



Los Alamitos Area Chapter News

Military Officers Association of America
P.O. Box 665, Los Alamitos, CA 90720

MARCH 2026



Los Alamitos Area Chapter Web Presence: <https://www.MOAA.org/chapter/losalamitosarea>

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Surviving Spouse Corner: Getting to Know TAPS

By: Cheryl Toland FEBRUARY 03, 2026

The Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) directly supports all grieving the death of an active duty servicemember or veteran, regardless of the survivor's phase in their grief journey.

TAPS' team of experts, staff, compassionate volunteers, and peer-support network stand ready 24/7 to embrace bereaved families, friends, and battle buddies and connect them with immediate and lifelong tangible resources and emotional care. This includes casework and education assistance, community-based connections, in-person events, a thriving online community, and the National Military Survivor Helpline, (800) 959-TAPS (8277), which is answered by a knowledgeable, caring survivor care team member anytime, day or night.

[MORE MOAA RESOURCES: Surviving Spouses]

TAPS was founded in the wake of a military tragedy following a 1992 C-12 crash in Alaska that took the lives of eight soldiers. Among the grieving family members was Bonnie Carroll, the widow of Brig. Gen. Tom Carroll, USA. After realizing that no support network was in place for the families of the fallen, Bonnie spent two years researching best practices while navigating her own grief alongside fellow survivors.

In 1994, TAPS officially opened its doors to military and veteran survivors. Today, Bonnie and the TAPS team have supported over 100,000 military and veteran survivors as they grieve, heal, and honor the life of their loved one.

Each day, an average of 26 new survivors connect with TAPS in search of support, resources, and community, such as:

- **Programs.** TAPS offers a wide variety of programming, seminars, online groups, and workshops. Learn more at TAPS.org/programs.
- **Advocacy.** Efforts are dedicated to empowering survivors to use their voices to spark change while working closely with government leaders and lawmakers to advance policy and legislation that impacts life after unspeakable tragedy. Visit TAPS.org/advocacy.
- **TAPS Magazine:** This quarterly publication, mailed to members/survivors, is a comprehensive resource for grieving families. Visit TAPS.org/magazine.
- **Facebook group.** In this group, a survivor can share and receive support from other survivors, staff, and professionals. Learn more at Facebook.com/tapsorg.

MOAA--Los Alamitos Area Chapter Luncheon Coupon

March 26th Luncheon is to be held at the Navy Golf Course, 5560 Orangewood, West of Valley View, Cypress, CA.

Social: 1130-1200 **Lunch:** 1200-1300 **Program,** if scheduled: 1300-1400

Circle ONE: California Hamburger Fish & Chips Fire Grilled Chicken Sandwich California Burrito Chicken Caesar Salad.

**(BE SURE TO CIRCLE YOUR SIDE FOR SANDWICHES: Regular FF Fruit Salad Sweet Potato FF Cole Slaw
Cottage Cheese)**

\$ 25 each! (Check payable to the Los Alamitos Area Chapter.)

LUNCHEON RESERVATIONS.

Name/s _____ Guest/s _____ (spouse is not guest)

Mail Check to: Bill Eveland, 3729 Nipomo Ave., Long Beach, CA, 90808; phone 562-425-3434

[Please have your reservation in by Mar 19th - Call me if you must!]

*****Remember*****

Chapter Executive Board Meeting: Tuesday, March 3rd at 0930 in the Retired Activities Office, NWSSB

ARMED FORCES MUTUAL/2026 MILITARY TAX GUIDE.

Your 2026 Military Tax Guide

Get clear answers on military pay, deployments, benefits, credits, and deductions — all in one place.

You can find it on-line at **Armed Forces Mutual/2026 Military Tax Guide**

More Military-Specific Tax Answers

- Is military pay taxable?
- Tax advantages for the military
- Are VA survivor benefits taxable?
- Smart tax tips for military families
- Free and trusted military tax resources
- Does life insurance get taxed?

