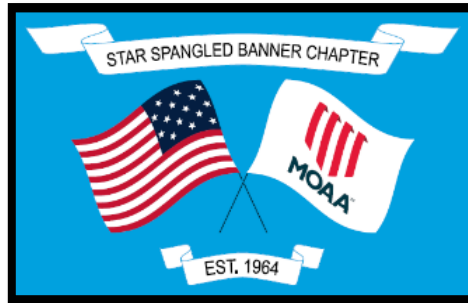


“Never Stop Serving”



Join us at –
www.starspan.org

Welcome to the **Star Spangled Banner Chapter** of the **Military Officers Association of America**. We are the oldest, continuously operating MOAA chapter in Maryland. Founded in 1964, we provide camaraderie with purpose and align with MOAA's national mission: a strong national defense, taking care of our country's veterans, and protecting the benefits of all who have served and currently serve. Our chapter membership is open to all seven services and supports ROTCs/JROTCs, numerous heartfelt charities and state tax exemption for retired uniformed services members and SBP recipients!

JUNE/JULY 2018 NEWSLETTER

Contents: The Role of the Military in U.S. Foreign Policy, LTG Ed Leland USA (Ret), Reservation for June 6 page 2; MITAGS Event April 19; Five Star Awards; Legislation Update; Recruiting; Advocacies; Member, Spouse and Surviving Spouse Information; Future Events

The Role of the Military in U.S. Foreign Policy – LTG Ed Leland USA (Ret.), Board Member at Large



...And Reflections on an Army Career:

- Role of the military in the establishment and execution of U.S. foreign policy - - how much is enough?
- 1990 as a pivot point in recent U.S. military history
- Role of luck and being saved by those with whom you work
- Things I learned from my father - - Colonel USAF

Liberatore's, June 6, 2018, 5:30 PM

Reservations by June 1 – Page 2

Ed Leland graduated from the United States Military Academy with a BS degree and also has an MS degree in Operations Research/Systems Analysis from the Naval Postgraduate School. He was commissioned an Armor Officer in 1961 and is a Ranger and a Paratrooper.

In 32 years of commissioned service in the Army, he commanded a tank company, a tank battalion, a mechanized infantry brigade, an armored division, and the Army's National Training Center at Ft Irwin, CA, and served two tours in Vietnam. He taught engineering at West Point for three years and concluded his service with two national security policy assignments - Chief of

***MARITIME INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND GRADUATE
STUDIES (MITAGS) EVENT APRIL 19, 2018***
Captain Bob Becker Host



Chapter members and guests enjoyed an enlightening and challenging experience aboard a “Simulated” Coast Guard cutter as it made its way through Baltimore’s Inner Harbor. The cutter encountered wind, wake and weather changes, dodged Cruise & Cargo ships, bridges and aircraft overhead, all programmed by the simulator’s engineer to demonstrate how Coast Guard, cruise ship & transport ship pilots from around the world are trained. Although a few members had trouble with their sea legs since the simulation was so realistic (until they looked down and found the floor didn’t move), all enjoyed a delicious buffet in the Institute’s cafeteria following the tour. Did anyone notice the cargo ship with “Thank You MOAA” projected on it? The chief instructor must have heard about the new MD State tax exemption for military retirees!

Captain Bob Becker, the Academic Business Development Director, who himself is qualified to teach 26 of the classes at MITAGS, was our most gracious and informative host for the Simulator Demonstration. CAPT Bob and his chief instructor showed us how multiple, large-scale simulators allow container ship captains, tug masters, and pilots to work together in the same scenario as part of a highly-accurate, interactive environment. In fact, ship simulation is now the most practical and cost-effective way for professional mariners to develop safe operational limits for vessel transits within restricted waters. The Maritime Institute of Technology and Graduate Studies (MITAGS) is the worldwide leader in the area of Full-Mission Ship Simulation (FMSS). With over twenty years of experience, and state-of-the-art simulation technology, the MITAGS-PMI expert staff can program a model of virtually any port/vessel combination in the world.

Captain Bob graduated from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, NY in 1978. He had experience on chemical tankers, oil tankers, roll-on-roll-off ships, break bulk ships, bulk ships and extensive time on container ships. He spent fifteen years at sea with containerhips of [Sea Land](#), an intra-regional container shipping company. Captain Becker spent the past fourteen years ashore with MITAGS.





Captain Bob and his console operator (Chief Instructor, MOAA member, and retired Coast Guard)

******MOAA National has awarded the FIVE STAR COL Marvin J. Harris Communications Award to the Star Spangled Banner Chapter Website and Newsletter for 2017! Congratulations to George Wright, Rita Kurek and all those who contributed!**

Legislation Update: Tom Seybold, Chapter President



Thank you for sending emails to the members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee in the lead up to the hearing for HB 327. Our team - MOAA, VFW,

American Legion, DAV, and several other organizations presented testimony!
[You can watch the testimony at by clicking here.](#)

MD State Tax Exemption of Military Retirement Pay Summary:

\$15,000 Tax Exemption for all age 55 and over beginning 2018!

