

# The Beacon

March 2026



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

18 March 2026, 6:00 PM, General Membership Meeting, Coakley's Pub, Havre de Grace. Guest speaker, Asha George, DrPH, Executive Director, Bipartisan Commission on Biodefense

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I complained about the weather last February. I'm doing it again this year. The groundhog says we've got several more weeks of this. Come on Spring.

Some good news. Harford County Schools has hired the new Officer-in-Charge of the JROTC Program at Joppatowne High School. The unit now has 54 cadets enrolled from across Harford County. Susquehanna Chapter continues to provide both financial support and guidance, primarily through the efforts your Chapter Vice- President, Ivan Montanez.

On the legislative front, we are being asked to use the Legislative Action Center, available on the National MOAA website, to urge your Representative to support H.R.1732, which aims to prevent individuals from charging veterans unauthorized fees relating to claims for VA benefits. The Action Center is easy to use. All you need to do is register and follow the instructions.

Our January Membership meeting was a great success. The new APG Installation Commander, COL Troy Johnson, was our guest speaker and discussed the importance of APG to the Nation and to Harford County. Attendance was better than I've seen in several years. Please join us for our next meeting in March when our speaker will be Dr. Asha George, Executive Director of the Bipartisan Commission on Biodefense. Sounds interesting to me.

There looks to be several Harford County events being planned to help celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> birthday of the United States. As we get more information, we will let you know in the Beacon. Stay tuned. In the meantime, Stay Warm!

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Never Stop Serving,

Bob Beahm  
BG, USA (Ret)  
Chapter President

## LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Updates to the latest legislative affairs can be found on the national website noted above or at the Maryland Council of chapters web page at <https://www.mdmoaa.org/>

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

WE NEED YOU!

Did you know that your current Regular Annual Member status with The Susquehanna Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America is about to expire? Your support over the past year has been appreciated and we would hate to lose you. Over the past years the Chapter has been instrumental in fighting for your benefits as a service member in Maryland at the legislative, legal, and community levels and indirectly at the national level through MOAA. Susquehanna Chapter of MOAA Membership annual dues (except the first year) are needed to be received by the end of each calendar year.

Please visit our website to renew your membership today before it expires. To renew, follow these easy steps: 1. First login using the Member Login button at the top of the page. [www.moaasusquehanna.org](http://www.moaasusquehanna.org) 2. Once logged in, renew your membership by clicking the Membership or Join button at the top third of the page in the blue bar.

- For those who have forgotten their username and/or password, there is a "Forgot Login?" link on the Login page. *Note: If this is your first login, click "Request Login Information" to get your temporary password.*

Should you not want to renew online you can go to this link and download the membership renewal. Fill out the form, enclose a check for \$20.00 and mail to the address on the form.

National MOAA and local affiliate membership are two distinct memberships. You do not have to be an MOAA member to join the Susquehanna Chapter although membership in both the local and National organizations is encouraged. Submitting your dues payment through this online application is for Susquehanna chapter dues (joins/renewals) only. If you are attempting to join/renew for National MOAA, please go to [www.moaasusquehanna.org/join](http://www.moaasusquehanna.org/join).

If you need any assistance in accessing your account, please email us at [info@moaasusquehanna.org](mailto:info@moaasusquehanna.org)

Thank you very much for your continued support of the Susquehanna Chapter of The Military Officers Association of America.

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## PROJECT OPPORTUNITY

The Spring 2026 Project Opportunity Military Spouse Course is sponsored by Philip E and Carol R Ratcliffe Foundation. The Ratcliffe Foundation is based in Annapolis Maryland and operates as a charitable organization designed to encourage and reward entrepreneurship, create jobs and expand economic opportunities.

Project Opportunity will soon be starting their Spring 2026 Entrepreneurship Course for spouses of veterans, active duty, National Guard and Reserve personnel. The course is free, but applicants must first attend a mandatory orientation session on March 10, 2026 at the Converge Center, 1201 Technology Drive in Aberdeen. See the attached flyer for more details.

## NATIONAL NEWS

### MOAA-Backed Caregiver Bill Takes Major Step Forward in House

By: René Campos

February 17, 2026

Bipartisan legislation that would provide much-needed support to veteran caregivers took a significant step toward becoming law last week, advancing out of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee alongside other important MOAA-supported bills.

