



**Upcoming Chapter Event**

**Friday, June 13** – Our June dinner meeting will be held at the Traverse City Country Club. Social hour will begin at 5:30 pm. Our guest speaker will be Michelle Gallagher, Executive Director of the Northern Michigan Chapter of the Red Cross. See the flyer for more information on the event. Don't forget, this will also be our annual silent auction to support our scholarship fund!



**In case you missed it – News from MOAA (Click on the links to open them):**

**Help MOAA Protect Student-Veterans: Stop the Repeal of the '90-10 Rule** - Ending the rule not only would weaken GI bill benefits and would cost the government \$1.6 billion. Make your voice heard today. Click [HERE](#) to read the article.

**Surviving Spouse Support: Take These Steps to Access Your Benefits** - Know which agencies to contact, what materials to update, and which resources you may have overlooked. Click [HERE](#) to read the article.

**TRICARE Toolkit: Using Pretax Funds for Medical Expenses** - A Health Care Flexible Spending Account may help you save big on eligible costs. Click [HERE](#) to read the article.

**Are You Eligible for VA Dental Insurance?** Learn more about this little-known program, including how to apply for benefits. Click [HERE](#) to read the article.

**Senate Hearing Spotlights MOAA-Backed Bill to Support Veteran Caregivers** - The bipartisan legislation would improve reeducation, reemployment, and retirement programs. Click [HERE](#) to read the article.

**What's Next for the Budget, the NDAA, and More from Congress** - Major legislation will affect DoD and VA benefits and programs. Here's what the calendar could look like. Click [HERE](#) to read the article.

**MOAA Joins Renewed Push to Support More Than 50,000 Combat-Injured Veterans** - The Major Richard Star Act "can be the difference between suffering and stability." Add your voice to the cause today. Click [HERE](#) to read the article.

**VA Referrals to Private Medical Care Will No Longer Require Additional Doctor Review** - VA Secretary Doug Collins says the change helps in "placing a premium on customer service and convenience." Click [HERE](#) to read the article.



**FROM THE PRESIDENT - CDR Mark Benjamin, USCG (Ret)**  
Northwestern Michigan Chapter of MOAA

Congratulations! You have received yet another annual Levels of Excellence Award! This is MOAA's way of recognizing the outstanding work of this Chapter during 2024. Not all MOAA Chapters are able to achieve this goal, but ours is now well above the minimum required standards of excellence. Why? Because of you! The leadership team as well as all chapter members deserve the credit!

Also, our Newsletter has received the Col Marvin J. Harris Communications Award. Curt Erickson, newsletter editor, clearly deserves full credit for this honor. His work has made our Newsletter one of the very best publications of this type MOAA wide.

We continue our support of the ROTC and JROTC programs on Michigan's Upper Peninsula by providing MOAA Certificates of Achievement, Medals and scholarship money to deserving graduates. In addition, the chapter board of directors has approved the inclusion of the Kingsley High School JROTC in our support program. As Kingsley is so close, I hope we can grow that interaction soon.

As most of you know, I will be stepping down as President at the end of my term. Our Chapter Officer nominating committee has been formed. Membership chair Mike Wildman and his team will be conducting a search for any required new chapter officers. Soon, we will be publishing procedures for either nominating someone else or requesting a leadership position for yourself. If you are interested in serving as a chapter officer, we invite you to step up!!

I want to thank our own Brad Graft for hosting our 4th annual mini-golf outing. The place was wonderful, the weather beautiful, and the golf champion jacket passed along. Dinner afterward was excellent. In addition, we hosted Mallory Lowe and her father Erin, as Mallory was recognized for receiving our continuing scholar award.

NEVER STOP SERVING!

Mark Benjamin

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) and the Northwestern Michigan Chapter of MOAA are non-partisan, non-profit organizations, chartered to better the overall well-being of its members – military officers and surviving spouses.

We seek to be the leading military service organization in our region. Our chapter's principles are:

- Love of Country
- Pride in our Armed Forces
- Commitment to Service

## 2025 Northwestern Michigan Chapter Structure

### Board of Directors:

Immediate Past President ..... CDR Thomas Haase, USCG (Ret.) ..... [thaase76@gmail.com](mailto:thaase76@gmail.com)  
 Director (USCG Liaison) ..... CDR Ryan Hawn, USCG ..... [ryan.d.hawn@uscg.mil](mailto:ryan.d.hawn@uscg.mil)  
 Director ..... MajGen Michael Lehnert, USMC (Ret.) .. [wontolla44@gmail.com](mailto:wontolla44@gmail.com)  
 Director ..... Brig Gen Scott Dennis, USAF (Ret.) ..... [sldennisf16@gmail.com](mailto:sldennisf16@gmail.com)

