

Aiken Chapter MOAA

The Courier September 2026



Board Members

PRESIDENT: Col Mike Gossett (540-842-0438)

1st VICE PRESIDENT: COL Lynda Mann (703) 326-7603

2nd VICE PRESIDENT: TBA

TREASURER: Maj Dan Meischen (713) 857-5710

SECRETARY: Capt Brent Caldwell (803) 226-0546

MEETING COORDINATOR: Capt Barbara McKnight (315-723-6185)

CHAPLAIN: CPT Edward Schneider
(703) 851-4918

LEGISLATIVE LIAISON: COL David Lobb (803) 270-8690

JROTC LIAISON: CPT Greg Burkes (803) 645-0693

SURVIVING SPOUSE LIAISON: Sharon Smoot
(803) 642-1292

COURIER EDITOR: CPT Jeanne Townes (803) 439-3303

Mailing Address: 262 Eastgate Dr #239 Aiken, SC 29803

*****All newsletters are sent by email.**

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Col Mike Gossett, USAF

Happy Birthday, America! From bustling cities to quaint towns, we celebrated 250 years of independence with great enthusiasm. The celebrations included parades, spectacular fireworks, historical reenactments, and lively cultural festivals. As proud Americans, we came together to honor our heritage and envision a future filled with hope and unity.

It is hard to believe September is almost here. I remember the eagerness and anticipation as a student...a new shirt, new school supplies, and seeing friends after summer break! That same sense of anticipation is felt today as we prepare to resume our meetings. I look forward to seeing each of you and am eager to see what lies ahead for our Aiken Chapter MOAA.

Our summer break began with an "exceptional bang!" On June 12, National Women Veterans Day, our chapter sponsored a well-attended "Sisters in Service Luncheon." Organized and chaired by Lynda Mann, the luncheon honored women veterans, both those in attendance and those in the broader community. Retired Air Force General Jackie Van Ovost shared her invaluable experiences and insights, making the event even more special. Be sure to mark your calendars—this will become an annual event, with next year's date set for June 11, 2027. In June, we also welcomed new members at a New Member Wine and Cheese Reception.

Our Chapter's strength is clear, thanks to a dedicated Board and members who are united in their commitment to supporting our military, their families, JROTC students, and the broader community. We do this by staying informed and engaged, sharing MOAA's mission with others, and identifying our passions for volunteering. I encourage each of you to join us for our first "State of the Chapter Meeting" on Monday, October 12, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the historic Aiken County Museum (Banksia). This meeting will provide an opportunity to learn more about what we do and the many ways we can serve. If possible, I encourage you to attend this informative meeting.

I feel blessed to be part of a community that honors the service and sacrifices of our military and their families. Some recent highlights (to name a few) include the Aiken County Memorial Day parades, the "Our Community Salutes" event, the Hometown Hero banners, and the Sisters in Service luncheon. Looking ahead, we have several upcoming events: the Battle at the Alley on September 5, the Veterans Day Parade on November 7, the Veterans Day Ceremony on November 11, and Wreaths Across America on December 19.

It is a privilege to work and serve alongside you. I hope to see you all at our next Chapter meeting on September 2.

NEVER STOP SERVING,

Mike Gosset, Col, USAF (Ret)

Aiken Chapter MOAA President



September Meeting Dinner Menu

September 2, 2026

Newberry Hall

Happy Half-Hour 1800

Meeting and Dinner 1830

Beef Taco Bar

Preset dessert

Preset Water and Tea

Coffee Station

Cash Bar

Dress Code: Country Club Casual

\$30/person Checks preferred made out to Aiken Chapter MOAA

Deadline for Reservation: August 28, 2026

RSVP: MOAAAIKEN@gmail.com (803) 315-726-1853

Reservation via Cheddar:

<https://aiken-chapter-September2-dinner-meeting.cheddarup.com>



Aiken Chapter Meetings

2026-2027

Mark your calendars :

September 2, 2026 – Newberry Hall 1800 hours

October 7, 2026 – Newberry Hall 1800 hours

October 12, 2026 – Aiken Historical Museum – State of the Chapter – 1000 hours -1200 hours

January 6, 2027 – Newberry Hall 1800 hours

February 3, 2027 - Newberry Hall 1800 hours

March 3, 2027 - Newberry Hall 1800 hours

March 31, 2027 *** Master's conflicts with April dates - Newberry Hall 1800 hours

May 5, 2027 – JROTC Recognition -Newberry Hall 1800 hours

June 2, 2027 - Newberry Hall 1800 hours



Upcoming Veteran Events

 **Aiken County Veterans Council**
Presents

BATTLE AT THE ALLEY

----- Featured Bands -----
The Experiment & the I-20 Horns
Band of Ages
Midland Music Revival
Jimmy Randell & the Steel Pines
Seth Logan
Zachary Scott Kline

Saturday, Sept. 5th 2026 6-10 pm
The Alley, Downtown Aiken

Proud Sponsors:
Mr Tattoo, 56 Brave Patriot Apparel, Pizza Joint

★ HONORING ALL WHO SERVED ★

AIKEN

South Carolina

VETERANS DAY PARADE

HONOR ★ RESPECT ★ REMEMBER

A STRONG PAST.
A PROUD COMMUNITY.
A Grateful Nation.

