



# Piedmont Chapter



## Military Officers Association of America

ARMY NAVY AIR FORCE MARINES COAST GUARD SPACE FORCE NOAA USPH

## SEPTEMBER 2025 Newsletter

Stay current on News of Interest to you....

### In this issue:

President's Message

September Membership Meeting - **1730 Dinner at Tucker's**

July Meeting Speaker's Recap

Upcoming Dates to Remember!

Chapter New Members / Memberships / Birthdays

Treasurers Report

JROTC Scholarship/ Fundraising

Our Own Backyard

Veterans Affairs

Military/MOAA News

Surviving Spouse Center

### Miscellaneous:

2025 Board of Directors

Support Your MOAA Charities.

Take Action: Join MOAA, Political Disclaimer

Footer: [Contact & Social Media Links](#) (ctrl+click to follow the links)



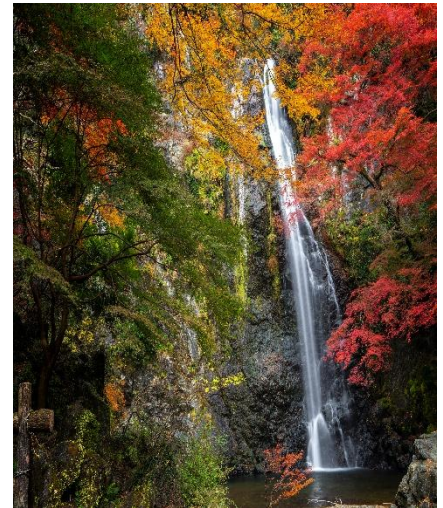
|                                                                                     |                                             |                                                                                     |                                                                                                   |                                                                                       |                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
|  | <a href="#">VISIT OUR WEBSITE</a>           |  | <a href="#">FUTURE SITE<br/>(NOT ACTIVE)</a>                                                      |  | <a href="#">EMAIL US</a>                  |
|  | <a href="#">VISIT OUR FACEBOOK<br/>PAGE</a> |  | <a href="#">JOIN OUR CHAPTER<br/>Choose SC as your state<br/>and Piedmont as your<br/>Chapter</a> |  | <a href="#">SUPPORT OUR<br/>CHARITIES</a> |

## Piedmont Chapter – President’s Message

The “Dog days of Summer” are upon us. I pray all have had a safe and enjoyable Summer.

**Happy Birthdays to our United States Air Force – September 18, 1947; and to our United States Navy – October 13, 1775**

I remind and commend to all members the awesome opportunity we have as a 501(c)19 Veterans Non-Profit, Tax-Exempt Chapter to expand and deepen our impact in our veteran communities - almost “from cradle (JROTC) to grave;” and at many points in between as we support all our veterans, spouses, surviving spouses; and our schools, veterans nursing home and veterans cemetery. Additionally, and it should be very important to each of us, we have the opportunity to influence positively the lives of our high school JROTC cadets - not only by recognizing excellence with our MOAA award, but also with the annual scholarship stipend to college we will provide starting next year to THE GRADUATING CADET selected as the most outstanding young man or woman seeking higher education with the desire and intent to serve our country in the Armed Forces.



As we transition to being this service organization, your Chapter leadership is committed to ensuring we continue to be social - enjoying the camaraderie of other retired and former Armed Forces officers, spouses and surviving spouses. We will continue to celebrate life together, assist one another as needed, and meet bi-monthly over enjoyable luncheons or dinners with interesting and informative guest speakers of varied backgrounds.

### **RECENT HAPPENINGS:**

- Regarding the above, your Board has voted “YES” to outsource the technology we need to ensure our website, trifolds for fundraising, and our social media sites tell a very clear story of “who we are, what we do, and why what we do is important to everyone in our 3 counties.” This will be crucial to our fundraising efforts with local businesses and outside entities, and to ensure we connect with our younger, more technologically skilled generations to help recruit younger Chapter members.