The Governor's tax relief bill that had out-year exemptions to reach 100% basically became House Bill 327 and passed 137-1 in the House of Delegates but did not pass in the Senate. Both Houses finally passed a \$15,000 tax exemption bill, SB996 for all age 55 and over beginning with tax year 2018 and it was signed into law! This applies to all seven (7) Uniformed Services and also SBP payments to surviving spouses. *This is a significant victory for those age 55 up!*****

Thanks to those who helped advance this legislation with your emails! I know many of you reacted quickly because I helped you cut and paste into the legislator's email reply form! **However, this chipping away is not near good enough!** We need to get 100% exemption for **all ages** and it will take a lot more positive action on your part! Our young members and new members are key to our success. Legislators listen to you. They recognize an active constituent from a passive voter. **Politics is a contact sport!**

We have argued for many years that 100% exemption is a solid economic move for Maryland, its workforce, its employers, our military installations, and all taxpayers across the State. Our Maryland Comptroller agrees! So does our Maryland Military Coalition (MMC). With the recent addition of West Virginia and Arkansas in 2018, the retired pay of Uniformed Services is not taxed at all in 27 States.

With your help we will continue the fight for 100% tax exemption and wake up our legislators to all the facts that military retirees are good for Maryland! Don't be bashful, the summer is a great time to chat with your representatives!

In the **Senate**, tax bills are managed by the Budget and Taxation (B&T) Committee; in the **House of Delegates**, they are managed by the Ways and Means (W&M) Committee. It is especially important to communicate with the members of these two Committees. Members of the General Assembly's Veterans Caucus, in both the House and Senate, should also be contacted. Remember, everyone has three Delegates and one Senator. B&T and W&M Committee members in your County Delegation should definitely be contacted.

You can check the status of proposed legislation any time by visiting the [Maryland General Assembly](http://www.starspan.org/legislation.html) website. For support of the tax-exempt issue, committees, emails, etc.: See <http://www.starspan.org/legislation.html>. **Everything you need is there!**

The Senators and Delegates in the Veterans Caucus will continue to meet and drive this effort as well as other legislation for future years based on the approved priorities from last November. See the Legislation site on our chapter website for information on the Veterans Caucus and their priorities, especially **state tax exemption and mental health – our chapter's key current issue and advocacy!**

Veterans Caucus Agenda:



The final results included suicide prevention and tax exemptions. The veteran community finally spoke with one voice to the legislature. Legislators are genuinely excited about this in Annapolis. If we're lucky, dozens of other legislators will use it to file bills with people they don't often work with, across party lines and between the House and Senate. The Veterans Agenda will form the core of the

Maryland Veterans Caucus mission for years to come, and hopefully make Maryland the most Veteran Friendly state in the Union. The Agenda is posted on our website!

Representatives from 50 Veterans organizations identified the top Veterans issues. This allowed legislators to introduce bills that would make a real difference. More than 27 important Veterans bills passed and will be signed into law by Governor Hogan later this month. **The epidemic of suicides emerged as the #1 Veteran priority, and the entire Senate approved SB911, Veterans Suicide Prevention Plan, but sadly the House of Delegates refused to even vote it.**

HB 502: This Bill passed to include Surviving Spouses. Since June 2016 Uniformed Services retirees over 65 (without any length of residency requirements) may be granted a **20% Property Tax Credit for up to five (5) years** by those Counties of resident or the City of Baltimore that approve it. Members should advocate for this benefit!

Recruiting: The chapter website <http://www.starspan.org/about.html> has the strategy for recruiting and also the Recruiting Brochure. You can print one from the website and recruit a veteran service friend! **New members bring clout to the tax exemption effort!**

MOAA National has signed up as members only about 1% of separated officers--who are from a total pool of prospective members of about 1,200,000. By comparison, the MOAA market share of Retired Officers is about 43% of 775,000. MOAA National also has as members somewhere in the vicinity 1/4 of currently serving officers (i.e., pool of about 450,000). Some could be potential chapter members.

ADVOCACIES:

paws4vets Foundation: "A dog will teach you unconditional love. If you can have that in your life, things won't be too bad." - Robert Wagner



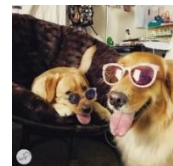
David served 16 years on active duty in the USMC, making it from Private to Major during his career. He has suffered from severe depression since shortly after returning from the Gulf War. David has flashbacks of his time in service, has trouble sleeping, and finds it difficult to focus. He also isolates himself, and in the process, destroys valued relationships he has previously built. After experiencing a permanent back injury, David found that the physical limitations of everyday life drove him further into the darkness.

David met his best friend, SPENCER, in March of 2018! SPENCER is a lovable Golden Retriever, who will help David see the good in life again and allow him to enjoy time with his sweet grandchildren! SPENCER will also help by retrieving items that David cannot reach, bracing to help him get up from low positions, and anchoring to control his anxiety.