LOS ALAMITOS AREA CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP FORM

New Member Enrollment []		Renewal []		January 1--December 31, 2026	
MOAA membership number _____ (located on your MOAA Magazine cover)					
Please enroll/ Continue as a Member of the Los Alamitos Area Chapter MOAA: <u>Regular Member Officers</u> (Active, Retirees and Former officers) @ \$25.00/Year [] <u>Auxiliary</u> (Widow or surviving spouse) @ \$20.00/Year []					
Service Affiliation:	Regular []	Reserve []	National Guard []		
Present Status:	Retired []	Active Duty []	Auxiliary []	Former Officer []	
Last Name	First Name	MI	Rank	Branch of Service	
Mailing Address	City	State	Zip	Area Code / Phone Number	
Spouse's Name	(Surviving spouses indicate your MOAA No.)				
Cell Number:	_____		E-Mail Address (for Newsletter)	_____	
Mail Form to: Los Alamitos Area Chapter, MOAA, P.O. Box 665, Los Alamitos, CA 90720					

TRICARE For Life Handbook

This handbook provides an overview of the TRICARE For Life program. TRICARE For Life is Medicare-wraparound coverage for military retirees and their TRICARE-eligible family members who have both Medicare Part A and Part B.

This handbook describes how Medicare and TRICARE work together, provider options, costs, claims, and more.

Download Handbook (PDF)

Audience: TRICARE For Life beneficiaries

- May be available in print from the TRICARE For Life contractor*
- Updated January 2026

Want to order a printed copy of the TRICARE For Life Handbook?

Call WPS Government Services at 866-773-0404.

TRICARE West Region <u>TriWest Healthcare</u> <u>Alliance</u>	• 888-TRIWEST (874-9378) • 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. in your time zone (CT, MT, PT, Alaska Time, and Hawaii-Aleutian Time), excluding federal holidays
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MOAA SITREP: The Major Richard Star Act

By MOAA Staff

MOAA continues its work to secure passage of the Major Richard Star Act during the 119th session of Congress. The bill would end an unjust pay offset faced by tens of thousands of combat-injured veterans who lose a dollar of earned military retirement pay for every dollar of VA disability they receive.

The Major Richard Star Act remains a high priority for MOAA and other advocacy groups represented in The Star Act Alliance. Contact your lawmaker today and demand a vote on the bill.

[RELATED: New Coalition Forms to End Unfair Pay Offset Facing Combat-Injured Veterans]

Why the Star Act Matters

This unfair pay offset, or “wounded veteran tax,” targets a population already facing physical and financial challenges because of their time in uniform. Ending the offset could mean an additional \$1,200 a month, on average, for these wounded warriors.

The bill would not create a new benefit – instead, it would fix an oversight from 2004, when Congress ended the offset for wounded veterans who served at least 20 years in uniform.

Under the legislation, veterans would be able to choose between receiving their current compensation – DoD retirement pay and Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) – or receiving their full DoD retirement and earned VA benefits. Of the more than 50,000 veterans eligible under the Major Richard Star Act, it’s expected some may keep the tax-free CRSC, reducing the expected cost of the legislation.

Star Act Resources

Learn more about the legislation, bust common myths about concurrent receipt, and more:

- **MOAA Issue Paper (2025):** The Major Richard Star Act (PDF download)
- **MOAA.org Article (2025):** Major Richard Star Act: Fact vs. Fiction
- **Star Act Alliance:** Bill Overview (PDF download) | Social Media Toolkit
- **Wounded Warrior Project:** Understanding the Major Richard Star Act
- **Veterans of Foreign Wars:** Advocacy Talking Points: Retirement and Military Personnel
- **MOAA.org Article (2021):** Maj. Richard Star, a Voice for Disabled Veterans, Loses Battle to Cancer
- **MOAA.org Article (2024):** Tonya Star, Widow of Maj. Richard Star, Dies at 51

Why Hasn’t Congress Passed the Star Act?

Despite strong support in the form of co-sponsorship, this bill has not been brought to the floor of either congressional chamber for a vote.

One reason may be the price: An estimated \$8 billion over 10 years. MOAA believes the projection is far higher than the bill's actual cost – many eligible veterans may elect to continue receiving current benefits, for tax purposes and other reasons – but even the full \$8 billion would amount to less than 0.1% of the annual federal defense budget.

Competing priorities across Capitol Hill and myths about the Star Act that continue to circulate have plagued efforts to move this bill across the finish line. Numerous partners in the veterans advocacy community will continue to work together to achieve this enduring priority – whether standalone passage or inclusion in a "must-pass" bill. These efforts extend beyond the Hill and into the halls of the Pentagon. Gaining support from Pentagon leadership is essential.