The progress of the Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement (3R) Act (H.R. 2148) highlights growing bipartisan commitment to strengthening support for caregivers, families, and some of the most severely wounded, injured, and disabled veterans in the country.

The legislation represents a major step forward for the caregivers who form the backbone of veterans' long-term care. By expanding access to education, easing reemployment barriers, and enhancing retirement planning resources, the bill helps ensure caregivers have the tools they need to maintain stability while supporting those who served.

Without targeted reforms like those in the 3R Act, caregivers could be left to rely on public assistance, shifting costs between government agencies rather than reducing them.

MOAA is grateful to every member and veteran advocate who contacted their lawmakers urging action on this critical measure. Your engagement made a real difference. Now that the bill has passed out of both the House

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and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees, it is more important than ever to keep the pressure on this priority. We encourage you to continue urging your elected officials to bring H.R. 2148 and S. 879 to the floor in both chambers and ensure it becomes law before the end of this year.

The legislation will be a key part of MOAA's upcoming testimony before a joint Feb. 24 hearing of the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees. That testimony will cover a range of veterans' priorities, such as protecting veterans from unaccredited "claim sharks" via the Governing Unaccredited Representatives Defrauding (GUARD) VA Benefits Act and ending the "wounded veteran tax" faced by tens of thousands of combat-injured veterans via the Major Richard Star Act.

## More Bills Move Forward

Along with the 3R act, House Veterans Affairs Committee members advanced other MOAA-supported legislation in their Feb. 12 hearing:

- The **Fisher House Availability Act** (H.R. 3726), which would allow TRICARE beneficiaries, including active duty families, to stay in VA Fisher Houses on a space-available basis. This change would expand access to lodging for families traveling for specialty or emergency care, reducing financial strain and ensuring they can remain close to their loved ones during treatment.
- The **Sharri Briley and Eric Edmundson Veterans Benefits Expansion Act** (H.R. 6047), which would increase the rate of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) to provide additional financial support for survivors and increase the rate of Special Monthly Compensation (SMC) to boost financial support for catastrophically service-connected disabled veterans. The bill is named for Sharri Briley, widow of an Army Black Hawk pilot killed in Somalia in 1993, and for Eric Edmundson, a former Army sergeant who suffered shrapnel wounds, a heart attack, and a brain injury after his Humvee struck a roadside bomb in Iraq in 2005.

## Your Advocacy Remains Essential

The hearing delivered meaningful momentum, but much work remains to get MOAA's legislative priorities across the finish line. MOAA urges all members and supporters to continue contacting their lawmakers to ensure these bills move swiftly to the floor and are enacted into law. Add your voice to our cause [via our Legislative Action Center](#).

MOAA will continue to monitor developments closely and keep you informed as these important measures progress.

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## The MOAA Education Assistance Program

Scholarships & Interest-Free Loans for College Students of Military Families

### Applications for the 2026-27 academic year are now OPEN!

Please identify which application you need to complete and use the appropriate button below to get started. First-time applicants must create an account and complete the New Student Application, while current recipients should log in to their existing account to complete the Renewal Application.

All applications are due by **March 1, 2026**. If you need help or have questions, please contact us for assistance at [edassist@moaa.org](mailto:edassist@moaa.org).

[NEW STUDENT APPLICATION](#)

[RENEWAL APPLICATION](#)

### Access the Application Portal

We use SurveyMonkey Apply to facilitate our application process. While applications are only open from Nov 1 to March 1, you can access your account at any time to check the status of your application

### PAWS4VETS FUNDRAISER

The MOAA Star Spangle Banner Chapter is holding a fundraiser for Paws4Vets. Paws4Vets mission per their website is:

***Our mission is educating and empowering people to utilize Assistance Dogs to transform their lives.***

*We provide highly trained, customized, and insured Assistance Dogs to people with disabilities. We also provide Facility Dogs who are trained, certified, placed, and insured with a specific individual to use within his/her profession and/or volunteer activities to provide educational instruction or therapeutic interventions, medical or environmental aid, methodologies to students with "special needs," or support to individuals with physical, neurological, psychological, or other medical related disabilities. We work to exceed industry training and utilization standards for all of our Assistance and Facility Dogs, and to increase the public's knowledge about the important roles these Dogs serve within society.*

