

*Aiken Chapter MOAA*

*The Courier February 2026*



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**CHAPLAIN:** CPT Edward Schneider  
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**JROTC LIAISON:** COL Lynda Mann (703) 326-7603

**SURVIVING SPOUSE LIAISON:** Sharon Smoot  
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**\*\*\*All newsletters are sent by email.**

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*PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:  
CWO2 Jerry George*

As we move into the new year, I particularly want to thank David Lobb, our Government Liaison, for his diligent work regarding the situation of Eisenhower Army Medical Center on Fort Gordon. David has kept us informed and offered suggestions on how each of us can help to keep the Eisenhower Army Medical Center operating as a viable part of health care for active duty, disabled, retired, and family members in the uniformed services.

Some of the other concerns from the Board of Directors and myself for the new year. Some of the topics of our meetings include:

- Adding Greg Burke as the ROTC Liaison working to further develop our relations with JROTC in the area high schools and ROTC program at University of South Carolina at Aiken,
- Developing a scholarship program assisting deserving JROTC Cadets to further their education and participation in ROTC programs,
- Enhanced Fundraising efforts to support our Charitable Donations and support the Scholarship Program,
- Focusing on Recruiting and Retaining members in the Aiken Chapter – MOAA,
- Accomplish a review of our current Bylaws with potential revisions as needed to keep the Aiken Chapter dedicated to the MOAA mission.

I and other members of the Board of Directors are interested in suggestions from the membership – and ideas to further our development!

# SPOTLIGHT ON

CDR Melinda Adams, USN (ret)

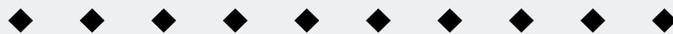
CDR Melinda (Mindi) Adams, USN (ret) and her partner Jim Peters joined our chapter recently. Below is a short “Bio” she submitted at my request. Please seek out Mindi and Jim as “new faces” in our MOAA family and welcome them to our chapter.

From Mindi:

My home is the East Coast of the United States as my father served in the U. S. Navy.

I earned a Bachelor’s degree in Education from Florida State University in 1976. Upon graduation, I joined the U. S. Navy in 1977 and served for 20 years, retiring with the rank of Commander with a Surface Warfare designation. While on active duty I earned my Master’s degree in Education, Training and Management from Old Dominion University. Upon retiring from the active-duty career, both my late husband and I worked for the Savannah River Site. Starting in Reactor Restart in the training organization, I was later assigned to Operations and then to Security. After retirement from SRS, I began volunteering with the local affiliate of Habitat for Humanity on the construction crews and in the ReStore. Jim Peters, my partner, and I spend much of our time with the Habitat work and with traveling.

There are four step-children from my marriage with many grandchildren and great grandchildren, with whom I stay in frequent contact.





**LET'S PUT OUT THE WELCOME MAT!**

**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS** who have joined in the past year:

**Malcolm Phillips, CPT, USA and spouse, Kitty: 01/2025**

**Glenn Shirley, LTC, USA and spouse, Jennifer: 01/2025**

**Michael Newland, MAJ, USA and spouse, Katherine: 04/2025**

**John Lindsay, LTC, USA 04/2025**

**Dominique Corbett, E8, USAF 06/2025**

**Charles Hansen, LT, USN and spouse, Lyddie: 08/2025**

**Mindi Adams, CDR, USN and partner, Jim Peters: 12/2025**

**Stephen Boren, CPT, USA and spouse, Louise: 01/2026**

**Yianne Ktirzas, CDR, USN and spouse, Jessica, CPO, USN 2/2026**

**Michael Spillane, LTC, USA and spouse, Karin 02/2026**



*March 4, 2026*

*Newberry Hall*

*Happy Half-Hour 1800*

*Meeting and Dinner 1830*

*Menu*

*Preset salad*

*Grilled Chicken w/ Leeks topped w/ Balsamic Reduction*

*Seasonal vegetables*

*Chef Choice dessert*

*Preset Water and Tea*

*Coffee Station*

*Cash Bar*

*Dress Code: Business Casual*

*Seating: Assigned.*

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

*Deadline for Reservation: Thursday, February 26, 2026*

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

*leave a message*



# Aiken Chapter Meetings

**March Meeting:** March 4, 2026 Speaker: Michael Carra will present an intriguing update on Amelia Earhart, his ongoing search for her, her navigator Fred Noonan, and her airplane.