To develop the needed media tools, your Board approved the recommendation of our Fundraising Committee to engage Ms. Marie Cole, Founder and Chief Marketing Advisor of “Spin Nest Marketing.” Marie is ready to go - and so are we. The Fundraising Committee will be the single point of contact for all information, photos, newsletters, minutes of meetings, etc. that will be provided to Ms. Cole to develop our website, trifolds and social media sites – and most importantly – the products she produces will only be as good as the input we provide. So, it’s up to each of us to make

certain all input reflects the excellence we want. We will continue to update the membership on our progress as we proceed.

- We welcome two more new members – new member CAPT Doug Smartt, USN (Ret) and his wife, Carole; and we welcome back former member, LtCol Percy Dingle, USAF (Ret) and his wife, Faye. Let's welcome them at our 18 September membership meeting. I already presented a Navy/MOAA lapel pin to Doug and look forward to presenting Percy his Air Force/MOAA lapel pin. In case you don't know, Percy is the Senior Instructor for the BHP High School JROTC unit.
- We had very good attendance, a delicious dinner, and an excellent presentation by The Honorable Davie Hiott, Majority Leader of our SC House of Representatives updating us on state legislative initiatives and challenges at our 17 July meeting at Occasions at Wedgefield.

### **UPCOMING EVENTS:**

- Our 18 September membership meeting will be dinner at 5:30 at Tucker's Restaurant in Anderson. We will welcome and get updates from our Clemson Army and Air Force ROTC Leaders, LTC Brad Vance, USA; Col Chris Kiser, USAF; and their most recent MOAA awardees - Cadets Carson Homan (Army) and Jackson Masters (Air Force). I look forward to seeing each of you there as we enjoy the camaraderie, a great dinner, and welcome our Clemson ROTC guests. I encourage each of our members to bring a MOAA-eligible guest.
- Hilda and I will host the next continental breakfast "welcome and orientation" for new members and spouses on Friday, 3 October. We enjoy getting to know our newest members and spouses better, and it's a good time to give them current information about MOAA, our Chapter, and details about the important things we are doing in our veteran communities.

### **REMINDERS:**

- As of now, we must have the New Generation Uniformed Services Identification (USID) card by 1 January 2026. Locally, you can get them done at the SCARNG office at 355 Clemson Blvd. Clemson, SC 29631 – weekdays 0800-1700, Saturday 0800-1300. Phone 864-666-3787.
- Please let me know if you have a MOAA-eligible retired or former officer or warrant officer who I can meet and give MOAA and Chapter info to.
- **Remember to wear your service-related hats, shirts, sweatshirts, etc. when out and about - they are great conversation starters!**

### **THIS DAY, 1 SEPTEMBER, IN AMERICAN MILITARY HISTORY:**

- 1838 -- 2LT William Clark of "Lewis and Clark Expedition" fame died.

- 1864 -- Confederate General John Hood evacuated Atlanta as Union General William T. Sherman threatened to cut off the Confederate escape routes.
- 1925 -- Navy CDR John Rodgers and a crew of 4, flying a PN-9 on the first flight from San Francisco to Hawai'i, ran out of fuel, landed at sea, and rigged a sail and set sail for Hawai'i. After an additional 9+ days at sea and a week with no food and limited water, they made it to Hawai'i.
- 1939 – at 0445 hours, German forces invaded Poland with 52 armored and motorized divisions.