Please see the flyer on page 12 for details if you would like to support their chapter's effort

### CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

President	BG Robert Beahm, USA (Ret)	<a href="mailto:info@moaasusquehanna.org">info@moaasusquehanna.org</a>
Vice President	COL Ivan Montanez; USA (Ret)	<a href="mailto:info@moaasusquehanna.org">info@moaasusquehanna.org</a>
Membership	COL Ted Newing, USA (Ret)	<a href="mailto:info@moaasusquehanna.org">info@moaasusquehanna.org</a>

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Programs	Keith Reagan USA LTC Reserve (Ret)	<a href="mailto:info@moaasusquehanna.org">info@moaasusquehanna.org</a>
Treasurer	MAJ Sidney (Bill) Beddow, USA (Ret)	<a href="mailto:info@moaasusquehanna.org">info@moaasusquehanna.org</a>
Secretary	Connie Richardson	<a href="mailto:info@moaasusquehanna.org">info@moaasusquehanna.org</a>
Legislative Affairs	LTC Bob Brown, USA (Ret)	<a href="mailto:info@moaasusquehanna.org">info@moaasusquehanna.org</a>
Newsletter	LCDR Lawrence Archer, USN (Ret)	<a href="mailto:info@moaasusquehanna.org">info@moaasusquehanna.org</a>
Chaplain	CPT Bill Whitford USA Reserve (Former)	<a href="mailto:info@moaasusquehanna.org">info@moaasusquehanna.org</a>
Publicity	Keith Reagan USA LTC Reserve (Ret)	<a href="mailto:info@moaasusquehanna.org">info@moaasusquehanna.org</a>
Webmaster	MAJ Sidney (Bill) Beddow, USA (Ret)	<a href="mailto:info@moaasusquehanna.org">info@moaasusquehanna.org</a>
Director	MAJ Jessica Ryu, USMC (Ret)	<a href="mailto:info@moaasusquehanna.org">info@moaasusquehanna.org</a>
Director	MAJ Cathy Hampton, USA (Ret)	<a href="mailto:info@moaasusquehanna.org">info@moaasusquehanna.org</a>
Immediate Past President	Keith Reagan USA LTC Reserve (Ret)	<a href="mailto:info@moaasusquehanna.org">info@moaasusquehanna.org</a>
Surviving Spouse Liaison	Connie Richardson	<a href="mailto:info@moaasusquehanna.org">info@moaasusquehanna.org</a>
Community Outreach	Keith Reagan USA LTC Reserve (Ret)	<a href="mailto:info@moaasusquehanna.org">info@moaasusquehanna.org</a>

## ABOUT MOAA

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is the nation’s largest and most influential association of military officers. It is an independent, nonprofit, politically nonpartisan organization. <http://moaa.org>. The Chapter is an affiliate of the national MOAA. Like MOAA National, the Chapter is an independent, nonprofit, politically nonpartisan organization.

The MOAA Legislative Action Center provides information regarding MOAA’s top national legislative priorities for the year and COLA, as well as perspective on issues in the military community that could affect you and your family <http://takeaction.moaa.org>

If you are not a member of MOAA, you can join at <http://bit.ly/JoinMOAA>. Membership in MOAA is separate from membership in the Susquehanna Chapter.

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## MOAA MISSION

To preserve and protect earned benefits for our uniformed services, veterans, their families, and surviving spouses through:

Advocacy, Leadership, Education, and Service.

Advocacy Highlights:

Pay Raises for all ranks, Widows Tax repeal, MTF restructuring delays, protecting TRICARE benefits, military housing reforms, PACT Act support, MISSION Act reforming VA programs, GI Bill upgrades, COLA adjustment improvements.

Current Legislative Goals:

Compensations and Service-Earned Benefits, Military Housing, Health Care for currently serving, retirees, and veterans, Survivor families benefits, and improve Guard and Reserves pay and health coverage.

