Ozark Empire News

Ozark Empire Chapter, Military Officers Association of America
2131 West Republic Road, Box 164, Springfield, Missouri 65807

October 2026

Greetings to each of you and welcome to fall. Before sharing news items, I would like to encourage each of you to make your voice count by voting in the upcoming general election. No matter how you vote, it is important that your voice is heard.

Speaking of the election, our chapter has important issues at stake and an election of our own coming up soon. Our Board members have all come to the end of their tenure. We have several appointed positions that do not require a vote, however some are integral to keeping the chapter running smoothly.

If we are unable to have a COMPLETE slate of officers willing to serve by our November meeting (November 20, 2026), we will take the appropriate measures to dissolve the chapter. Our December 2026 dInner will go on as planned

These are the minimum number of offices that need to be filled.

- President
- 1st Vice President
- 2nd Vice President
- Secretary/Treasurer
- Immediate past President
- Awards Coordinator (one of the VPs could assume this role)
- Legislative Chair (more important these days-also a VP)
- Newsletter Editor (Ron could share template)

If our chapter ceases to exist, this does not preclude us from getting together informally. It is my hope that the friendships we have made will continue.

A few important notes from MOAA, taken from their newsletter dated September 24, 2026:

TAKE ACTION: Ask Your Lawmakers to Address Military Care Access Problems]

- Expand on continued congressional oversight of services offered by military treatment facilities (MTFs), to include reversing planned cuts to 41 hospitals and clinics.
- Require a study on the future of the military health care system – a necessary step to ensure the program remains viable for all beneficiaries.
- Address the administration's plans to split Defense Health Program funding into two appropriations: One for combat and operational medicine, another for private sector care. MOAA raised concerns in the letter that the move "could lead to challenges with adequately funding purchased care and diminished access for beneficiaries."

A couple of important military dates in October.

***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.*

TRICARE Changes, Housing Fixes, and More: 10 MOAA Priorities as the NDAA Takes Shape

By: Kevin Lilley
SEPTEMBER 23, 2026

Much-needed improvements to the military health system lead a list of MOAA priorities for the FY 2027 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), must-pass legislation that will take shape in the closing weeks of the 119th Congress.

A letter from MOAA to the chairmen and ranking members of the House and Senate Armed Services committees sent Sept. 23 outlines these key provisions and recommends modifications to ensure the best possible outcomes for servicemembers, retirees, their families and survivors.

[READ THE LETTER]

The list includes proposals that will:

- Establish a digital system so TRICARE beneficiaries can report access to care concerns in a way that will ensure their issues are resolved and systemic problems can be addressed. The NDAA provision builds on the MOAA-backed Military Care, Access, Reporting, and Evaluation (Military CARE) Act and is a top priority for several military and veterans service organizations.

[TAKE ACTION: Ask Your Lawmakers to Address Military Care Access Problems]

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- Create a no-premium dental plan for junior enlisted members of the Selected Reserve, a program designed to increase readiness of the overall force.

Other Key Proposals

Along with health care issues, MOAA also endorsed proposals found in either the House or Senate NDAA versions that would:

- Expand in-home child care options for military families, to include improved access to au pairs.

- Prevent Pentagon officials from funding any changes under the Supply Chain Transformation Initiative – moves which could affect the commissary benefit – until six months after a report required in the FY 2026 NDAA is filed to Congress.
- Prohibit landlords in privatized military housing from asking tenants to sign nondisclosure agreements, which may limit the options for military families facing housing problems.

- Improve landlord accountability for mold and other housing hazards by establishing testing requirements and remediation timelines – measures included in the MOAA-backed MOLD Act.

- Protect the retirement pay of commissioned-officer retirees from the U.S. Public Health Service and NOAA during funding lapses by processing those payments via the Military Retirement Fund, a protection offered to Coast Guard retirees via the FY 2021 NDAA.

[TAKE ACTION: Urge Lawmakers to Support the Pensions for Retired Uniformed Servicemembers Act]

Other Priorities

MOAA's letter to committee leadership expressed disappointment at the exclusion of the Major Richard Star Act from the NDAA but noted "alternative avenues" of progress for the legislation, which would end an unjust pay offset faced by tens of thousands combat-injured retirees who lose a dollar of military retirement pay for every dollar of VA disability compensation they collect.

The letter also endorsed NDAA plans to raise military pay at the same or higher rate as the Employment Cost Index, but noted concerns with an administration proposal to uncouple the pay of USPHS and NOAA officers from others in uniform. There is "no justification" for such a move, according to the letter, which notes these officers "serve alongside their armed forces counterparts, deploy in support of national emergencies, and undertake hazardous assignments" that merit comparable compensation.

Lawmakers from both chambers will craft the final NDAA from the House and Senate versions when both chambers return to Washington after the midterm elections. MOAA will remain active in the halls of Congress as this process moves forward, and your voice can help make a difference in the end result – to keep up with the latest developments, including calls to action on behalf of these key priorities, register at MOAA's Legislative Action Center.