The Reynolds girls and HEART had fun spending their first Easter together as a family. It is amazing to see how our Dogs Help Transform not only the lives of our Clients, but their whole family's lives

Student Trainer Melissa Spivey spent her Friday night-in with GRAYSON & ATKINS! Girls just wanna have fun!



MOAA Military Family Initiative:

see <http://www.moaa.org/foundation/#Donate.html>

The MOAA Scholarship Fund offers scholarships, interest-free loans, and grants to children pursuing their first undergraduate degree whose parents are former, active, or retired officers or active or retired enlisted military personnel. Selected students must have a military parent who is a Premium or Life member of MOAA or, if enlisted, a member of Voices for America’s Troops. Information can be found at: **MOAA Scholarship Fund.**

UPDATE FOR MEMBERS, SPOUSES AND SURVIVING SPOUSES:

On Wednesday, April 17 MOAA Stormed the Hill,
But You Can Still Make a Difference

Find out how you can help from home.



The two issues discussed:

1. push for a **2.6% active duty pay raise** next year
2. **better treatment for Chapter 61 medical retirees** (with less than 20 years of service).

Dulaney Valley Gardens in Timonium always has a wonderful *Memorial Day Ceremony* with the National Guard Band performing and survivors and local dignitaries as speakers. Watch for the time and date in the news!

May 20, 2018

[Massing of the Colors](#) - Ft. George G. Meade

[Congress Is Still Split Over VA Reform and Veterans Choice](#)

Recap on the "Widow's Tax." The survivor of a deceased retired military member must forfeit part or all of his/her Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) Annuity when VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) is granted. This loss affects approximately 67,000 military survivors, even though they had made monthly payments for the SBP insurance. [This is the only insurance plan you pay into but are legally not allowed to collect!] The purpose of **SBP** is to ensure that surviving dependents of military personnel will have a reasonable income after the sponsor passes away. The **DIC** is a Department of Veterans Affairs payment as a monetary benefit for survivors whose sponsors died of a military-connected injury or disease. These are based on two separate and distinct reasons for compensation. The VA indemnity compensation should be paid in addition to the SBP annuity. If Congress cannot repeal the SBP-DIC Offset, it should increase **SSIA** (Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance) above COLA adjustments to help mitigate the overall effect of the Widow's Tax. We need to urge Congress to end the offset or else further increase SSIA--which, at



just over \$300 per month at present, covers only about 25% of the offset. The total loss to the eligible surviving spouse is now close to \$13,000 annually. Congress knows this is wrong, but the cost to fix it completely is very high.

New Virtual Chapter for Surviving Spouses. During Storming the Hill last week we were advised that a new Virtual Chapter is being established for Surviving Spouses. It currently is scheduled to hold its first conference call on **Tuesday, June 5th**. You need to sign up over the next few weeks if you wish to participate in what promises to become an educational as well as interesting method to communicate with other Surviving Spouses around the State and Nation. There is no charge to join for MOAA members. If you have any questions, you can contact MOAA Headquarters at 800-234-6622 and ask for Council and Chapter Affairs. You also may wish to reach out to Mickey Costello, Co-Chair of the new Virtual Chapter MSSVC02, and you can e-mail her at MSSVC02@gmail.com. Please note that the e-mail address ends in zero two, and it's the "MOAA Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter #2." **Note: Karen Seybold, Auxiliary Liaison has a paper application if interested.**

How Surviving Spouses become MOAA members: If the Veteran member is a Life Member of MOAA at the time of death, the surviving spouse becomes a member free of charge, with a unique and new membership number. If the Veteran was eligible for MOAA membership, then the spouse can become a surviving spouse member of MOAA by self-initiating a request for membership.

The last three News Items were furnished by Naomi M. Kaplan, Spouse and Surviving Spouse Liaison, MOAA Maryland Council

Future Chapter Events for 2018:

<p>Sept. 22, 2018 Saturday 4:30 pm</p> 	<p><i>Chapter Paws4vets Fund Raiser, Sparrows Point Country Club, MD</i> Paws4vets Assistance Dogs and perhaps puppies!!!</p>
<p>Nov. 14, 2018 Wednesday 5:30 pm</p> 	<p><i>Chapter 54th Annual Banquet, Liberatore's Ristorante, Timonium, MD</i> Park Ranger Raconteur from Ft Mc Henry, Vincent Valaise, WWI at FT McHenry and More!</p>

***This newsletter is published by the Star Spangled Banner Chapter. It is a 501(c)19 nonprofit affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA). The Star Spangled Banner Chapter is one of more than 400-plus chapters affiliated with National MOAA. Our chapter is a non-partisan veterans' organization. MOAA and its affiliates is dedicated to maintaining a strong national defense and ensuring our nation keeps its commitments to currently serving, retired and former members of the uniformed services, their families and survivors. Our chapter supports national MOAA's federal legislative actions and MD Council's State legislative priorities. ***

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