## SUSQUEHANNA CHAPTER MOAA:

Susquehanna Chapter, a 501(c)(19) nonprofit organization was affiliated in October 1969 with the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), formerly TROA. Chapter members live in Harford and Cecil Counties. We promote the MOAA purposes and objectives to foster fraternal relations among retired, active and former officers of the eight uniformed services and the Reserve Components.

The chapter has 60 active members, who are currently serving, former, and retired officers, and their spouses and widows/widowers. Working through the Chapter, we provide assistance to our membership, enabling them to continue to serve their nation and communities, maintain contact with the other services, and enjoy social fellowship with people who share common values of patriotism, honor and selflessness.

Our Chapter helps provide critical grassroots support for MOAA's national legislative agenda. Our benefits are under attack, and MOAA is in the fight to preserve them. Chapter members let their legislators know what's on their minds and open doors for MOAA's legislative team in Washington, D.C. In these difficult times, our chapters are the best way we know to do that.

At the local level we successfully advocated for reduction of Harford County property taxes for retired veterans and reductions of MD State taxes on retired pay for military members and first responders. We sponsored scholarships, engaged Harford County Board of Education to establish a JROTC program, and continue to coordinate community outreach to schools for Veteran Poster essay contests. We coordinated COVID 19 grants for qualifying veterans, volunteered with the Susquehanna Habitat for Humanity, and participate in local veteran memorial activities.

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## MEMBERSHIP DUES FORM (New & Renewal) Susquehanna Chapter

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First MI

Information below is only required if it has changed. \_\_\_ New \_\_\_ Renewal

Mailing \_\_\_\_\_  
Address Street City State Zip Code

Home \_\_\_\_\_  
Address\* Street City State Zip Code

\*If different from mailing address

Home Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Office Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_ @ \_\_\_\_\_  
address

**Annual Membership Fee.** New members joining the Chapter during January – June pay no dues for the current year. Those who join in July – December pay no dues during the current year and following year. Annual dues are \$20. Please complete this form and submit it with your check for the appropriate amount, payable to “Susquehanna Chapter, MOAA” or you may pay online at <https://chapterdues.moaa.org/Membership.aspx>.

Mail this form to:

**Membership Chair**  
**Susquehanna Chapter, MOAA**  
**PO Box 243**  
**Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD 21005**

Dues enclosed are for \_\_\_2026 \_\_\_2027 \_\_\_2028 \_\_\_2029 \_\_\_2030 \_\_\_ Lifetime Membership

**Lifetime Membership:** If you are 70 years of age or older, and not in arrears for dues, you are eligible to become a Lifetime Member of the Susquehanna Chapter. The one-time fee for Lifetime Membership is 80- your age x \$20.00. Lifetime membership cannot be paid online. Lifetime Membership in the Susquehanna Chapter does not convey Lifetime Membership in MOAA. Payment for Lifetime Member status must be paid via check to the address above.

Please contact Ted Newing at [ted.newing@gmail.com](mailto:ted.newing@gmail.com) with questions about your dues status.

Serving the Community and the Nation since 1969

One of the oldest Chapters in the Maryland Council

[www.moaausquehanna.org](http://www.moaausquehanna.org)



## **FREE ENTREPRENEUR TRAINING FOR SPOUSES OF VETERANS, ACTIVE DUTY, AND GUARD/RESERVE PERSONNEL**

**Is Entrepreneurship the right choice for you?  
Do you have a business idea but not sure where to start?  
Do you currently have a business and want to take it to the next level?  
Currently laid off or furloughed and looking at entrepreneurship?**

**Mandatory Orientation Session will be held on  
Tuesday, March 10, 2026  
6:00 to 8:00 PM**

Classes will be held on Tuesday Evenings from 6:00 to 9:00 pm, starting on March 24, 2026, and ending with a Graduation Ceremony on June 2, 2026

**Orientation and all classes will be held at  
Converge Building  
1201 Technology Drive  
Aberdeen, Maryland**



To register for the Orientation Session please complete form found at <https://www.project-opportunity.com/spouse-entrepreneurship-course/>

Project Opportunity is an intensive curriculum based 10-week cohort program that meets every Tuesday evening from 6:00-9:00PM. The curriculum and material are facilitated by small business professionals and subject matter experts. The program concludes with a formal Graduation Ceremony and Business Pitch Competition.