Respectfully,

Mel

Mel Case; Colonel, Infantry (Ret)  
President, Piedmont Chapter, MOAA  
904-304-8871  
[melcaseusma64@comcast.net](mailto:melcaseusma64@comcast.net)



## **Piedmont Chapter – 18 September MOAA Membership Meeting**

**Date/Time: 1730 Thursday, 18 September 2025**

**Place: Tucker's in Anderson**

**Address: 3501 Clemson Blvd, Anderson 29621**

**Speaker: Clemson ROTC leaders**

**Cost: \$35 per person (includes tax and gratuity)**

**RSVP/Mail Checks: Alex Glass, 106 Moorhaven Dr, Liberty, SC 29657**

**Email: [aglass1949@gmail.com](mailto:aglass1949@gmail.com) / Phone: 843-801-1509**

**Checks payable to: Piedmont Chapter, MOAA**

**Dinner RSVP Date: NLT, 16 September 2025**

**Please pay with a CHECK NOT CASH! Thank you**

Spouses and guests are encouraged to attend. If you are a prospective member and wish to attend this function, and/or join the chapter, please send in your reservation or contact the following:

**Chairperson Membership: Howard Stammerjohn**

**Phone: 864-964-1631 / Email: [piedmont.moaa@aim.com](mailto:piedmont.moaa@aim.com)**

## **July Meeting Speaker's Recap**

The Honorable Davey Hiott, Majority Leader, SC House of Representatives:  
He has been in the SC House for 22 years and is looking forward to retirement.

Addressing the membership: “I feel unworthy to be among you. You are the reason we live in the greatest state and greatest nation. All I can say is THANK YOU and that is not enough. We love you; we thank you; we appreciate you as do ALL Americans”

- SC is in good shape financially. One of three states with balanced budgets and has over \$1billion dollars in reserve.
- By law the debt may not exceed 5%, currently the debt is at .0001%.
- SC is below the national average for unemployment.
- There’s enough natural gas off the coast to power the state for 75 years.
- The state House passed the first step to discontinue the state income tax. Plan calls for a 1/2 % drop per year with the goal of eliminating it altogether.
- Passed a bill that gives you the right to protect your private property.
- SC, 5 years ago, committed \$200 million dollars per year for road improvements. This year another \$200 million has been allocated.

## **Piedmont Chapter – Proposed Meeting Dates, Venues, and Speakers For 2025/2026!**

**20 Nov 25:** 1130 Luncheon – Tucker’s in Anderson

Speaker: Joel Collins (invited), Attorney at Law, Columbia, SC

“The Oversized Influence of SC on the Establishment of our Nation”

**15 Jan 26:** 1130 Luncheon – Tucker’s in Anderson

Speaker: (Tentative) MG Robin B. Stilwell, The Adjutant General of SC

“The State of the SC National Guard “

## **Piedmont Chapter –New Members / Membership HERE WE GROW AGAIN!!**

Our Piedmont Chapter membership currently stands at 91 members. Our goal for the year is 93. Let’s welcome the following new members:

Percy A. Dingle, LtCol USAF (Ret) 2502 Cobbs Way, Anderson, 29621

864-617-9840 [pdingle@asd2.org](mailto:pdingle@asd2.org) ... wife is Faye

Douglas Smartt, CAPT USN (Ret) 301 Wilkes Way, Anderson 29621

540-267-5723 [dasmartt@msn.com](mailto:dasmartt@msn.com) ...wife is Carole

**Wear that military gear and keep those chapter business cards handy.** When you meet a potential member, please obtain their email address and/or phone number for me to follow up. Tell your contacts how we support **ALL** veterans, of **ALL** ranks, and **their military families.** Thank you for your membership, dedication and faith in MOAA and the Piedmont Chapter mission.

**"Never Stop Serving"**

## Piedmont Chapter – Birthdays

### SEPTEMBER

Winter Hunter  
Howard Jones  
Liona Meeks  
John Steer

### OCTOBER

John Allen  
Janelle Merritt  
Tommy Thompson  
Lou Russell



If you don't see your name mentioned in YOUR month, please call Howard Stammerjohn.

Membership Director  
864-964-1631

### Treasurer's Report

We finished July strongly with additional JROTC donations that pushed our balance to almost \$14,000; but more contributions are always accepted! Our general balance is healthy, and I anticipate we will be able to comfortably meet all our remaining year's budget needs. Janelle Merritt's name tag was drawn for the free meal at for our upcoming September meeting.

