



# Ozark Empire News

Ozark Empire Chapter, Military Officers Association of America

2131 West Republic Road, Box 164, Springfield, Missouri 65807



June, 2026

## A Word from the Chapter President

Once again, welcome back! As you know, we canceled our May 2026 meeting so members could attend LtCol William Pickett's celebration of life that fell on the same day. Our thoughts and prayers remain with Cathy and the rest of Bill's family as they navigate a new normal.

Dena Kilgore from National had been our scheduled speaker for May. Of course we notified her of our meeting cancellation. We can reschedule in the future.

Some sad news we received this past week was that Jeffrey Long passed away after a setback following a stroke a month ago. Many of you may not know that Jeff assisted our Chapter's Treasurer in filing taxes, as well as the State Council of Chapters' taxes. Our condolences are with Jeff's family.

Our meeting's focus this month is on recruitment of new members. We reached out to several hundred members of National who fall within our Chapter's catchment area (thank you to Steve Vanderhoof who volunteered for this undertaking). Most of these people do not belong to a chapter. So we welcome you, if this is your first time attending!

We will be voting on the rewording of our Chapter Bylaws to be consistent with changes previously voted on and approved. Copies are available of these changes at the back table.

Your Board made a decision at a recent meeting to change our 50/50 contribution from Honor Flight of the Ozarks to the DAV Benevolence Fund. Dean Smith, our current Treasurer, is involved in oversight of the vetting process for this fund, and shared it is tightly controlled. There are several reasons why this seemed like a good move. The Board felt it would be important to involve the membership and take a vote on this issue. We will discuss at our September meeting and then vote.

Chuck Guy and Dean Smith have been appointed to lead a newly-formed committee established to go into long term care facilities and connect with veterans, especially those without visitors/family. Since this is very new, processes will be under development. Chuck and Dean will also offer a short presentation about progress to date.

### Commemorative Dates & Observances (taken from: [www.affn.org](http://www.affn.org))

- **June 6, 2026:** 82nd Anniversary of D-Day, honoring the Allied invasion of Normandy.
- **June 12, 2026:** Women Veterans Day.
- **June 14, 2026:** Flag Day & the 251st Birthday of the United States Army.
- **June 23, 2026:** U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Birthday.
- **June 27, 2026:** National PTSD Awareness Day ([www.hfotusa.org](http://www.hfotusa.org)).

It seems like this first part of 2026 has gone by quickly. We will take a break during July and August and reconvene on September 18. May you have a safe and fun summer. Until we meet again!

**Chapter Mission Statement:** *To stimulate patriotism in our community and serve those who hold or have ever held a warrant or commission in any of the eight uniformed services, as well as their surviving spouses. The Ozark Empire Military Officers Association of America (OEMOAA) is an affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA). MOAA and its affiliated chapters are nonpartisan.*

# Taps



William J Pickett, LtCol, USAF, Retired, passed away peacefully at his home, May 7, 2026. LtCol Pickett was a longtime member of the Ozark Empire Chapter, having served for many years as Secretary and Treasurer. He served during the Vietnam conflict, as a Bioenvironmental Engineer.

Visitation was held at Greenlawn Funeral Home on May 17, 2026. Interment was held at Missouri Veterans Cemetery on the same date, with full military honors.

The family has requested that any memorial donations be made, based on the donor's preference, to Honor Flight of the Ozarks, MOAA Scholarship Fund, or other charity of the donor's preference.

---

## IMPORTANT CONTACTS AND RESOURCES

**Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) Telephone Center** - Call DEERS at 800-538-9552, Monday through Friday, excluding U.S. federal holidays.

**Defense Finance and Accounting Service** - The agency that pays military retirees and annuitants can be reached at 800-321-1080, or through AskDFAS online. Visit the [retired military and annuitants webpage](#) for more information about pay matters such as tax forms, pay verification, Direct Deposit, myPay and more.

**Federal Long-Term Care Insurance Program** - The program provides long-term care insurance to help pay for the costs of care you need if you can no longer perform everyday tasks (activities of daily living) by yourself because of chronic illness, injury, disability or the aging process. For assistance, call 800-LTC-FEDS (800-582-3337) or TTY 800- 843-3557 to speak with a program consultant. You can also visit <https://www.ltcfeds.com>.

**Identification Cards** - Call 800-525-0102 for location of the nearest issuing facility, or visit the site locator.

**Legal Offices** - Assists members with preparing wills and powers of attorney, and answers certain legal questions. Visit the Air Force Legal Assistance website at <https://aflegalassistance.law.af.mil>.