### Chapter Officers:

President ..... CDR Mark Benjamin, USCG (Ret.) ..... [mebmd11@gmail.com](mailto:mebmd11@gmail.com)  
 Vice President ..... Maj Todd Sanders, USMC (Ret.) ..... [sanders.todd.m@gmail.com](mailto:sanders.todd.m@gmail.com)  
 Treasurer ..... CDR Thomas Haase, USCG (Ret.) ..... [thaase76@gmail.com](mailto:thaase76@gmail.com)  
 Secretary ..... CDR Chris Buday, USN (Ret.) ..... [cbuday@earthlink.net](mailto:cbuday@earthlink.net)  
 ROTC/JROTC Liaison Officer ..... Maj Bob Stovall, USA (Ret.) ..... [lrstovall@comcast.net](mailto:lrstovall@comcast.net)  
 Membership Chair ..... LCDR Mike Wildman, USN (Ret.) ..... [wildmike50@gmail.com](mailto:wildmike50@gmail.com)  
 Legislative Liaison ..... LTC Christopher Johnson, USA (Ret.) ..... [cljpai87@gmail.com](mailto:cljpai87@gmail.com)  
 Programs Officer ..... Maj Todd Sanders, USMC (Ret.) ..... [sanders.todd.m@gmail.com](mailto:sanders.todd.m@gmail.com)  
 Newsletter ..... Open  
 Scholarship Chair ..... CAPT Dan Warren, USCG (Ret.) ..... [warrendr@earthlink.net](mailto:warrendr@earthlink.net)  
 Personal Affairs Officer ..... Open  
 Surviving Spouse Liaison ..... Open  
 Chaplain ..... LTC John Brian, USA (Ret.) ..... [airborneranger840@yahoo.com](mailto:airborneranger840@yahoo.com)

You can visit the MOAA online Legislative Action Center at: [www.moaa.org/takeaction](http://www.moaa.org/takeaction)

## 2025 Chapter Events

**2025**

### Board Meetings

- August 14
- November 13

### Quarterly Dinner Meetings

- June 13 at the Traverse City Country Club. The *silent auction* to help finance our Scholarship Fund will be held that evening. The guest speaker will be Michelle Gallagher, Executive Director, Northern Michigan Chapter of the Red Cross.
- September 11 at the U. S. Coast Guard Air Station, Traverse City – The guest speaker will be CDR Ryan Hawn, Commanding Officer, USCG Air Station Traverse City.
- December 12 our annual Chapter Christmas Gala and Scholarship Awards Dinner will be held at the Traverse City Golf and Country Club; Guest speaker: TBD.

### Other Events

- Thursday, August 14: Golf tournament and picnic at the Elk Rapids Golf Course.

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## **Coast Guard Air Station Traverse City Updates CDR Ryan Hawn, USCG Commanding Officer**

Greetings from your Coast Guard Air Station in Traverse City! It is such an honor to serve in the greater Traverse City region. Coast Guard members continue to enjoy your strong support and advocacy. Every interaction that our active-duty members and families have with you makes us better and more connected to this special community.

We have some exciting events coming up to which the MOAA community is invited:

- June 27 – USCG Air Station Traverse City Open Ramp (details to be published via radio, CG City Committee Flyers and social media)
- September 11 – MOAA Dinner hosted at USCG Air Station Traverse City (details will be provided later)

Again, it is an honor to serve – and an absolute privilege to do that in this beautiful, remarkable midwestern region. Thank you for making our members so welcome as we serve our community together!

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## **Chapter Supports American Legion Boys State**

At the last board meeting, the chapter's Board of Directors and Officers voted to sponsor one boy to Michigan's Boys State this year.

Boys State is a non-partisan, non-political mock government program that is designed to replicate the structure and operation of Michigan state government. In this week-long program, attendees learn about leadership, citizenship and our democratic form of government.

Boys State will be held June 22-28 at Grand Valley State University – Allendale.



## **Scholarship Winner Part of Team That Receives National Award**

Jacqueline Hearne and two other students from Leelanau St. Mary school recently received a first-place award at the National Business Professionals of America (BPA) Conference in Orlando, Florida. Jacqueline received our chapter's "Bob Kutulis Scholarship Award" at last December's Christmas Gala and Scholarship Awards Dinner.

The students created a podcast titled "Sprouting Simplicity". The podcast addressed the impact of social media trends.



**Jacqueline Hearn receiving her scholarship award from past president and chapter founder Bob Kutulis at the December 12 Christmas Gala and Scholarship Awards Dinner.**

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## **NWMI Chapter to Advertise on Radio Again This Year**

Our chapter board of directors and officers voted to once again advertise on northern Michigan's Midwestern Broadcasting stations beginning July 4. This is the third year in which our chapter has raised public awareness of MOAA and our chapter. The broadcasting group has six radio stations including four stations in Traverse City and two in the Alpena area.