### JROTC Scholarship

"All on track to award first JROTC scholarship in May 2026."

### Fundraising

- Following last month's web-page developer interviews, the Fundraising Committee Co-Chairs briefed the assembled Chapter Board of Directors on 05 AUG 2025. Topics addressed included:

- The Committee's research findings regarding requirements for a successful Fundraising program.
- The Committee's conclusion is that expertise outside the Chapter's membership body was needed for several of the key Fundraising elements (e.g., Chapter webpage, current social media accounts with active donation links, creation of Chapter public relations Trifolds, etc.).
- Non-profit and military-affiliated organization web page development background and qualifications of the developer we interviewed, Ms. Marie Cole of the firm Spin Nest.
- The Committee's recommendation to the Board to approve funds to hire Ms. Marie Cole.

- The Board of Directors vote concurred with the Committee's recommendation

Next Steps:

- The Fundraising Committee will meet in the upcoming weeks to prioritize the various Fundraising elements listed above with Ms. Cole.



## **Navy League of the United States**

Upper South Carolina Council | Greenville, South Carolina

### **Navy Birthday Ball Celebrating the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the U.S. Navy at the Poinsett Club on Saturday, October 11, 2025 (6:00 – 8:30)**

**Program will include Guest Speaker, Silent Auction, NJROTC Color Guard  
and Drill Team,  
& more**

**(The Ball is the major fund-raising event for supporting 8 Youth Programs involving  
over 650 young men and women; tickets \$55, \$5 of which goes directly to the Youth  
Programs)**

**Attendance Limited to 250**

**Signup deadline October 7, 2025**

**The QR Code for signup is:**





**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**

Veterans Health Administration  
*Ralph H. Johnson VA Health Care System*

---

## **Important Update: Use 843-577-5011 for All VA Health Care Calls**

---

Dear Veteran,

We want to make you aware of an important issue that may be affecting your ability to contact your VA care team.

Some outdated clinic phone numbers have recently reappeared in Google search results.

To avoid any disruptions in care or communication, please use the following number for all needs:

Call 843-577-5011 for appointments, questions, and all VA health care services.

This is the official phone number for the Ralph H. Johnson VA Health Care System and all associated clinics. It is staffed by our centralized Call Center 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Our trained staff will ensure your call is routed to the right team.

We are working with VA web teams and external platforms like Google to correct outdated listings, but these systems can take time to update. In the meantime, please disregard any local clinic numbers you may see online or on printed materials and use 843-577-5011 exclusively.

Thank you for your patience as we work to resolve this issue. Our commitment remains the same: delivering safe, timely, and Veteran-centered care every time you reach out.

## SCAMS IN SC | 07/01/25 - 07/31/25

Crooks use clever schemes to defraud millions of people every year. They often combine sophisticated technology with age-old tricks to get people to send money or give out personal information. They add new twists to old schemes and pressure people to make important decisions on the spot. One thing that never changes: they follow Headlines—and the money.

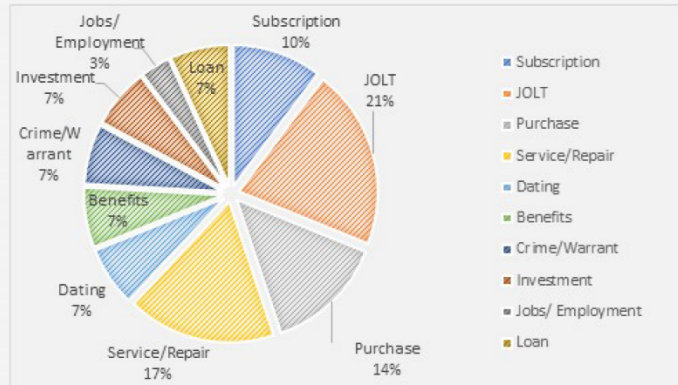
The charts below reflect scams reported to SCDCA from 07/01/25 to 07/31/25