**Medicare** - 800-633-4227 or visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).

**Social Security Office** - Call toll free 800-772-1213; commercial 410-965- 8019; or write to Social Security Administration, Office of Public Inquiries, Windsor Park Building, 6401 Security Blvd., Baltimore, MD 21235. Visit the website [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov) for more information.

**TRICARE Mail-Order Pharmacy Program (Express Scripts, Inc)** - In United States, call toll free 800-282-2881; or overseas, call 866-275-4732. Visit [www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE/index.shtml](http://www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE/index.shtml) for more information.

**Veterans Affairs** - For benefit inquiries call 800-827-1000; life insurance 800-669-8477; status of headstones and markers, 800-697-6947; special issues such as Gulf War/radiation/Agent Orange/Project Shad call 800-749-8387; GI Bill and education matters call 888-442-4551. Visit the website at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov).

## JROTC Awards

Springtime is again a busy season for the annual Awards ceremonies at local schools. Here are some of the presenters, and the happy recipients from this academic year.



Col Chuck Guy presented the MOAA Award to Nixa JROTC Cadet Emma Ethridge. She was the MC for the Nixa awards program, and did a great job. Chuck also reports that the military instructor of the Nixa program, LtC Brennan Cole, will be transferring to Logan-Rogersville High School next year.



Capt Ron McCall presented the MOAA Award to Bolivar Cadet LtC Kayler Ballard. She was the cadet squadron commander this past year, and presented gifts of challenge coins to each member of her squadron, and encouraged them to continue to push themselves and their squadron-mates to bigger and better achievements in the future. This is the first time that this military tradition has been observed for the Bolivar unit.



Col Chuck Guy presented the MOAA Award to Tyler McHaffie at the College Of The Ozarks' Bobcat Gold awards ceremony.

Capt Ron McCall presented the MOAA Award to Branson High School JROTC Cadet SrA Ayden Flaming



# June US Military History

**1775** – US Army founded by the Continental Congress

**1775** – Continental Congress authorizes a “Chief Engineer” for the Army, the predecessor for what would become the US Army Corps of Engineers

**1789** - US Constitution, enacted as Sovereign Law, goes into effect

**1800** - Presidential Executive Mansion, later known as the White House, completed. President and Mrs John Adams are the first residents

**1812** – President James Madison petitions Congress, and obtains a declaration of war against Great Britain, resulting in the War of 1812, often called America’s Second War for Independence

**1845** – The Congress of the Republic of Texas votes to accept annexation by the US, after 10 years as an independent Republic

**1876** – Native Americans, under leadership of Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, wipe out Lt Col George Custer, along with much of his 7th Cavalry, at the Battle of Little Big Horn

**1877** – Henry Ossian Flipper, born a slave in Thomasville, Georgia, in 1856, is the first African American cadet to graduate from the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York. Flipper was never spoken to by a white cadet during his four years at West Point

**1921** – Race riots erupt in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Official death toll stands at 85, although the actual death toll may never be known. Recent Commission reports put the death toll at close to 300.

**1942** – Japanese Admiral Chuichi Nagumo, commander of the fleet that attacked Pearl Harbor, launches a raid on Midway Island with almost the entirety of the Japanese Navy.

**1944** – The U-505 became the first enemy submarine captured by the U.S. Navy under Admiral Dan Gallery.

**1950** - Armed forces from Communist North Korea, smash into South Korea, setting off the Korean War

**1971** – 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the US Constitution ratified, lowering voting age to 18

**1972** – More than thirty US planes and helicopters fly through heavy fire to rescue Capt R.C. Locher, who had been trapped northwest of Hanoi, since his Phantom jet went down on May 10.

**1979** - During a summit meeting in Vienna, President Jimmy Carter and Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev sign the SALT-II agreement, providing guidelines for limiting nuclear weapons

**1991** – Mount Pinatubo (4,750 feet high) erupted, forcing closure of Clarke Air Force Base

**2003** – North Korea announces that it possesses nuclear arms

**2009** – US Forces withdrawn from Baghdad

---

## Surviving Spouse Corner

By Becky Hutchings

How do you stay in touch with others? Maybe you prefer social media, like Facebook or LinkedIn. Perhaps email is your preference. Many connect through text messages. For some, like me, a phone call is top choice.

