@33
- Join via phone:
 - Call 1-404-397-1596 and enter access code 282 692 45247.
 - Phone participants must press *3 to raise their hand to ask a question.

To find out if you are eligible to enroll in VA health care:

- Call VA toll-free at 877-222-8387, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
-
- Apply at www.va.gov/health-care/how-to-apply
-

- Download the mailable [VA Form 10-10EZ](#). Send the completed 10-10EZ with a copy of your DD214 to VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System, Attn: Patient Registration, University Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15240
-

MOAAA ADVOCACY - A Top Priority for Change!

Key MOAA Advocacy priorities:

- **Junior Enlisted Pay Raise:**

Competitive pay remains critical to the health of the all-volunteer force, and both the House and the Senate seek to address this issue in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The House NDAA calls for servicemembers E-1 to E-4 to receive a 15% pay raise beyond the 4.5% earmarked for all in uniform. While the Senate version calls for an additional 1% increase for servicemembers E-1 to E-3 (beyond the 4.5% raise).

- **Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) Restoration:**

Access to quality housing and promoting financial wellness are important to sustaining the all-volunteer force. Restoring BAH addresses both issues. The House version of the NDAA would restore BAH to 100% for FY 2025 – a move toward MOAA's goal of full repeal of the BAH reduction, but not a permanent fix. Unfortunately, the Senate version does not address the issue.

- **Major Richard Star Act:**

Tens of thousands of combat-injured veterans lose a dollar of earned DoD retirement pay for every dollar of VA disability compensation. For three years in a row, over two-thirds of Congress has supported the Star Act, which would end that unjust financial offset. Despite this vast support, neither version of the NDAA includes the bill. However, it is critical lawmakers continue to hear about this important issue, especially as we approach the start of the 119th Congress.

It is time to **"TAKE ACTION NOW!"**

Follow the Links below to take action to write your Representatives.

[MOAA | Legislative Action Center \(quorum.us\)](#)

[MOAA - Meet MOAA's New Legislative Action Center](#)

MOAA QUICK LINKS CORNER

Why join MOAA-

[MOAA - Why Join MOAA](#)

Policy and Procedure Guidelines-

[MOAA - Council and Chapters Policy and Procedure Guide Details](#)

Ask the EXPERTS! (new)-

[MOAA - AskTheExperts](#)

Surviving Spouses-

[MOAA - I Am a Surviving Spouse](#)

MOAA Legislative Action Center

[MOAA | Legislative Action Center \(quorum.us\)](#)

MOAA ROTC Program

[MOAA - MOAA ROTC/JROTC Awards Program](#)

MOAA Council and Chapter Dates to Know-

[MOAA - Council and Chapter Dates to Know](#)

The MOAA Newsletter-

[MOAA - The MOAA Newsletter](#)

Events Calendar-

[MOAA - MOAA Events](#)

MOAA Council and Chapter Awards-

[MOAA - Council and Chapter Awards](#)

MOAA Scholarship Fund-

[MOAA - Scholarship Fund](#)

MOAA Publications-

[MOAA - MOAA Publications](#)

PA Council of Chapters-

[Who We Are - PA Council of Chapters \(pa-coc.org\)](#)

Southwestern Veteran's Center-

[Southwestern Veterans' Center \(pa.gov\)](#)

Soldiers and Sailors-

[Soldiers' and Sailors' \(pa.gov\)](#)

MOAA PITTSBURGH EVENT TRACKER

DATE	FUNCTION	LOCATION	ATTENDEES/LANE	NOTES/AAR
04-14-2024	CHAPTER LUNCHEON	CHARTIERS COUNTRY CLUB	ALL /Pat Seda-Rivera	
04-19-2024	AFROTC	Pittsburgh University	Chad Rittle/Chuck Chasler	
04-25-2024	AROTC	Slippery Rock University	Chuck Chasler/Richard DiGiacomo	Complete / Cadet Sager and others
04-26-2024	JUNIOR ROTC/ MILITARY BALL	Butler HS (Tornado Bn)	Chuck Chasler/LTC Warren Hull	Complete -TY from MAJ Coleman
05-03-2024	JUNIOR AFROTC	North Allegheny HS	Dan Kysela/ Chuck Chasler	Complete /Cadet Sethia an others
05-04-2024	JUNIOR ROTC	Connellsville HS	Chuck Chasler/CW2 Joseph Cordier	Completed/JROTC Military Ball
06-02-2024	CHAPTER LUNCHEON	CHARTIERS COUNTRY CLUB	ALL /Pat Seda-Rivera	SPEAKER - Dave Defide, Sr. Customer Prog. Mgr. at Duquesne Light Company. Agenda passed vote 100%
06-29-2024	VA BINGO	VA Facility University Drive	Pat Seda-Rivera	
09-4/7-2024	VETCON	Wyndham Pittsburgh, PA	Chapter Volunteers (TBD)	Table - Representing MOAA National and Pennsylvania. RECRUITES: (1) Chapter/ (3) PA/(1) Kentucky
09-08-2024	CHAPTER LUNCHEON	CHARTIERS COUNTRY CLUB	ALL /Pat Seda-Rivera	SPEAKER - LT Eyobe Mills, CGMSU Pittsburgh. Agenda passed vote 100%
10-25-2024	MOAA NATIONAL MEETING	Alexandria, VA	LTC (RET) Bill Pentecost	Coordination with National Leaders on Advocacy and JAG Virtual Chapter
12-08-2024	CHAPTER HOLIDAY PARTY	CHARTIERS COUNTRY CLUB	ALL /Pat Seda-Rivera	Gift Exchange, 50/50 Raffle and Caroling
04-25/26-2024	USAR RET. APPRE. DAY	316th RSC, Coraopolis, PA	Chapter Volunteers (TBD)	Table - Recruiting and Providing Information

My wife, Kathy, and I wish you and yours a Happy Thanksgiving. We hope to see everyone at the Holiday Party!

Jon P. Comis
 President
 MOAA Pittsburgh Chapter
"NEVER STOP SERVING"



Holiday Party 8 December 2024, the first Sunday after Thanksgiving Weekend

The 2025 Luncheon are currently scheduled as follows:

27 APRIL 2025/ Initial Meeting

13 JULY 2025

07 SEPTEMBER 2025

12 OCTOBER 2025 /Annual Meeting

07 DECEMBER 2025

Community Service Activities will be added as they are planned. Ideas/suggestions welcome. Volunteers welcome.

MOAA Pittsburgh | 601 Baldwin Road | Pittsburgh, PA 15205 US

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