**36 REPORTS**

**TOP THREE CATEGORIES**

1. JOLT
2. Service/Repair
3. Purchase

### Top Reported Scams in South Carolina



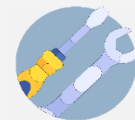
#### JOLT



*Jamaican Operations Linked to Telemarketing - US Postal Inspection Service communications. SCDCA is provided names and addresses of potential scam victims to ensure an opportunity for local outreach to protect the vulnerable elderly citizens of this state.*

#### Service/Repair

*Consumer directed to or approached by imposter business to trick consumer into paying for a fake service or repair.  
Example: Fake credit repair companies; internet services.*



#### Purchase



*Consumer directed to or approached by imposter business to trick consumer into paying for fake consumer goods. Most online purchase scams occur when a payment is made online to purchase something, and nothing is delivered.*

#### POTENTIAL LOSSES

**\$189,305.07**

This is the total amount of money reported to SCDCA by consumers who did NOT fall for a scam



#### ACTUAL LOSSES

**\$375,839.00**

This is the total amount of money reported to SCDCA by consumers who DID fall for a scam



SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

293 Greystone Boulevard, Suite 400 | Columbia, SC 29250 | 844-835-5322 | [www.consumer.sc.gov](http://www.consumer.sc.gov)



### Medicare Trustees Report Estimates Next 9 Years of Part B Premiums

The standard Medicare Part B monthly premium could nearly double over the next nine years, according to the annual report from the program's trustees, reaching \$347.50 by 2034 – up from \$185 this year.

The report projects a \$206.50 premium for next year. The \$21.50 year-over-year increase from 2025 to 2026 would be the largest among the projected hikes until 2033. A look at the full projection:

- **2026:** \$206.50
- **2027:** \$218.60
- **2028:** \$231.30
- **2029:** \$247.40
- **2030:** \$264.70
- **2031:** \$281.60
- **2032:** \$300.80
- **2033:** \$325.90
- **2034:** \$347.50



The report's projections are significantly higher than last year's report, which topped out at a \$299.80 monthly premium estimate in 2033. Higher premiums are connected to higher-than-anticipated Part B-related outlays; the report points to "higher projected spending for outpatient hospital and physician-administered drugs" as the key cost driver.

### Future IRMAA

The report also projects the Income Related Monthly Adjustment Amount (IRMAA) for future years, breaking down the additional costs faced by beneficiaries whose income falls into one of five tiered brackets from 35% to 85% above a baseline figure. Next year, those in the lowest IRMAA bracket would pay an estimated \$82.60 in additional premium costs, while those in the highest bracket would pay an added \$495.60. The 2025 IRMAA levels for those brackets are \$69.90 and \$419.30, respectively.

[RELATED: [What Is IRMAA, and What Does It Mean for My Medicare Premium?](#)]

The report does not predict the income levels connected to the brackets. These will change with inflation, and may influence beneficiaries' investment and/or [charitable-giving strategies](#).

Rates for 2026 likely will be announced in November.

The report's projections do not account for any changes to premium formulas that could be part of addressing the health of Medicare trust funds. The Hospital Insurance trust fund, which covers Part A services, is projected to run dry in 2033, per the report, while the Supplementary Medical Insurance fund – covering Part B and Part D programs – would remain solvent thanks to a different funding structure, but would represent nearly 5% of the nation's gross domestic product by 2099 under the current setup.

## Medicare and TRICARE For Life

MOAA Premium and Life members moving from TRICARE coverage to TRICARE For Life (TFL), which requires enrollment in Medicare Parts A and B, with questions about their benefit can access *Transitioning Into Medicare and TRICARE For Life* – our exclusive guide available as an [online microsite](#) and via [PDF download](#) (MOAA.org login required). The guide offers:

- A roadmap outlining eligibility concerns and the enrollment process, including a checklist to help prepare for the transition.
- Instructions for filing claims or using TFL alongside other insurance.
- Answers to frequently asked questions about the benefit.
- Advice for using the benefit overseas.
- A list of resources and official contacts.