The need for a personal connection still exists. Nothing can brighten your day like a call from an old friend. Sharing a memory or exchanging a laugh with someone lifts the spirits. Personal communication builds strong families and good friends and creates successful institutions and cohesive organizations.

Within MOAA chapters, personal interaction among members provides opportunities to build friendships, exchange ideas, and share experiences.

A chapter member who lives alone and has no local family needs a chapter friend or neighbor to exchange a greeting with each day. It could be as simple as texting “Good morning” and the recipient sending a thumbs-up response. The greeter and recipient should share contact information for their next of kin in the event that the greeting is not returned.

Make caring for and connecting with each other part of your mission to never stop serving. (This article was written by Pat Green, President of Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter-included in the MOAA Newsletter from March 3, 2026).

# Sign Up for MOAA “Newsletter” and Legislative “Calls to Action”

We encourage all chapter members *and spouses* to always, please stay alert, and respond to MOAA **Calls to Action** at least monthly, preferably weekly! Yes, two votes per household are better than 1.

## **Signing Up for the MOAA “Newsletter” and Legislative “Calls to Action”:**

- **Newsletter:** Sign up for the MOAA Newsletter. [www.moaa.org/](http://www.moaa.org/) Check “News & Info” on Menu, then, on drop-down menu, check “Newsletters”

Or go directly to this link: [www.moaa.org/content/tmn/the-moaa-newsletter/](http://www.moaa.org/content/tmn/the-moaa-newsletter/)

- **Calls to Action:** Please stay alert for any “Calls to Action”. [www.moaa.org/](http://www.moaa.org/) Check “Advocacy” on Menu, then, on drop-down menu, check “Legislative Action Center”

Contact your Federal elected officials by using the following link: [takeaction.moaa.org/?0](http://takeaction.moaa.org/?0)

\*\*\*WHEN COMPLETING “CALLS TO ACTION” **PLEASE LOGIN TO THE MOAA WEBSITE**, WHICH WILL ALLOW YOU TO ENTER OUR **OZARK EMPIRE CHAPTER #** IN THE BLOCK AT THE BOTTOM OF THE LETTER PRIOR TO SENDING. THE CHAPTER # IS: **MO05** (MO is “alpha character” and 05 is “numeric” zero 5).\*\*\*

## **Phone calls matter; Emails matter; Online petitions matter; In-person**

**meetings, when practical, matter.** We want to ensure our elected representatives receive local constituents concerns for maximum national impact. (call them via MOAA’s toll-free Capitol Switchboard: 1-866-272-6622).

### **CONTACT YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS**

The Honorable (name), U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510 • Phone: (202) 224-3121

The Honorable (name), U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515 • (202) 225-3121

Collectively we make a difference - **Never Stop Serving®**



---

## Chaplain's Corner

By Becky Hutchings

How can it be possible that we are almost halfway through 2026? Are you ready for a "true confession"? Drum-roll...my Christmas tree finally came down! Yes indeed, and my family is delighted. It's about time since summer will be here soon. Summer begins with the solstice on Sunday, June 21, 2026, marking the astronomical first day of summer in the Northern Hemisphere, the longest day of the year ([almanac.com](http://almanac.com)). A few fun facts about summer are as follows (taken from [kids.britannica.com](http://kids.britannica.com)):

- **The Tilt:** Summer happens because the Earth's axis tilts toward the sun, providing direct sunlight and longer days.
- **Midnight Sun:** Places in the Arctic Circle, like Alaska, experience 24-hour sunlight during the peak of summer.
- **Extreme Heat:** The hottest temperature ever recorded on Earth was 134°F in Death Valley, California.
- **Happy Hormones:** Longer daylight hours boost the brain's serotonin levels, which is why science suggests humans are generally happier during the summer (taken from: [medium.com](http://medium.com)).

Let's explore what the Bible has to say about summer. The Bible portrays summer primarily as a season of divine order, diligent preparation, and spiritual readiness. Scripture highlights several key themes regarding summer (taken from: [facebook.com](http://facebook.com)):

- **Creation and Divine Order:** Summer is established by God as a steadfast natural boundary. In [Genesis 8:22](#), it is promised as an enduring cycle alongside winter and harvest.
- **Wisdom and Preparation:** The summer months were crucial for gathering crops in the ancient Near East. The Book of Proverbs uses the ant as an example, praising the prudent individual who works and stores provisions during the summer, while cautioning against laziness.
- **Signs of the Times:** In the Gospels, summer is used as a metaphor for spiritual awareness. In the Parable of the Fig Tree, Jesus explains that when the branches bud and leaves appear, "summer is near," urging followers to recognize the signs of the times Matthew 24:32.

