

MOAA REPORTER

MOAA Greater Dallas & North Texas Chapter

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2022 Membership Renewal Campaign



The 2022 membership renewal notices were sent out on September 14th. As of October 1st we have received back only about 75 responses. We have not raised Chapter's annual dues in the past 10 years; they remain \$20 for regular members and \$10 for Surviving Spouse members. Chapter dues pay for the Membership Directory, mailing newsletters to members without access to email, Leadership Medals for JROTC cadets, and support for the Veterans Center of North Texas. The renewal notices also asks members to voluntarily donate to the Chapter's scholarship fund. We were able to award \$1,000 scholarships to 7 JROTC cadets in 2021 due to the generous donations of our members. Contributions to the scholarship fund are tax deductible in accordance with IRS regulations. Help the Chapter continue to serve our members and support the community by renewing your membership today. One final note – review your personal information in the renewal package and return any changes or corrections with your renewal payment. We will publish this information in the 2022 Membership Directory.

Mark Your Calendar & Save the Date

MOAA GDNTX Chapter Holiday Party



The Chapter Christmas Party and Annual Business Meeting will be held on Saturday, December 11th from 11:30 to 2:00. We will again meet at Maggiano's Little Italy Restaurant in the North Park Centre (US 75 and Northwest Highway). This will be a great opportunity to get into the holiday spirit! The entertainment will feature Brad Ackland, a classic American crooner, singing classics made famous by Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Tony Bennett and others. You don't want to miss him; he put on a great show for us several years ago. Since this is also our annual business meeting you will have the opportunity to meet 2022-2023 slate of Chapter Officers. If you haven't been to Maggiano's before, be prepared to come hungry and take home leftovers in a doggie bag. Watch for more details in the November newsletter.

Check Out The Chapter Website

www.moanorthtexas.org or www.moagreaterdallas.org

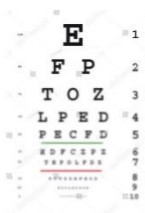


The Chapter's award winning website has a wealth of information for Chapter members. The website is colorful, full of pictures of Chapter members and easy to navigate. This is a great resource; click on either of the links above to get access to the following information:

- Did you miss Allen West's presentation at the September meeting? You can see it on the website home page.
- Do you need to find something in a past newsletter? You can find issues back to June 2020 in the Calendar & News section of the website.
- Want to find out more about MOAA's 2021 key legislative issues or contact your Senator or Congressional Representative? Click on the links on the Legislative page and you will be taken to the appropriate pages on the MOAA National website.

- Know a Veteran who needs help finding a job, paying a bill, or finding affordable housing? Go to the Community page and click on Veterans Center of North Texas to be connected to the premier Veterans resource center and crisis management organization in North Texas.
- Need to start or update your plans for end of life? Click on MOAA Publications in the Calendar and News section and you will find four excellent MOAA publications to help your planning process.
- Need help navigating the internet to find important information for Veterans and retirees? The Useful Websites page in the Calendar & News section of the website contains links to many helpful websites.
- Need to find a location to renew your Military ID card? The Military ID page in the Calendar and section of the website shows locations in the DFW area and provides a link to the RAPIDS website to make an appointment. Note – If you are planning to walk-in, I strongly recommend you call first.
- Scheduling Military Honors for a veteran’s burial can be complicated. The Military Honors page in the Calendar & Events section provides helpful contact numbers of each branch of the service.

VA Low Vision Services



This article is a personal testimony of my experiences with the Dallas VA hospital Low Vision Clinic. I have Stargardts, a genetic disease that affects the macular. I first noticed a problem around 2012 and my vision has deteriorated over the years. I stopped driving in 2019 and was diagnosed as legally blind earlier this year. I was able to cope with my vision loss over the years because changes came gradually. I enlarged the fonts on my computer screen, used the magnifier on my iPhone to read menus, and used a portable magnifying device from my low vision optometrist to read documents. However, by about 6 months ago, I was having to use my iPhone to read my computer screen and I gave up reading long documents.

I learned about the VA Low Vision clinic late last year and scheduled an appointment in May. The Low Vision team is more than a low vision optometrist; it includes a support assistant, orientation and mobility specialist, blind rehab specialist, visual impairment treatment specialist and low vision advocate. The team thoroughly tested my eyesight and recommended devices tailored to my eyesight and lifestyle. They provided glasses to improve my ability to watch TV; they provided a software application that allows me to selectively enlarge the font on my computer screen; and they provided a device that allows me to read an entire page of text. Low vision problems are not curable. However, the VA Low Vision Clinic has given me the ability to continue my volunteer activities for MOAA, the Veterans Center of North Texas and the George W. Bush Presidential Library. With their help I have been able to maintain my quality of life.