## WANT TO ATTEND THE MEETING?

If you want to attend the monthly meeting but can not drive at night, please contact the meeting coordinator, the 2nd VP (membership chair) or any member of the Board and they will assist in providing transportation. Contact information is on Page 1.



**April Meeting:** April 1, 2026 Our guest speaker will be South Carolina's Attorney General Alan Wilson

**May Meeting:** May 6, 2026\*\*\* JROTC Awards Banquet

**June Meeting:** June 3, 2026 \*\*\* Final meeting before summer break



JULY AND AUGUST: SUMMER FUN  
TRAVEL FUN R and R



ANNUAL AIKEN CHAPTER MOAA  
MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

**DURING THIS TIME OF MEMBERSHIP DRIVE, here's a few reasons to renew membership or sponsor new members to the Aiken Chapter**

Between 2024 and 2025 Aiken Chapter grew by 19 members

Monthly Meetings offerings:

- Opportunity to foster fraternal relationships
- interesting speakers/entertainment
- good food

Provide support or services for uniformed members, families and surviving spouses (\*\*list is not inclusive)

- Christmas Angels and Operation St. Nick
- Charity Fund support: Wreaths Across America and several others
- Fisher House meals
- Academy interviews
- JROTC Awards Night
- Gold Bar Ceremony (USCA)

Become aware/involved in legislative objectives and issues affecting local, state and national veterans and military

- Monthly Newsletter The Courier
- Invited speakers bring members up to date on critical issues
- Network of connected members bringing forth critical information and need for advocacy

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION Click here: [PDF](#)**



Annual dues \$25.00 to Aiken Chapter. Bring your check to the next meeting **or** mail to :

**Aiken Chapter MOAA 262 East Gate Drive #239 Aiken, SC 29803**

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT



## **WHO IS MOAA**



**MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOC. OF  
AMERICA**

**JOIN YOUR LOCAL AIKEN  
CHAPTER TODAY**

**ITS ROLE AS A LEADING LOBBYIST ON  
CAPITOL HILL AND A COMMITTED  
ADVOCATE FOR ALL RANKS OF THE  
MILITARY.**

**MOAA HAS BEEN NAMED TO THE  
HILL'S ANNUAL "TOP LOBBYISTS"  
LIST FOR THE 19TH CONSECUTIVE  
YEAR**

**MOAA WAS RECOGNIZED IN THE  
"GRASSROOTS" CATEGORY  
ALONGSIDE ORGANIZATIONS SUCH  
AS THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN  
WARS, THE AMERICAN CANCER  
ACTION NETWORK, THE BOYS &  
GIRLS CLUBS OF AMERICA, AND  
OTHERS.**

**WANT MORE INFORMATION  
MOAAAIKEN@GMAIL.COM**

# SAVE THE DATE

SAVE THE DATE - June 12, 2026, Aiken's Inaugural Sisters in Service Luncheon - Newberry Hall, Honoring National Women Veteran's Day

Sisters in Service is launching in Aiken! This informal group of active and former military women traces its beginnings to the semiannual gatherings of Women's Army Corps (WAC) officers during the Second World War. Over the years the gatherings have expanded to include women veterans of all ranks, all services, and all eras, as well as their friends.

Aiken's Inaugural Sisters in Service Luncheon will have a speaker with significant personal experience in the military, who will sharing experiences, insights and inspiration. Be sure to mark your calendars and watch for more details!



## JROTC AWARDS DINNER

On May 6, 2026 MOAA will again honor our local outstanding Junior ROTC Cadets at our Annual JROTC Awards Banquet. This years' event has been streamlined, and will be conducting more like a military awards ceremony (some of these cadets have a 6 am PT formation this next morning!) Table sponsorships are now available, so bring your check for \$100 to the next MOAA meeting to help make this another great event! You can also mail your check to: Aiken MOAA 262 east gate Drive #239 Aiken, SC 29803



## JROTC SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Thanks to a generous donation to MOAA, we have created a Scholarship Committee to oversee our JROTC scholarship process. This committee will be involved in creating the selection process, adjudicating applications, and supporting the awards ceremony at our May JROTC Awards Dinner on May 6. If you would like to be a part of this great effort, please consider serving on this committee. You can also make a donation to support these young people as they move forward in their education and careers. Please contact Lynda Mann at [lyndamann@me.com](mailto:lyndamann@me.com) or 703-328-7603 to get involved.





# VETERAN EVENTS

MARCH 14 2026




9th Annual **SPRING THAW RIDE**  
Hosted by ALRSC Post 71

Registration  
8:30-10:00  
KSU 10:30



AMERICAN LEGION POST 71  
333 E. SPRING GROVE AVE  
NORTH AUGUSTA, SC

Scan the QR code to  
Pre-Register  
Early Bird Discount  
Before 2/15/26

DOOR PRIZES  
50/50 RAFFLE

\$20 for Rider  
\$10 for Passenger

LUNCH PROVIDED TO REGISTERED PARTICIPANTS AFTER THE RIDE

## 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

CALLING ALL FEMALE VETERANS!

SAVE THE DATE: JUNE 12, 2026

SISITERS IN SERVICE CELEBRATION

## Surviving Spouse Corner

*Getting to Know TAPS* :This article was recently shared on MOAA's news feed

Written by: Cheryl Toland

February 2026

The **Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)** directly supports all grieving the death of an active duty servicemember or veteran, regardless of the survivor's phase in their grief journey.

TAPS' team of experts, staff, compassionate volunteers, and peer-support network stand ready 24/7 to embrace bereaved families, friends, and battle buddies and connect them with immediate and lifelong tangible resources and emotional care. This includes case-work and education assistance, community-based connections, in-person events, a thriving online community, and the **National Military Survivor Helpline, (800) 959-TAPS (8277)**, which is answered by a knowledgeable, caring survivor care team member any-time, day or night.

TAPS was founded in the wake of a military tragedy following a 1992 C-12 crash in Alaska that took the lives of eight soldiers. Among the grieving family members was Bonnie Carroll, the widow of Brig. Gen. Tom Carroll, USA. After realizing that no support network was in place for the families of the fallen, Bonnie spent two years re-searching best practices while navigating her own grief alongside fellow survivors.

In 1994, TAPS officially opened its doors to military and veteran survivors. Today, Bonnie and the TAPS team have supported over 100,000 military and veteran survivors as they grieve, heal, and honor the life of their loved one.

Each day, an average of 26 new survivors connect with TAPS in search of support, resources, and community, such as:

- **Programs.** TAPS offers a wide variety of programming, seminars, online groups, and workshops. Learn more at [TAPS.org/programs](https://TAPS.org/programs) or tap the link here: [Programs](#)
- **Advocacy.** Efforts are dedicated to empowering survivors to use their voices to spark change while working closely with government leaders and lawmakers to advance policy and legislation that impacts life after unspeakable tragedy. Visit [TAPS.org/advocacy](https://TAPS.org/advocacy) or click this link: [Advocacy](#).
- **TAPS Magazine:** This quarterly publication, mailed to members/survivors, is a comprehensive resources for grieving families. Visit [TAPS.org/magazine](https://TAPS.org/magazine). Link: [Mag](#)
- **Facebook group.** In this group, a survivor can share and receive support from other survivors, staff, and professionals. Learn more at [Facebook.com/tapsorg](https://Facebook.com/tapsorg).



## ... HOW TO ACCESS THE AIKEN CHAPTER'S WEBSITE?

To access the website you must go through the SC Council's website ([www.moaasc/aiken](http://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.

# 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](mailto: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](http://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: *Caregivers Sustain Our Veterans. Ask Congress to Protect Their Futures* By: René Campos

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 .

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[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 to Aiken Chapter is on the Home Page as a PDF

Department of Veteran Affairs: [DVA](#)

Aiken County Veterans Affairs: [ACVet](#)

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

Lindsay Graham's Website: [Graham](#)

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

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



# FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

**Guided by Robert's Rules of Orders, *For the Good of the Order* allows members to speak freely about general announcements, observations or other things that may benefit the group. I am renaming this page to better reflect it's purpose. Feel free to submit any interesting articles, videos or photos to the editor at:**

**[jeannetownes@gmail.com](mailto:jeannetownes@gmail.com)**

David Lobb shared a link to an article from the United States Department of War news. I wonder how many of us knew the "Donut Dollies" were still active?

**Read on:**

**Vietnam-Era 'Donut Dolly' Continues Service With Red Cross in Poland**

Click here: [Donut Dollies](#)

**Editors note:** The **SPOTLIGHT** page each month is dedicated to featuring a member of our chapter. With our meetings being rather large, it is difficult to get to know every member. This page is another way for us to meet each other and network our common interests. if you would like to submit a "bio" and a photo to put a "face to the name" email [Jeannetownes@gmail.com](mailto:Jeannetownes@gmail.com)

HOPE YOU ENJOYED