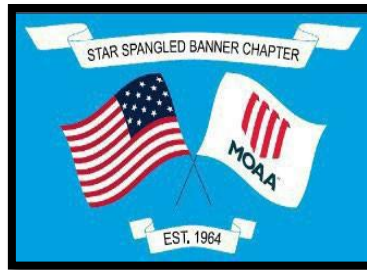




Never stop serving!



Banner & client Eric

Join us at www.starspan.org

Star Spangled Banner Chapter of MOAA

July 2026 Newsletter

Contents: April 25th paws4vets Fundraiser Results & Photos, President's Message, JROTC & ROTC news, Legislative & Membership Update, Future Event Dates

THE RESULTS ARE IN !!!!!

***paws4vets* Fundraiser, Columbus Gardens, 4/25/2026**



The paws4vets Fundraising Event held at Columbus Gardens in April was another **HUGE** Success! We raised **\$32,000.00** for the Foundation!! The Food was Fabulous, the Band was Fantastic and everyone had a blast taking chances on the wonderful Auctions and Raffles! In attendance were **Randy Powers**, *paws4vets* Relationship Development Officer, who is also a client, with his dog, "Layla" and client **Amy Makar**, her parents Jen & veteran Tom, and her dog "Dottie". We were able to name two more puppies in a recent litter. We now have **"McHenry"** and **"Betsy"** to add to our sponsored dogs, keeping with the Star Spangled Banner theme. (see paws4people update

dated July 1, 2026 on next page). Our Chapter logo will also now be embroidered on the outside of the dog's vest to show that the SSBC of MOAA is a major contributor.

paws4people® Updates

Volume 10 | Issue 25 | July 1st, 2026

New Puppy Announcement



We are thrilled to welcome our two newest litters to the paws4people® family. We cannot wait to see the lives these amazing puppies will change.

HELEN x STATIEN

QUINCY named by Chris and Carolyn Weinzril

SEPTEMBER named in honor of Patti Hill

BETSY named by MOAA

MCHENRY named by MOAA

LINCOLN

REVERE

ELEANOR

INDY

GLORY

KILLIAN x MACGREGOR

OPAL named in honor of Bonnie Sanders Burney.

Thanks to Our Generous Endowment Donors

Honorary Donations (\$10000+)

In honor & memory of **Capt (former) Derald N. Jendersee**
from family members Judi Jerbi, Phyllis May & Julie Towns Elliott

Addie's Way Society (\$5000-\$9999)

Dr. Rita M. Kurek

Golden Retriever Circle (\$1000-\$4999)

Mike DeHaemer

Lou Kousouris Jr.

Banner's Boosters (\$400-\$999)

John Backer

Military Family Resource Fund (MD National Guard
Association)

Assistance Puppy Promotors (\$1-\$399)

Charles Blomquist

Tom Lowe

R. David Edwards

Beryl & Jean Sachs

Randy Everett

Irma & John Rybczinski

Deb Franklin

Cheryl Talbot

Dr. Erin Loeliger

Rick & Dawn Kurek

Kathy Hofmann

Rene Whelehan

Judy Lunnen

Grand Prize Auction Donors

Dr. Rita M. Kurek (Orioles Package)/Atlas Gift Card

Patrick Dyer (Ravens Package)

Thanks to all who attended, sold tables and raffle tickets, obtained prizes for our auctions & raffles, worked during the event or made generous donations!!

The dogs & clients THANK YOU!!!

The winners of our Grand Raffle were:

1st Place (Orioles 20 game package): Jeff Markiewicz

2nd Place (4 Club Level Ravens Tickets): Bill Gray

3rd Place (\$200 Atlas Gift Card): Tony & Jeanette Scarr



Future paws4vets Fundraisers

We have supported the paws4vets foundation since 2017, nearly 10 years! Our past president, the late Col (r) Tom Seybold, started the relationship off with a chance meeting with Randy Powers on a commercial plane trip! It started out with a members only informational meeting to learn about the paws4vets, and a member vote was taken to adopt this organization as our annual fundraising advocacy. Tom eventually asked Col (r) Rita Kurek to chair this fundraising effort, and it has grown exponentially since then into a very successful event with fantastic food, great entertainment, many fun chances to win prizes and the paws4vets service dogs and clients in attendance. We have raised nearly \$100,000.00 for the foundation to date!! We can be

very proud as an organization of supporting this worthy cause but as with all events of this nature it takes a lot of work to pull it off *and many, but not all members are actively supportive.* Therefore, we will be sending out a survey shortly to gauge the interest in continuing this type of event, or suggestions for an alternate means, before we schedule the next event date! Please respond promptly when you receive it.

The following photos were from the 25 April 2026 **paws4vets** event



Randy Powers, Amy Makar & dogs Layla and Dottie



*Randy Powers, **paws4vets** Relationship Development Officer, with Amy & Dottie, advocates for the cause.*



Randy Powers checks out the Auction



Randy & Elva Everett working the Plant & Booze wheel.



Vickie & Clay Maas selling Auction Tickets



President George Stakias & Randy Powers greet some guests.



The Band "Double Play", Larry & Chuck.



SSBC President George Stakias checking out the Auction Prizes.



A guest checks out the Silent Auction



Bill & Pat Gray enjoying the event. Bill won the 2nd place Grand Raffle prize! Thus the big smiles!!!

President's Message

COL (Ret) George Stakias, USAR



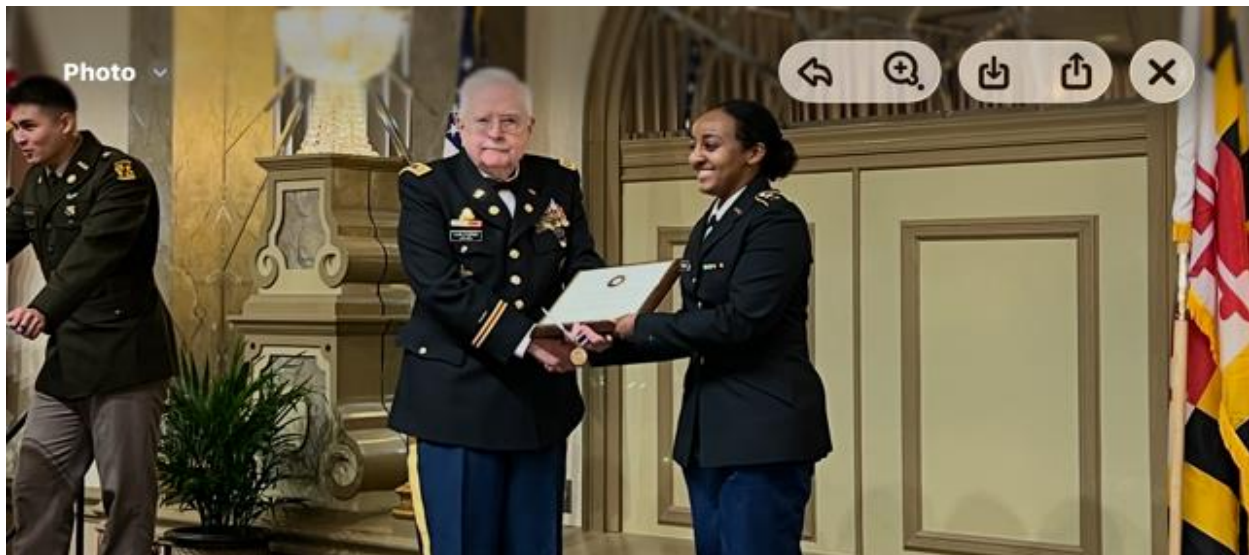
I would like to take this time to hope all our members enjoy their summer break, spending it with loved ones and taking time off to enjoy some much-needed rest and relaxation. As we approach our nation's 250th celebration from 1776 to 2026, we have celebrated freedom, resilience, and the enduring spirit of our nation. Today, I am especially grateful for the love, laughter, and unity we share — the greatest blessings of all. May the red, white, and blue remind us of the courage of those who came before us, and may our home always be a place of safety, pride, and joy. Wishing you a Fourth of July filled with tasty food, great company, and fireworks that light up the night. We have a lot to be gearing towards by the end of the year 2026. I kindly request that you be an active member through this chapter and if you ever need a ride to any of our upcoming dinner meetings, “we are here to help”. As we are gradually and steadily increasing our membership, we would like to hear from those whose voices may not have been heard. Your input is of foremost importance, and we

desperately need your participation. We are actively pursuing new members and are looking for current and new members to take part in the chapter by volunteering their time for a committee assignment or a board officer position, specifically President, Secretary, Treasurer and Surviving Spouse Rep. We actively encourage you to donate for the noteworthy causes of *paws4vets*, the Army Officer Guides and MOAA Leadership Award medals.

Thank you so much! Looking forward to seeing you at our next dinner meeting and upcoming events!

ROTC & JROTC News: Col (ret) Frank Hilsher, ROTC Chairman, Col (ret) Rob Paolucci, JROTC Chairman

This has been a busy Spring for the ROTC & JROTC programs! Col (r) Frank Hilsher attended all the ROTC graduation and commissioning events this spring and presented several MOAA ROTC Leadership Awards and the shoulder board gift from the late Past President Col (r) Tom Seybold's surviving spouse, Karen Seybold. LTC (r) John Davidson presented the MOAA ROTC Award at Johns Hopkins University Military Ball. The following pictures are from the ROTC events this spring.



LTC (r) John Davidson, USA, presents the MOAA ROTC Award to *Cadet Liana Tesla* at the JHU Military Ball, Martins West, 8 May 2026



Col (r) Frank Hilsher, USA, presents the MOAA ROTC Award to **Cadet Henry Richter**, Loyola University, 8 May 2026.



Col (r) Frank Hilsher, USA, presents the MOAA ROTC Award to **Cadet Courtney Cephas**, Morgan State University, 30 April 2026.



Col (r) Frank Hilsher, USA, makes the special presentation of the LTC Shoulder Board gift from surviving spouse Karen Seybold on behalf of the late Col (r) Tom

Seybold, past SSBC President, to ***Cadet Ashton Busseau***, Loyola University, 8 May 2026.



Col (r) Frank Hilsher, USA, attended the JHU and UMBC swearing in ceremony for 17 new 2LTs, 22 May 2026

Col(r) Rob Paolucci was successful in arranging MOAA JROTC Awards for 8 Cadets this year. The High School JROTC programs and presenters were as follows: Baltimore Polytechnic Institute (CAPT (r) John Backer), Franklin HS (CAPT (r) Chuck Rishell), Landsdowne, Forest Park, Randallstown, Reginald F. Lewis and Edmonson-Westside High Schools (Col (r) Rob Paolucci), Dundalk HS (Col (r) Rita Kurek). ***If you are interested next Spring in being a presenter for the JROTC HS Awards, please notify Col (r) Rob Paolucci at paoluccir@gmail.com.*** It's an honor and a privilege to represent SSBC of MOAA and encourage these young warriors. So great to see this program more robust again-***thanks Rob!!!***

The following photos are from the JROTC Award events.



Col (r) Rob Paolucci, USA, presents the MOAA JROTC Award to Cadet Semaj T. Robinson, Forest Park HS, 29 April 2026.



Col (r) Rob Paolucci, USA, announces the MOAA JROTC Award as it is presented to Cadet Jeremiah Stout, Landsdowne HS at the American Legion Post 109, 1 May 26



CAPT (r) John Backer, USN, presents the MOAA JROTC Award to **Cadet Anyla Hairston** at Baltimore Polytechnic Institute, 7 May 2026. CAPT Backer is a graduate of BPI himself!!



CAPT (r) Chuck Rishell, USMC, presents the MOAA JROTC Award to **Cadet Connor Tayloe** at Franklin HS, 13 May 2026



Col (r) Rob Paolucci, USA, presents the MOAA JROTC Award to Cadet Janela Smith, Randallstown HS, 7 May 2026



Col (r) Rob Paolucci, USA, presents the MOAA JROTC Award to Cadet Jaday Mills at Edmonson-Westside HS, 11 May 2026



Col (r) Rob Paolucci, USA, presents the MOAA JROTC Award to **Cadet Katherine Alvarado**, Reginald F. Lewis HS, 14 May 2026



Col (r) Rita Kurek, USAF, presents the MOAA JROTC Award to **Cadet Alex Zuniga Fuentes**, Dundalk HS, 15 May 2026. In addition, SSBC Chaplain **Maj (r) Ted Knach, USA**, provided the Invocation at the ceremony.

Legislative Update: LTC (ret) Bill Gray, Chairman

Summary of the 2026 Maryland Legislative Session

The 2026 Legislative Session ended on April 13, and most of the legislation that passed and was approved by the Governor updated existing policies and programs. Changes mostly applied to definitions to coincide with the “Uniform Services” or were to include the National Guard or expanded benefits to apply to spouses or dependent children.

Others expanded certain Professional Licensure Compacts that simplify licensure process across multiple states. An example this year applies to School Psychologists.

These compacts benefit military family members when a military family relocates or retiree family moves from one state to another.

A summary of the final status of introduced bills that applied to Veterans or Military personnel can be found on our website at www.starspan.org under the Legislation Heading, then the 2026 MD Legislative Session.

Membership Update: LTC (ret) Bill Gray, Chairman

Please check your dues status for 2026 promptly! Some of you have prepaid for several years so you can find out if your dues are up to date by keying into Chapter Info, Membership, Members Only on the website at www.starspan.org. You will be directed to make certain that you are properly signed in, and then your membership status will appear. If it does not show "Paid", you may go to the "Renew your membership online" or notify our Membership Director, Bill Gray if you think there is an error or omission.

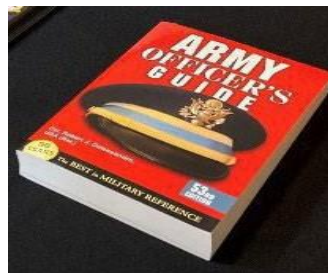
All non-paid members will be dropped from the distribution list on August 1, 2026. We are extending this due to some recent website issues, so please make sure you are current.

Under the Chapter Info, Recruiting heading, the Recruiting Brochure has been updated. It is easy to print and deliver to prospective members. If the individual has questions, refer them to Bill Gray or if they want to send in their dues, refer to Rita Kurek, Treasurer.

LTC (Ret) Bill Gray, 2nd VP, Legislative & Membership Chairperson
Email: graybillo@verizon.net
Cell: 410-746-2861

Pay Dues Online or mail to:
Col (Ret) Rita M. Kurek, Secretary-Treasurer
1231 Engleberth Rd.
Essex, MD 21221
rmkurek@aol.com
Cell: 410-294-4913

Dues help pay for the Army Officer Guides we present to newly commissioned 2nd LTs each year at our three supported ROTCs.



New Members are always welcome!! Recruit your colleagues!

Future Chapter Events for 2026: (SAVE THE DATES NOW!!!)

<i>DATE</i>	<i>EVENT</i>
16 September 2026 6pm	Dinner Meeting Speaker:TBD Venue: Pappas Restaurant & Sports Bar, Cockeysville, MD 21030 POC: George Stakias (410) 707-6947
11 November 2026 6pm “Veteran’s Day”	Annual Dinner Meeting Speaker and Venue TBD POC: George Stakias (410) 707-6947

This letter 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 are dedicated to maintaining a strong national defense and ensuring our nation keeps its commitment 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.



*** Newsletter Online: www.starspan.org Newsletter Editor and
Distribution: COL Rita M. Kurek, USAF (Ret) C: 410 294-4913 H: 410 574-
5330rmkurek@aol.com

The Star Spangled Banner Chapter of the **Military Officers Association of America** is 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 commission and warrant officers of all eight services.