It is important to note that low vision problems do not have to be service connected for a veteran to be eligible for treatment by the VA. My condition is genetic and not service connected. Feel free to contact me, Dave Schafer, at 214-577-4107 or moaschafer@att.net if you have questions or would like additional information.



Support The MOAA 2021 Advocacy in Action Campaign

The MOAA Take Action website continues to ask members to urge their elected representatives to support the following key initiatives. Although some of these initiatives are included in the 2022 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), differences remain between the House and Senate Versions (read more about the NDAA at [NDAA Passes House as Senate Process Continues](#)). Now is not the time to lower the pressure. Visit the [MOAA - Advocacy in Action](#) site and urge your elected representatives to support these issues.

- Support the Military Hunger Prevention Act
- Support comprehensive toxic exposure legislation
- Fix the TRICARE Young Adult coverage gap

Support the Military Hunger Prevention Act

It is hard to believe that members of the military live at or near the poverty level or have to rely on food stamps (SNAP) to feed their families. This initiative would provide a \$400 monthly subsidy to service members with a household gross income at or below 130% poverty line. The Congressional Budget Office estimates around 10,200 service members (primarily junior enlisted) would benefit from this allowance.

Support comprehensive toxic exposure legislation

Thousands of Vietnam-era veterans have been diagnosed with serious illnesses, including cancer, heart disease, diabetes, Parkinson's disease and peripheral neuropathy as a result of exposure to Agent Orange. Now, veteran advocates have raised concern over burn pits as a similar crisis. Although veterans who have been exposed to toxins from burn pits have noted health issues, scientific research making the link is ongoing. Exposure to toxins stateside is also a concern to many veterans. The Toxic Exposures in the American Military (TEAM) Act was introduced March 23 by Sen. Thom Tillis (R-N.C.) and Sen. Maggie Hassan (D-N.H.). Specifically, the TEAM Act will:

- Provide consultation and testing through the VA for eligible veterans exposed to toxic substances.
- Require the VA to respond to new scientific evidence regarding diseases associated with toxic exposure within an established timeframe.
- Establish a scientific commission to research the health effects of toxic exposure in veterans, and report the findings to the VA and Congress
- Ensure the VA enters into agreements with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to conduct scientific studies regarding associations between diseases and exposure to toxic substances during military service
- Develop an online portal for veterans to access the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record, which can track exposures throughout a veteran's service
- Expand training on toxic exposure issues for VA health care and benefits personnel
- Require the VA to develop a questionnaire for primary care appointments to help determine whether a veteran may have been exposed to toxic substances during service

Fix the TRICARE Young Adult coverage GAP

This initiative urge Congress to fix a TRICARE eligibility gap for young adults that has existed for more than a decade. Commercial plans that offer dependent child coverage are required to make the coverage available until the adult child reaches the age of 26. There is no separate premium for families

who elect to keep adult children on commercial plans. This protects young adults' access to affordable health care even if they elect to pursue advanced degrees or face barriers obtaining their own employer-sponsored coverage. In contrast, TRICARE policy terminates coverage for young adults at age 21 (or 23 if a full-time student). The FY 2011 National Defense Authorization Act established TRICARE Young Adult (TYA) extending eligibility to age 26 but, unlike families covered by commercial plans, TYA enrollees are required by law to cover the full cost of the program via a separate monthly premium. For 2021, the monthly premium to cover a young adult is \$459 for TYA Prime (up 22% versus 2020) and \$257 for TYA Select (up 13% versus 2020).

The Health Care Fairness for Military Families Act of 2021 ([H.R. 475](#)), introduced by Reps. Elaine Luria (D-Va.) and Michael Waltz (R-Fla.). This bipartisan bill would expand TRICARE eligibility to young adult dependents up to age 26, bringing TRICARE in line with commercial plan requirements. The bill is gaining momentum, picking up eight co-sponsors since its February introduction. MOAA's goal is to advance the legislation to the FY 2022 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to ensure children from military families transitioning to adulthood have the same health care protections as those afforded to their peers in civilian families.

What can you do to support these Initiatives?

- Go to the MOAA website www.moaa.org
- Click on **Advocacy** and then on **Take Action Now**
- Click on the **Be Informed** links on the right side of the page to read the MOAA point papers for each issue
- Click on the links in the **Take Action Now** section on the page
- Follow the instructions to send emails to your elected representatives in Washington