★ ★ ★

★ SATURDAY ★
NOVEMBER 7, 2026
 DOWNTOWN AIKEN, SOUTH CAROLINA

★ PARADE BEGINS AT 11:00 AM ★

WE HONOR OUR VETERANS.
WE CELEBRATE OUR FREEDOM.
★ *Thank You for Your Service!* ★

PRESENTED BY
AIKEN COUNTY VETERANS COUNCIL
 AIKENCOUNTYVETERANS.ORG

★ ★ ★



THE WELLNESS COLLECTIVE

Invites Veterans & Military Personnel to
Join Us for Food & Fellowship

Offered On the 3rd Friday of Each Month at
 The New Ellenton Community Center
 212 Pine Hill Ave, New Ellenton, SC 29809

11:30 AM – Welcome & Coffee
12:00 PM – Lunch Served
12:00–2:00 PM – Fellowship & Resources

All meals and resources are provided at no cost
 Offered in partnership with



For More Information
 Contact Dawn Billeci (516) 884-6935

Chapter Committee Spotlight_Y



Charity Committee

Yes, we have a Charity Committee that is hard at work making recommendations to our chapter leaders. The contributions we, as members, make to this fund supports LOCAL VETERAN AND MILITARY organizations. Here's a **glimpse** of **some** of the charities our chapter has supported 2024 and 2025. Please note this is not all inclusive of charities supported in the past.

Wreaths Across America 2024, 2025

USO Columbia Airport 2024. 2025

Fisher House 2024, 2025

Our Community Salutes 2024, 2025

Wounded warriors Golf Tournament 2024, 2025

Memorial to MOAA for deceased members – ongoing

JROTC Recognition Ceremony

WAYS TO MAKE DONATIONS :

Birthday celebration - \$1 per year or any amount is welcome.

Return of 50/50 winnings

JROTC Recognition Sponsor

Memorial of a loved one.

Honor a living family/friend

Just Because!

Thank You

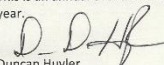
Lots of exciting activities happening as we finalized the 2025-2026 meeting year!

Thank you from Our Community Salutes. Photos to say thank you to our chapter leaders and committee members for the Sisters in service celebration.





OUR COMMUNITY SALUTES
MIDLANDS SOUTH CAROLINA
The First to Say Thank You!

Board of Directors Clinton Romesha – <i>Medal of Honor Recipient</i> Stephanie Belkirch Linda Caldwell Dale Haas SSG Clifford Hancock, SCANG Duncan Huyler Sara Lombardi CWO4 Robert Murphy, USMC (Ret.) Sondra Thomas	May 14, 2026 Military Officers Association of America Aiken Chapter 262 Eastgate Dr #239 Aiken, SC 29803 MOAA- Thank you for your kind donation of \$800 to Our Community Salutes – Midlands South Carolina. Your support makes it possible for us, a community, to be "The First to Say Thank You" to our fine young men and women entering the military directly from high school. Our organization is funded entirely by charitable contributions and thanks to the generous donations from people like you, we're able to honor the new enlistees for their decision to serve and to join the one-half percent of high school graduates who enter the military each year. This is an annual event and any funds not used this year will be carried over to the next year.  Duncan Huyler Treasurer P.S. Our Community Salutes – is a 501c3 organization and this letter will serve as your receipt for income tax purposes. FEIN# 84-4375921 Our Community Salutes-Midlands South Carolina is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Post Office Box 1124 • Aiken, South Carolina, 29802 www.ocs-midlandssouthcarolina.org
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... HOW TO ACCESS THE AIKEN CHAPTER'S WEBSITE?

To access the website you must go through the SC Council's website (www.moaasc/aiken) BUT you can click on the link

here: [Aiken Chapter](#)

... HOW TO OPEN IMBEDDED LINKS IN OUR COURIER?

Many of us are challenged by many of today's technological advances. We incorporate links into our documents to make it easier to access information. By placing the cursor just under the link and pressing the ctrl button on your keyboard a hand (with a finger pointing to the link) will appear. Then just one click and you are at the imbedded website.

CHEDDAR UP

The Cheddar Up! online payment plan system is a service of MOAA national to help chapters and councils with dues payment, meeting registrations, and other financial functions. This online system simplifies membership management for chapters and councils by offering secure payment processing and customizable member experiences. It streamlines record-keeping and reduces administrative burdens while enhancing the MOAA brand.

After extensive preparation and testing, the Aiken Chapter has implemented the Cheddar Up! Program this month. Goals of Cheddar Up! are:

Make it easier to join a chapter, renew membership, or make financial contributions

Simplify tracking payments, collection of information from members, and record keeping

Cheddar Up! was implemented by MOAA national and any associated fees are paid by them. There is no cost to any chapter or council.

We will customize the program to suit our needs:

Make reservations for dinner meetings AND pay in advance for meals

Pay annual membership dues

Make a charitable donation, such as a JROTC banquet table

Send event reminders

Make payments with credit card or e-checks

Provide electronic receipts for payments

For the dues page scan the QR Code below or click on this link web link or you may go to our URL is <https://aiken-chapter-dues.cheddarup.com>

If you are unable or choose not to use the Cheddar Up! system to register for dinners or pay your dues, you can still make a dinner reservation with the Meeting Coordinator and pay at the door. For membership dues, you can pay by paper check mailed to the chapter mail box (address below).

Our mailing address:

Aiken Chapter- MOAA

262 Eastgate Drive #239

Aiken, SC 29803



LOCAL VETERAN ASSISTANCE

Aiken County Veterans Affairs: Major Dwight Bradham is the Aiken County Veterans Affairs Officer. He and his team can be reached at (803) 642- 1545 or dbradham@aikencountysc.gov by email. If you have any veteran issues, please contact the office.

US Congressman Joe Wilson - Veteran Assistance: The local number to Congressman Wilson's Aiken County office is (803) 642-6416. His State Senate office also regularly assists veterans with many issues. The number is (803) 212- 6000.

Veterans Legal Clinic: The USC School of Law operates the Veterans Legal Clinic. Veterans can inquire about help with a legal problem by calling (803) 777- 2278



Reminder From MOAA



Reminders from national MOAA to remain non-partisan in everything concerning MOAA

Partisan Political Activities: As organizations exempt from federal taxation under Sec. 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code, MOAA and its affiliates must take care to avoid engaging in partisan political activities. Under IRS rules, we are prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.

Divisive Social Issues: We are all aware of the divisive nature of the debate over today's leading social issues – protesting during the national anthem at sporting events, racial justice, public protests, and the conduct of law enforcement officers. These are issues over which many Americans have deeply held, but differing, personal beliefs. This is also true within the military community among the ranks of active duty and retired officers and within MOAA itself.

MOAA leaders have an obligation to keep this in mind when communicating on behalf of MOAA or its affiliates. Suggesting that MOAA only supports one side of a deeply divisive issue sends a message to those with a different belief that MOAA is not for them. See the complete statements from MOAA: (click this link) [MOAA](#)
MOAA Guidance on Partisan Political Activities

More from MOAA National



NATIONAL MOAA's LEGISLATIVE MISSION: MOAA's greatest mission is to improve the lives of those who serve and their families, which is achieved largely through the tireless advocacy efforts taking place in our nation's capital. For more than 90 years, MOAA has supported legislation that benefits the uniformed services community and has remained equally vigilant when fighting to stop legislation that threatens our livelihood. The larger our numbers, the greater our voice. Legislative Accomplishments

NATIONAL MOAA's ADVOCACY IN ACTION: Please visit the national MOAA website (www.moaa.org) to learn more about MOAA's Key Advocacy Issues. Click on the Advocacy tab at the top of the homepage. Learn about such topics as Legislative Action Center and Accomplishments; Health Care; Family Issues; Guard and Reserve Issues; COLA; State Report Card; Advocacy News and Advocacy Leaders. The webpages have contact information and forms to help you reach out to your Congressional Representatives to advocate for these and other important issues.

Take a look at what is posted on the MOAA advocacy page this month: **Take Care of America's Veterans Act in the Spotlight at Recent Conference (August 18,2026)**
Click on [Advocacy](#)

KEEP CONNECTED: ensure you are signed up for The MOAA Newsletter and register as an advocate at the **Legislative Action Center**. Here's the link.

[MOAA: Legislative Advocacy Center](#)



IMPORTANT LINKS

Listed here are several links to contacts that members and friends of Aiken Chapter may find informative or helpful.

MOAA National: [MOAA](#)

Aiken Chapter MOAA: [Aiken](#)

****Please Note an application in PDF to Aiken Chapter is on the Home Page and you can click here [PDF](#)

Department of Veteran Affairs: [DVA#](#)

Aiken County Veterans Affairs: [ACVet](#)

Aiken County Veteran's Council: [ACVC](#)

Lindsay Graham's Website: **Graham** – currently unavailable to access

Joe Wilson's Website: [Wilson](#)

Tim Scott's Website: [Scott](#)