MOAA will keep reminding lawmakers that the cost of caring for our combat-injured veterans by passing the Star Act pales in comparison to the cost of breaking faith with those who sacrificed limbs, health, and futures in service to this nation. And what impact does this have on our ability to recruit an all-volunteer force from a population who has seen the most vulnerable warriors struggling?

Star Act Legislative History

119th Congress: The House version of the bill (H.R. 2102) had 313 cosponsors as of Jan. 29, 2026; the Senate version (S. 1032) had 77 cosponsors. The House bill was referred to House Veterans' Affairs Committee's disability assistance and memorial affairs panel in April 2025. The Senate bill was referred to the Senate Armed Services Committee in March 2025.

The bill was introduced in the Senate on Oct. 8, 2025, for consideration of unanimous consent, but it was blocked by an objection. Text of the legislation was put forward as an amendment to the FY 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) in the Senate but was not included in the final bill.

118th Congress: The House version of the bill had 326 cosponsors at the end of the session. It was placed on the House's Union Calendar (for scheduling bills with financial components) but did not reach the House floor. The Senate version had 74 cosponsors at the end of the session; it was referred to the Senate Armed Services Committee in February 2023, about a month into the session, and did not advance further.

117th Congress: The House version of the bill had 335 cosponsors at the end of the session. It was placed on the House's Consensus Calendar (for bills that have met a certain sponsorship threshold but have not received floor consideration) on Oct. 25, 2022, but did not reach the House floor. The Senate version had 66 cosponsors at the end of the session; it was referred to the Senate Armed Services Committee in March 2021 and did not advance further.

116th Congress: The House version of the bill had 101 cosponsors at the end of the session. It was referred to the House Veterans Affairs' Committee panel on disability assistance and memorial affairs in March 2020 and did not advance from that committee. The Senate version had 31 cosponsors at the end of the session; it was referred to the Senate Armed Services Committee in March 2020 and did not advance further.

State tax breaks - California

- California's new partial exemption, beginning in 2025, subtracts up to \$20,000 from state income tax on military retired pay or survivor benefits annuities. This is available for those with a federal adjusted gross income (AGI) of less than \$125,000 for single filers or \$250,000 for joint filers.
- This benefit is open to the U.S. Army and other uniformed services, including the U.S. Public Health Services (USPHS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The California benefit was enacted on June 27, 2025, and will remain in place through tax year 2030 unless renewed. Advocates are excited about the forward movement although it was not approved for the full exemption originally proposed.

VETERAN OF THE MONTH



Bill Thompson couldn't have known how well his educational pursuits prepared him for a life of pastoral service. It started with undergraduate degrees in English, philosophy, and psychology, but that wasn't enough. He went on to earn a Master of Divinity degree and then entered a Doctor of Ministry program. Here he completed all coursework and half of his thesis before leaving to accept a pastoral position. Years later, he completed his Doctor of Ministry degree because Bill doesn't do anything halfway. He already had pastoral experience at four churches before entering military service as a chaplain.

Bill's military service began with Navy Reserve training immediately after high school. He had looked forward to receiving standard military instruction during basic training. Instead, he was assigned a typist job. He was thoroughly disappointed! He wasn't even that good a typist, but he was the only recruit to raise his hand and admit he took typing in high school.

Bill's direction in life is easy to understand when you appreciate his early commitment to full-time Christian service. The decision to enter military chaplaincy was influenced by a speech from the Chief of Navy Chaplains at a Southern Baptist Convention, emphasizing the need for chaplains during the Vietnam War. Bill took the advice to heart.

Bill's first military assignment as a chaplain in Vietnam, where he served at Dong Ha near the DMZ and provided pastoral care at a medical clinic receiving wounded soldiers via helicopter. His Vietnam service included conducting chapel services in various locations, including bomb craters, visiting multiple companies throughout the week and participating in weekly medical clinics for local Vietnamese citizens.

To show that military chaplains were not immune from potential injuries tells this story. In St. Elizabeth's Hospital (psychiatric), chapel service were the only opportunity for patients from different wards to socialize and interact. Most of the time, this was healthy interaction. But on one occasion, two patients in love disrupted a service, and one threw a heavy hymnal at the preaching supervisor (fortunately it was not Bill).

Bill retired after serving as a chaplain across multiple military branches, including Navy, Army, and Marines.

Colonel Bill Thompson, thank you for your service.

(this article is taken from a periodical and photo from Chapter file)

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- Personal Finance -Military Benefits -Transition -Survivor Issues -Chapters -Spouse and Family