When MOAA Speaks, Congress Listens

Learn more about MOAA's key advocacy issues and contact your elected officials using our messaging platform.

TAKE ACTION

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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.

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 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 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.

October US Military History

1648 – Peter Stuyvesant established America's 1st volunteer fire brigade
1775 - The Continental Congress authorizes construction of the first American naval force
1779 – Polish nobleman General Casimir Pulaski was killed while fighting for American independence during the Revolutionary War Battle of Savannah, Ga.
1781 – Surrender of Cornwallis to Washington at Yorktown, effectively ending the American War for Independence. This would be finalized upon finalization of the Treaty of Paris in 1783, officially recognizing the United States as an independent nation
1797 – The 44-gun 204-foot U.S. Navy frigate USS Constitution, also known as Old Ironsides, was launched in Boston's harbor. She continues in active service to the present day.
1862 – Dr. Richard Gatling patented a machine gun, desiring to expose riflemen to enemy fire for shorter periods
1863 - The H. L. Hunley, the world's first successful combat submarine, sinks during a test run, killing its designer and 7 crew. She completed her last mission in 1864, when she sunk the USS Housatonic. The vessel was raised in 2000, and is now a museum piece.
1901 - Theodore Roosevelt officially renames 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue as The White House
1916 – US Army formed Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC).
1918 – Sgt. Alvin C. York almost single-handedly killed 25 German soldiers and captured 132 in the Argonne Forest in France. For his actions, he was the recipient of the Medal Of Honor.
1947 - Chuck Yeager becomes the first person to fly faster than the speed of sound, when he flies Glamorous Glennis, named in honor of his wife, over Rogers Dry Lake in California
1957 – The Space Age and "space race" began as the Soviet Union launched Sputnik (traveler), the first man-made space satellite.
1962 – A U.S. Air Force U-2 reconnaissance plane and its pilot fly over the island of Cuba and take photographs of Soviet missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads being installed and erected in Cuba.
1972 – A race riot occurs on the United States Navy aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk off the coast of Vietnam during Operation Linebacker.
1985 – The leader of the so-called "Walker family spy ring," John Walker, pleaded guilty to giving U-S Navy secrets to the Soviet Union.
1993 - American troops launch disastrous failed raid in Mogadishu, Somalia, later known as Black Hawk Down
2000 - A motorized rubber dinghy laden with explosives blows a 40-by-40-foot hole in the side of the USS Cole, killing 17 sailors, wounding 38
2005 – In a referendum vote, new Iraqi constitution is ratified
2006 – George W. Bush signs into law The Secure Fence Act of 2006 to build a fence along the U.S.-Mexico border.
2007 – Time change from Daylight Savings to Standard time is changed from late October to early November, resulting in numerous technical glitches
2014 – USS America (LHA 6), which at that time, was t**he Navy's newest and most technologically advanced amphibious assault ship, was commissioned during a formal ceremony during San Francisco Fleet Week.**

September Meeting Recap



At our September meeting, we heard from LtC Brennan Cook, USA (Ret). He is the Director of the JROTC Program at Logan-Rogersville High School. Formerly, he was the director of the Nixa High School program, but took the opportunity to relocate to Rogersville, and see a new program stand up and become functional. He gave us a good overview of Army JROTC programs throughout the US, with most states falling into what the Army considers Under-represented in terms of JROTC enrollment, The goal at present is for 10% participation, based on total enrollment at schools with a JROTC detachment. The program seeks and realizes the following results: Greater high school graduation rate among cadets, overall lower absence rate, civic engagement, volunteer involvement. Approximately 20-25% of JROTC cadets typically enlist in military service, 5-10% continue to ROTC at the collegiate level, and a few seek appointment to service academies.

JROTC programs are continually looking for qualified instructors. Though there is no age limit, there is a 5 year limit for application following retirement from military service. In the long term, the overall goal is for JROTC programs to expand across the country, further emphasizing the need for additional qualified instructors.

Thank you to LtC Brennan Cook, for a very informative presentation, highlighting the current JROTC programs in our area, and their benefits to our younger generations, who some of the future leaders of our country.

Following with the JROTC theme, Frank Bridges has indicated that after 2026, he will no longer be acting as Award Chairperson, for our chapter's support of ROTC and JROTC cadet awards. He is willing to share his knowledge and expertise with anyone who wants to take up the mantle of this position. Anyone interested please contact Frank, 573-308-7272 or frankbridges@frankbridges.com. On that same note, unless volunteers are found to take on running the chapter, we will likely be closing as of December. Of course, Coffee With Chuck meetings, and any other non-official social gatherings are welcome to continue.

Chapter Business

Following discussion by the Board, a motion was made and seconded, and passed by unanimous voice vote (three members abstained: Dean Smith, Chuck Guy, and Ron McCall, all due to personal involvement with affected agencies), to move our monthlhy 50/50 support from Honor Flight of the Ozarks, to the local Disabled American Veterans chapter. This is following MOAA's encouragement of local chapter support, and DAV's gracious support of our chapter.

Surviving Spouse Corner

Instructions on how to access MOAA's Surviving Spouse Corner. If unable to access, type in the search box and it will take you to it.
➢ MOAA Home Page [moaa.org] You don't have to Login but you have more access if you do

➢ Click on [Resources]

➢ Select [Surviving Spouse Corner] https://www.moaa.org/content/about-moaa/meet-our-leaders/surviving-spouse-advisory-committee/surviving-spouse-corner/

o Click on [Go Now}

➢ Here you will find monthly informational articles from the past 12 months plus archived articles from several years

➢ Go to [I am a] and select [Surviving Spouse]

o Select [View My Resources] - Six green squares appear

▪ Select [Survivor Publication from MOAA] You will see a list of all publications that are available to you from MOAA arranged by topic area. There are three that are specifically directed to Surviving Spouses

o Use back arrow and return to the six green squares

▪ Select [Surviving Spouse FAQs and More] You will find a list of frequently asked questions and answers. There is also an extensive list of MOAA LINKS that take you straight to website references on a plethora of topics. There is also a Suggested Reading list on several topics. Check out the other four squares as well as Chapter Membership information on this page.

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Strengthening Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) for Surviving Families: Under the proposed provision authored by Sharri Briley and Eric Edmundson, DIC would increase by 1% each year in addition to the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for three years, to a total of 3%. This incremental step toward parity with other Federal DIC beneficiaries can help veteran families manage rising costs for basic necessities. (By Pat Green Sept. 2, 2026).

Chuck Guy mentioned that he will be holding Veteran Visits at local assisted living facilities again in October. At present, a visit to the Mount Vernon Veterans Home is scheduled for October 14. Chapter members interested in participating are wellcome to contact Chuck, and carpooling can be arranged. As reported in the last newsletter, their previous visits have been well received, and beneficial both the the involved Veterans, as well as the chapter members participating.

Steve Vanderhoof announced that a Medicare Advantage informational meeting will be held on October 15, at the Library Station, located on N Kansas Expressway. Interested members can contact Steve for further information.

Jim Bureman announced that OEMOAA Chapter members are eligible for ½ price admission to the History Museum, located on the Springfield Square. This is an excellent presentation of the history and development of Springfield and surrounding areas. All are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity.



Chaplain's Corner

By Becky Hutchings

As I write this article on September 22, 2026, the first day of Fall, we are expecting a few more warm days, but probably no longer the oppressive days that summer held. The night air is cool, almost crisp, and it truly feels like Fall.

Autumn is not only a significant time culturally, but this season also holds biblical significance. We can study Scripture and its theme of harvest to gain a deeper perspective of fall. For those of us who place our faith in Christ, autumn signifies the gospel and the coming of Jesus.

Scripture introduces gospel hope through the fall feasts among the ancient Israelites. The Israelites were God's chosen people through whom He revealed His plan of redemption. Living in an agrarian society, the Israelites viewed autumn in light of harvest. Harvest refers to a process or period when crops are gathered. To accompany the harvest season, God told the Israelites to celebrate three festivals (Leviticus 23 and Numbers 29). These festivals included the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles.

Jesus equated bringing people to salvation with the work of the Fall season. After preaching the good news about the kingdom and healing people from sin, Jesus said to His disciples, "The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few. Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:35-38). Belief in the gospel is a spiritual harvest. Through our faith in Him, Jesus reaps us for the kingdom of God.

Until the time of this great harvest, we can reflect on these truths during the fall season. Though believers today do not need to celebrate the biblical feasts because of the finished work of Christ, we can still set aside time to consider God's Kingship, mercy, and provision in Jesus. With the indwelling Holy Spirit, we can strive to reach maturity by sowing seeds of faithfulness so that we are ripe for Christ's return (Galatians 6:7-9). We can be sure that God will make us ready for His harvest, for the power of God's redemption does not fail.

As the crisp autumn air comes in, view this time through the lens of biblical truth. When we see the leaves change color, our minds can remember our transformation into the image of Jesus. When we cozy up in a warm sweater, our hands can reach for the comfort of God's presence. When we taste the sweetness of a pumpkin-spiced latte, our hearts can know that God has a sweeter gift for us in eternity. (Taken from: www.theservantsandhandmaids.net/the-fall-season-and-biblical-harvest

Be encouraged and blessed.

October 2026 Meeting

DATE: Friday, 16 Oct 2026
PLACE: DAV Hall, Chapter 11
2525 E Division Ave
Springfield, MO

TIME: 1100 – Social Hour
50/50 drawing, 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: **Dan Head, Missouri Veteran's Home**

RSVP: By Monday, 12 October
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: (OPEN)

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, Retired

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Ron McCall, Capt, USAF, Retired

2026 OEMOAA Monthly Schedule

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

2026 Dates

Oct 16: Missouri Veteran's Home
Nov 20: Nutrition for Seniors
Dec 11: TBA

The shortest distance between two points, is usually under construction

You can't have a new reality with an old mentality

If someone could only see your actions and not hear your words, what would they say are your priorities?

Fear doesn't stop death – it stops life.

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

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

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 (das1302@icloud.com) 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.