We are very fortunate that most of us don't have (or had) to labor in fields for a living. There are still many people worldwide that remain hunters and gatherers, eking out a meager survival.

The Biblical reference to the ants, how they work, and relating it back to the prudent person who prepares for the future fascinates me. These tiny creatures work together for the good of all. We can learn much from them.

As we separate for the summer, make sure to enjoy this season. Hopefully there will be family reunions and trips to various places in your plans. Make sure to thank the Lord for his many blessings during this season.

I offer this prayer over you (AMP; Numbers 6:24-26): "The Lord bless you, and keep you [protect you, sustain you, and guard you]; The Lord make His face shine upon you [with favor], And be gracious to you [surrounding you with lovingkindness]; The Lord lift up His countenance (face) upon you [with divine approval], And give you peace [a tranquil heart and life]."

May you be encouraged and blessed.

## June 2026 Meeting

**DATE:** Friday, 19 June 26

**PLACE:** DAV Hall, Chapter 11  
2525 E Division Ave  
Springfield, MO

**TIME:** 1100 – Social Hour  
50/50 voluntary donations, to support Honor Flight of the Ozarks. Drawing at the close of the presentation.  
1200 – Meal

**MENU:** Luncheon Meal

**Cost:** \$20/plate. (NOTE: 50/50 Drawing, and Donations for Honor Flight of the Ozarks will also be accepted)

**Program:** Elder Law

**RSVP:** By Monday, 15 June  
To: LtCol Dean Smith, USMC, Retired

LtCol Smith will acknowledge ALL reservations received. If you do NOT receive a confirmation, please contact him directly.

## ELECTED CHAPTER BOARD OFFICERS

**PRESIDENT:** Becky Hutchings

**1ST VICE PRESIDENT:** Anthony Willis, COL, USAF (Retired)

**2ND VICE PRESIDENT:** Frank Bridges, LtCol, USA, Retired

**SECRETARY/TREASURER:** Dean Smith, LtCol, USMC, Retired

**IMMED PAST PRESIDENT:** Ron McCall, Capt, USAF, Retired

## APPOINTED CHAPTER OFFICERS

**CHAPLAIN:** Becky Hutchings

**LEGISLATIVE CHAIR:** (OPEN)

**AWARDS COORDINATOR:** Frank Bridges, LtCol, USA, Retired

**SURVIVING SPOUSE LIAISON:** Becky Hutchings

**AMBASSADOR:** Chuck Guy, Colonel, USA, Retired

**MEMBERSHIP CHAIR:** Chuck Guy, Colonel, USA, Retired

**WEBMASTER:** Keith Oxby, W/O British Navy

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR:** Ron McCall, Capt, USAF, Retired

## 2026 OEMOAA Monthly Schedule

Regular Chapter meetings will be held at Noon, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of the month, unless otherwise noted.

### 2026 Dates

June 19: Elder Law (Recruitment Meeting)  
Summer: No meetings planned in Jul, Aug  
Sept 18: LTC Brennan Cook, "JROTC, Nixa HS"  
Oct 16: Missouri Veteran's Home  
Nov 20: Nutrition for Seniors  
Dec 11: TBA

### Quotes from Yogi Berra:

I never said most of the things I said

If you don't know where you're going, you might end somewhere else

When you come to a fork in the road, take it.

Why buy good luggage? You only use it when you travel

We encourage all eligible members to also join our National organization, Military Officers Association of America. Information regarding membership options can be accessed at [www.moaa.org](http://www.moaa.org)

Our chapter maintains a presence on Facebook. We strive to keep this page current with information about chapter activities and opportunities. Members can access that page by following this link: [www.facebook.com/groups/712416736284579](https://www.facebook.com/groups/712416736284579)

## OEMOAA NAME TAGS

Some members and their spouses prefer a solid plastic name badge with a magnetic clasp. The member cost is \$10 per badge, payable in advance. Order forms will be available at the next two meetings. You can also email Dean Smith anytime and he will send you the form by return email. Please return completed forms to Dean at a meeting with the \$10 per badge fee. Nametags will be ready at the next regular dinner meeting. Yes, the name tags with the pin clasp will continue to be provided at no cost.