## Legislative Priorities in Support of Veterans

The Michigan Commanders Group, a coalition of Michigan's Congressionally Chartered Veterans Service Organizations, aggregates veteran-related federal and state legislative priorities on their website. In addition to a description of each priority, the website provides the ability to email a free-form message directly to you U. S. and State Representatives and Senators. The Group's website can be seen by clicking [HERE](#).

## Chapter Mini Golf Outing

The spring weather cooperated for this year's mini golf outing at Pirates Cove in Traverse City. A team comprised of Peggy Joyner-Johnson, Todd Sanders, Brad Graff, and Christopher Johnson were the victors in the event. Following the competition, the golfers retired to the Smoke & Porter restaurant to discuss their games. The highly desired, blue winner's jacket was presented to team captain Peggy by Mike Wildman.



Pictured (L to R): Mike Wildman, Peggy Joyner-Johnson, Brad Graff, Todd Sanders, and Christopher Johnson.

## March Chapter Dinner

Our March Chapter dinner was held at the Traverse City Elks Lodge on March 20. We had a great turnout.

Our guest speaker was Chapter member Col. John Wemlinger, USA (Ret.), who spoke to us about "Leadership and the Call to Service".



John Wemlinger

## Level 5 Level of Excellence Award

Level of Excellence awards are MOAA's most prestigious affiliate awards, honoring councils and chapters for their efforts across the full scope of MOAA's mission. Our Chapter received the 5-Star Level of Excellence Award again this year, which is MOAA's highest award.





**Northwestern Michigan Chapter  
June Dinner Meeting and Silent Auction  
Friday, June 13, 2024  
5:30 p.m.**

**Traverse City Country Club  
1725 Union Street  
Traverse City, MI 49684**

**Guest Speaker: Michelle Gallagher,  
Executive Director, Northern Michigan Chapter of the Red Cross**

**Price: \$50.00 per person**

**RSVP and pay using your credit card on this webpage:  
<https://www.moaamcoc.com/nwmimoaa-meeting.html>**

**You can also make a scholarship donation using this same link.**

**Dinner includes:**

**Southwest Salad**

**Grilled Chicken**

**Smoked Brisket**

**Maque Chous Vegetables**

**Cornbread and Butter**

**Pulled Pork**

**Baked Mac and Cheese**

**Crème Brule Bread Pudding**

**If you wish to donate a gift basket to the auction, please contact Silent Auction  
Co-Chair Karen Movsesian via email at [themovsesians@gmail.com](mailto:themovsesians@gmail.com) or by  
telephone at (313) 318-4703.**

# THE LARGER OUR NUMBERS, THE GREATER YOUR VOICE.

Why MOAA chapter membership matters.



## MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENT FORM FOR MOAA AND NORTHWESTERN MICHIGAN CHAPTER

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Rank \_\_\_\_\_ Branch of Service \_\_\_\_\_  
 Active  Retired  Former  Reserve  National Guard  Surviving Spouse  
Spouse name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

(To ensure delivery of MOAA communications, please provide a personal email address)

Are you a member of MOAA?  Yes  No  Unknown

MOAA Member Number (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

**Not a MOAA national member yet? Check here to receive a BASIC Membership at no cost to you.**



Upgrading to **PREMIUM** membership gives you immediate access to a full spectrum of career and financial resources, exclusive publications, college scholarships for dependents, and countless discounts on products and travel.

Visit [moaa.org/join](http://moaa.org/join) to learn more.

How did you hear about MOAA Chapter involvement? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a member of any other MOAA Chapter(s)?  Yes  No

If yes, which one(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

### To complete enrollment:

- Fill in this form and email it to [wildmike50@gmail.com](mailto:wildmike50@gmail.com). Do not include credit card information. Or,
- Mail it with a check made out to NWMI Chapter MOAA, and mail it to:

**Mike Wildman, 702 Ahgosa Trl, Traverse City, MI 49686.**

You will be opted in to receive e-communications from MOAA and your local chapter. You will be able to opt out of any further e-communications at any time. MOAA will not sell or share your personal information.

### Chapter Membership and dues information

Get to know and enjoy the company of fellow officers in northern Michigan.

As members, we engage socially; award scholarships to deserving students; maintain a strong civic presence; and support legislation to preserve and enhance the benefits for active, veteran, and retired members of the armed forces of the United States of America.

Chapter eligibility is limited to MOAA members who have paid their chapter dues.

Chapter dues are \$20 per year, or \$55 for three years, and are payable on January 1 of the year after your membership has expired.

*"Never Stop Serving"*

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