## Piedmont Chapter – Surviving Spouse Corner

MOAA members and staff gather before visiting Capitol Hill offices as part of Advocacy in Action 2025 in Washington, D.C., in April. MOAA members — including members of MOAA's [Surviving Spouse Advisory Council](#), gathered in the nation's capital for Advocacy in Action, a day to visit lawmakers and advocate for key issues. This year, MOAA identified some issues for members to discuss. Learn more in [this event wrap-up](#).

[\*\*Caring for Survivors Act of 2025 \(H.R. 680/S. 611\)\*\*](#). This bill proposes increasing the monthly Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) payable to surviving spouses through the VA. It also seeks to reduce the required period a veteran must have been rated totally disabled from 10 years to five years for survivors to qualify for benefits.

[\*\*Love Lives On Act of 2025 \(S. 410/H.R. 1004\)\*\*](#). This bill would eliminate the remarriage penalty for surviving spouses, allowing them to retain DIC, Survivor Benefit Plan, and TRICARE benefits regardless of age if they remarry. It also restores TRICARE if a subsequent marriage ends and preserves access to education and the commissary benefits.

To all Surviving Spouses members of the Piedmont Chapter. If anyone has an interest in specific issues concerning the rights of surviving spouses, please contact me at:

[\*\*argojo@aol.com\*\*](mailto:argojo@aol.com) and I will respond quickly. **“Surviving Spouses are not Forgotten.”**

Gordon Johnson  
Chaplain

# Piedmont Chapter 2025 Board of Directors

## OFFICERS

|                |                                |              |
|----------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| President      | COL Melvin E. Case, USA        | 904-304-8871 |
| VP/Programs    | COL Wayne Beam, USA            | 843-814-7145 |
| Secretary      | Juliana Heck, Surviving Spouse | 703-475-5374 |
| Treasurer      | CPT Alex Glass, USA            | 843-801-1509 |
| Past President | LtCol Wayne Watson, USAF       | 864-296-1815 |