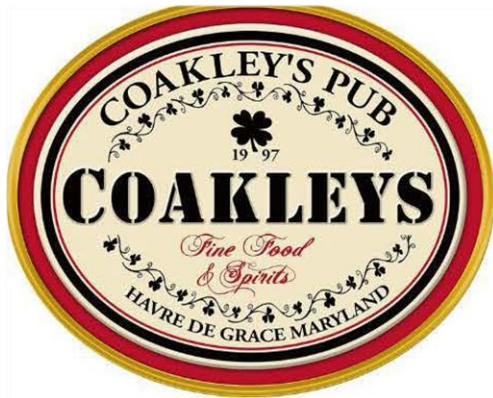
Training Includes:

- ❖ *Assessing Your Business Idea*
- ❖ *Marketing Analysis*
- ❖ *Financing and Financial Management*
- ❖ *Business Structure and Taxes*
- ❖ *Development of a Business Plan*

The Spring 2025 Project Opportunity Military Spouse Course is sponsored by **Philip E and Carol R Ratcliffe Foundation**. The Ratcliffe Foundation is based in Annapolis Maryland and operates as a charitable organization designed to encourage and reward entrepreneurship, create jobs and expand economic opportunities.

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## Susquehanna Chapter MOAA General Membership Meeting

Wednesday, 18 March 2026, 1800 – 2030 hours  
Coakley's Pub  
406 St John St, Havre De Grace, MD 21078

Our guest speaker, Asha M. George, DrPH, Executive Director, Bipartisan Commission on Biodefense, will speak about the nation's preparation for and needs for biodefense.



Please choose from one of the following entrees when making your reservation online:

### **New York Strip \$31**

Served with baked potato and broccoli

### **Crab Cake Platter \$31**

Served with baked potato and green beans

### **Garlic Tuscan Chicken \$24**

Grilled chicken & penne pasta tossed in a creamy garlic parmesan sauce with sundried tomatoes and spinach served with toasted bread and Caesar salad

(prices include tax and tip)

Go to <https://www.moaasusquehanna.org/>  
to choose your entrée and sides and pre-pay

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## Our Featured Guest

### Dr. Asha M. George Dr. PH

Dr. Asha M. George is a public health security professional whose research and programmatic emphasis has been practical, academic, and political. She served in the US House of Representatives as a senior professional staffer and subcommittee staff director at the House Committee on Homeland Security in the 110th and 111th Congress. She has worked for a variety of organizations, including government contractors, foundations, and non-profits. As a contractor, she supported and worked with all Federal Departments, especially the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Health and Human Services. Dr. George also served on active duty in the U.S. Army as a military intelligence officer and as a paratrooper. She is a decorated Desert Storm Veteran. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Natural Sciences from Johns Hopkins University, a Master of Science in Public Health from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and a Doctorate in Public Health from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. She is also a graduate of the Harvard University National Preparedness Leadership Initiative.



Star Spangled Banner Chapter  
Military Officers Association of America

Find us at [www.starspan.org](http://www.starspan.org)

“Never Stop Serving”

Presents our

**Annual Paws4vets Fundraiser**  
**Bull, Shrimp & Oyster Roast**  
**Saturday, April 25th, 2026**  
**4-8pm**

**Columbus Gardens**

4301 Klosterman Ave, Nottingham, MD 21236

Music by: “Double Play”

Delightful Buffet, Cash Bar, Raffles, Auctions, Wheels of Chance

Tickets are \$60.00 per person or \$550 for a table of ten.

Call Colonel (ret) Rita M. Kurek, chairperson for tickets.

410 574-5330 (H) or 410 294-4913 (C)

or mail order form below with check

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

#Tickets @\$60 \_\_\_\_\_ or Table(s) of 10 @\$550 \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like tickets mailed \_\_\_\_\_ or pick up at will call \_\_\_\_\_

Make Checks Payable to: Star Spangled Banner Chapter of MOAA

Mail to: Rita M. Kurek, 1231 Engleberth Rd., Essex MD 21221