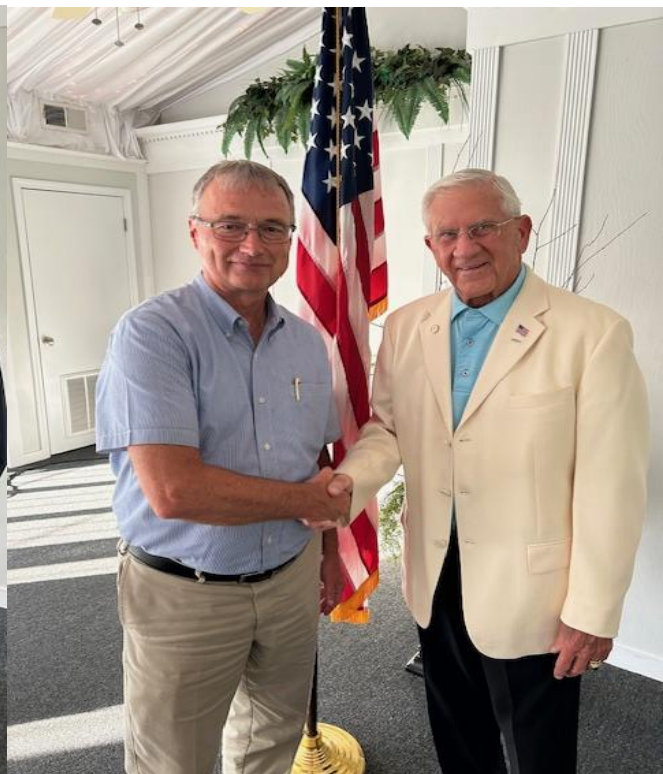
## DIRECTORS

|                            |                                  |              |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Public Relations/Publicity | COL Dale Ellenburg, USA          | 864-225-1073 |
| ROTC/JROTC Awards          | CDR Janelle Merritt, USN         | 864-617-1153 |
| Membership                 | LtCol Howard Stammerjohn, USAF   | 864-964-1631 |
| Newsletter                 | CDR Alan Erisman, USN            | 678-778-0183 |
| Legislative Affairs        | (open)                           |              |
| Social Media/Facebook      | (open)                           |              |
| Webmaster                  | Mr. Danny Nelson                 | 864-209-1638 |
| Chaplain/Personal Affairs  | Rev (Col) Gordon Johnson, USAF   | 864-633-4995 |
| Hospitality                | Sharon Jacobs, Surviving Spouse  | 864-245-5501 |
|                            | Penny Schriver, Surviving Spouse | 864-224-4374 |

For Chapter property, anyone having equipment should notify Juliana Heck, Secretary, by email: [julianaheck@yahoo.com](mailto:julianaheck@yahoo.com). She's the record keeper of all the Chapter property.



Doug Smartt, Mel Case, and Bill Williams



Davey Hiott (Majority Leader) and Mel Case



## HELP MILITARY FAMILIES TODAY

**ACT NOW:** Now is the time to urge your senator to help military families by securing financial relief for the U.S. child-care industry.

You may have noticed some changes to the Take Action Website, it is now even easier to reach out to your lawmakers on these issues, as well as track what MOAA is engaging in the halls of Congress. To learn more about the new changes, [click here!](#)

Take Action Now



## HELP THOSE IN NEED

Donate to help address emerging needs among currently serving and former uniformed service members, retirees, and their families.

Every donation, no matter what the size, makes a positive difference in the lives of uniformed service members and their families across the country.

Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Donate Now!

## Advocacy in Action

How? Easy, just go to the MOAA website: <https://moaa.quorum.us/home2/>

Scroll through the topics, read the articles, support those issues that have impact on you or someone you know but let our voices be heard. As the prophet Isaiah answered back to God's challenge to a long list of commands by God and God ask of Isaiah who will do these things? Isaiah replied, "Who, but I."

MOAA IS ASKING FOR ALL MEMBERS, our families and friends to join in the never-ending attack by outside influencers, our own legislators, and at times the American people against our benefits and still serving military members. Who will answer those threats and attacks on our benefits? WHO but you and I... Your Piedmont Chapter MOAA Officers ask all members to engage in the Advocacy and Action Program.



**Standing with you  
at every stage.**

1-800-247-2192  
[www.moaainsurance.com/plans](http://www.moaainsurance.com/plans)

100392

## HELP SUPPORT OUR SPONSOR!



### Association Member Benefits Advisors:

AMBA works with small and large associations nationwide. We have the expertise to meet any association's needs, regardless of cultural, geographic, and economic conditions.

Contact Person: Michele Armesto, CLU,  
RHU

Telephone: 202-251-9488

Contact

Email: [michele.armesto@amba.info](mailto:michele.armesto@amba.info)

[Sponsor Website](#)

## JOIN MOAA!

### BECOME A MEMBER OF OUR CHAPTER

**Join MOAA:** If you want to join MOAA national go to [MOAA National](#).

To join our chapter, choose **JOIN**, choose the state of **South Carolina**, and choose the **Piedmont Chapter**.

To  
about

[Become a Member Now!](#)

learn more  
the

National MOAA membership benefits,  
click [HERE](#)

**Disclaimer:** The Piedmont Chapter of MOAA is affiliated with the South Carolina Council MOAA and the national MOAA organization and all are nonpartisan.

**“The most important single ingredient in the formula of success is  
knowing how to get along with people”**

**- President Teddy Roosevelt**

### POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

A reminder from National MOAA: "As an organization 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 the 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."

### PIEDMONT CHAPTER LINKS:



### MOAA SOCIAL LINKS:

