

September Meeting

After our annual three-month “sabbatical” from meetings, we return to the splendorous aura of Franco’s for our September meeting.

Among our usual camaraderie and agenda items, this meeting will be keynoted by our own Bill Witham, and a presentation on the Incarcerated Veterans Group (IVG) by DOC. Details are as follows—

Date: TH, 19 September
Location: Franco’s Restaurant
1708 E. Lebanon Rd.
Dover DE 19901
Social Hour: 5pm-6pm
Dinner: 6pm-7pm
Program: 7pm-8pm

Dinner selections for September’s meeting include these choices:

- Baked Lasagna (\$30)
- Fettuccine with Shrimp and Mushrooms in a white sauce (\$31)
- Grilled Chicken Salad (\$23)

*All meals include bread, side salad, and coffee/tea or soda, except the chicken salad - no side salad

To secure your dinner choice, contact Tom Smith by 12 noon on Tues., 17 September.

**Email: rotorhead65@aol.com
Phone: (301) 904-0228**

IVG Program Highlights for September’s Meeting



Highlights of the Incarcerated Veterans Group (IVG) presentation will include the following—

- Program development, and current status
- Statistics on those individuals incarcerated within the program
- Fundraising methods, including organizations that receive the donations
- Brief overview of topics discussed during the monthly meetings
- Accountability of the offenders in the program, and expectations
- Q&A session

Delaware Veterans Court

The Delaware Veterans Court was initiated in 2011 by our own Bill Witham (COL-Ret., USA and retired Superior Court Judge), who understands that some veterans tend to face challenges after their service. At the time, it was the only Veterans Court in the nation serving all counties within a particular state. Nationwide, there are currently over 600 Veterans Courts serving various jurisdictions today.

When veterans are arrested for misdemeanor and minor felony offenses, they must apply for the program; and depending on the offense, not all are accepted. Those who are accepted undergo an intensive program, which includes a team approach involving non-adversarial meetings and collaboration with partners found in drug and mental health treatment courts, along with the Veteran Administration Health Care Network, and veteran mentors.

Veterans who successfully complete the yearlong program are diverted from the traditional criminal justice system, and provided with the tools needed to lead a productive and law-abiding life. All of the judges, attorneys and mentors are themselves veterans who volunteer their time and expertise for their fellow veterans. Judge Witham's initiative has resulted in an estimated 450 veterans across the state avoiding incarceration over the years. Now retired, his greatest joy is staying involved with the program.

"Judge Witham's initiative has not only diverted eligible veterans from the state's prison system; he is a key member of the Delaware Veterans Coalition Incarcerated Veterans Program that works with the state Department of Correction to facilitate successful reentry of veterans into their communities," said Dave Skocik, Coalition president.



Capt. Adrienne M. Hanna, Delaware Dept. of Corrections, serves as the Security Liaison for the Incarcerated Veterans Group (IVG) at Sussex Correctional Institute.



September's Keynote Presentation and Guest Speaker

Our program for September's meeting will be a presentation on the Incarcerated Veterans Group (IVG) Program, which is currently conducted at Sussex Correctional Institute (SCI) in Georgetown. Bill Witham will kick off the program, and introduce our guest speaker, Adrienne Hanna, who is a Captain with the Delaware Dept. of Corrections (DOC), and is the Security Liaison for the Incarcerated Veterans Group (IVG).

Adrienne M. Hanna is a dedicated professional with a robust background in law enforcement and community service. She proudly served in the U. S. Marine Corps before embarking on a distinguished career with DOC in 2006. In addition to her role with the IVG Program, she also serves as the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Compliance Manager, Watch Commander, and Unit Commander with DOC.



LEFT: Bill Witham displays a copy of HB 349, passed during the recent legislative session.

RIGHT: Gathered for SCI IVG donations presentations are (L-R) Capt. Hanna (DOC); Terra Taylor, DOC Commissioner; Sandra Frunzi, Thresholds Coordinator; Mike Rowe, People's Place Veterans Outreach; Dave Skocik, Delaware Veterans Coalition President; our own Bill Witham; and Scott Ceresini, Warden and U.S. Army veteran.



Legislative Wrap-up

Delaware's General Assembly considered various bills this past legislative session, with impact upon the active and retired military/service community. Following is a description of each bill and its status, at the end of the 2024 session (30 June 2024). Those bills that passed are awaiting the Governor's signature to become law.

- HS1 to HB 272 -Related to Veterans' Benefits and Trade Practices "Claim Sharks." DIED in the Senate Banking Committee.
- HB 303 - Related to Disabled Veterans' School Tax Credit. DIED in the House Veterans Affairs Committee.
- HB 310 - Related to the US Space Force. SIGNED INTO LAW.
- HB 349 - Related to the Veterans' Treatment Court. PASSED.
- HB 354 w/ HS1 - Related to the enrollment priority of military connected students. SIGNED INTO LAW.
- HS 1 to HB 356 - Related to concurrent jurisdiction of juveniles who commit crimes on US military installations. SIGNED INTO LAW.
- HB 399 – Related to the creation of a Dept of Veterans Affairs. DIED in the Senate Appropriations Committee.
- HB 437 – Related to DE Commission of Veterans Affairs, corrects existing law related to the Commission. SIGNED INTO LAW.
- SB 183 – Related to Military Judges. SIGNED INTO LAW.
- SB 201 – Related to the Exclusion of Military Pensions. DIED in the Senate Executive Committee.
- SB 327 – Related to Grant-in-Aid, funding to veteran service organizations and others. SIGNED INTO LAW.
- SB 329 – Related to the Exclusion of Military Pension, adds NOAA and Public Health to the military pension tax exclusion. SIGNED INTO LAW.

For detailed information on each bill, go to the Delaware General Assembly website, and simply click the name of the bill in the search bar (ex., HB 272, SB 183, etc.):
<https://legis.delaware.gov/Search/>

*Information submitted by
MOAA Member Russ Hall



Passed during the 2024 General Assembly session, Governor John Carney (center) signed four bills that support veterans, the Armed Forces, and military families who have made significant sacrifices for our country. The bills were sponsored by Rep. Nnamdi Chukwuocha (standing next to Gov. Carney) and Sen. Kyle Evans Gay (standing furthest right in the photo). Dover MOAA member and Delaware Veterans Commissioner Doug Hudson joined the event (standing directly in front of the U.S. flag). Bills signed into law at this event included HB 310, HB 354, HB 356, and HB 437.

*Photo submitted by MOAA Member Doug Hudson

Contact Your State Legislator

Particularly for issues involving our military and veterans, your voice does matter!

Make your voice heard by letting your state senator or state representative know your thoughts. Click the below link for specific info on your rep or senator, by inputting your address.

<https://legis.delaware.gov/FindMyLegislator>

DCVA Notes

The monthly meeting of the Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs (DCVA) was held on 20 August 2024. A short recap of pertinent issues is encapsulated below:

The Office of Veteran Services (OVS)

- The OVS Executive Director position is still open. HR 437's passage moves this position from the merit system to exempt
- Trust Fund is at \$98,840.65, and the amount spent so far is \$10,539.66

Delaware Veterans Home (DVH)

- Census is currently at 70
- Job Fair Expo will take place at DAFB on 01 October
- Staffing/recruitment efforts are continuing, with sign-on bonuses ranging from \$5,000 for CNA's and up to \$10,000 for RN's.
- DVH descriptive video:
https://youtu.be/basklwFDW_E?si=RF-kd6fTvrRX4LqPQ
- DVH recruitment video:
<https://youtu.be/iPQeMOomnDs?si=1dEJ2y1VPXbRUoMr>

Statewide upcoming events

- 20 September: Veterans Stand Down (see related article/link in ***Local and National Topics of Concern***)
- 29 September: 29th Annual Pass The Torch for Veterans Festival, Fire Base Lloyd, Townsend DE
- 02 October 2nd: NABVETS Black & Gold Gala, Modern Maturity, Dover DE.
- November 7th Annual Trust Fund Dinner, Modern Maturity, Dover DE.
- November 11th Veterans Day Bridge Ceremony, Veterans Memorial Park New Castle DE.

*Information submitted by MOAA Member Doug Hudson



Serving... x3

On 31 July 2024 at the Kent County Government Building, Dover, our own Bill Witham (COL-Ret., USA and retired Resident Judge) swore in Joel Gartner (COL-Ret., USAF) as Kent County Deputy Recorder of Deeds. Our Chapter President Gene Thornton, (COL-Ret., USA and Kent County Recorder of Deeds) holds the Holy Bible.

The MOAA motto of "Never Stop Serving" is on full display with this trio of public servants. They have a combined 86 years of military service as they all continue to serve Kent County, Delaware and MOAA.



The Findlay Scholarship Fund

The current academic school year will mark the final awarding of the Findlay Scholarship to a deserving JROTC student. The origin and awarding of this benevolent endowment over the years has a cherished history.

Col. George W. Findlay, USAF, was a C-5 *Galaxy* pilot who served for 26 years, including an assignment at Dover AFB. He retired in 1994 while stationed at McGuire AFB, and he and his wife Lucy moved back to Dover. After his retirement, George established the Air Force Junior ROTC program at Caesar Rodney High School in Camden-Wyoming, where he was the Senior Aerospace Science Instructor for six years.

George and Lucy were members of the Dover Delaware Chapter of MOAA for many years. On an annual basis, our Chapter has awarded \$1,500 scholarships to graduating JROTC cadets from Kent County. Scholarship winners are selected by our Executive Board from applications submitted by participating JROTC programs. Funding for the scholarships is raised through donations from chapter members, friends of the chapter, businesses, and corporations.



**Col (Ret.) George
W. Findlay, USAF**

and

Lucy Ford Findlay



After Col. Findlay passed away in March 2016, Lucy decided to establish the “Col. George W. Findlay Scholarship Fund” in his honor, in addition to MOAA Dover’s existing scholarship awards. She asked our MOAA Dover Chapter to administer the program under our 501(c)(19) tax exempt, non-profit veterans’ organization status. In George’s obituary, donations were requested for the fund in lieu of flowers, and Lucy personally picked the Findlay scholars. Beginning in 2017, the Findlay Scholarship recipients are as follows—

- 2017 (\$2,000): Cadet Julie Dumont, Caesar Rodney HS to the University of Delaware
- 2018 (\$2,500 from here forth): Cadet Paige Raymond, Caesar Rodney HS to the University of Delaware
- 2019: Cadet Brice Taylor, First State Military Academy (FSMA) to Cedarville University in Cedarville, Ohio
- 2020: Cadet Bryson Minear, Caesar Rodney HS to the Virginia Military Institute (VMI)
- 2021: Cadet Grant Kidner, FSMA to The Citadel

Lucy passed away in March 2022, but her daughter (Lisa Merrell of West Grove, PA) and her son (Chris Findlay of Charlestown, SC) chose to continue the scholarship fund.

- 2022: Cadet Juliana Diaz, Caesar Rodney HS to the University of Delaware
- 2023: No scholarship awarded
- 2024: Cadet Tyler Johnes. FSMA to the U.S. Air Force Academy

Over the lifespan of the Findlay Scholarship, 73 donations were received. Benevolent donors included Lucy’s family and friends, as well as our own MOAA Dover Chapter members. As encapsulated above, the Col. George W. Findlay Scholarship Fund provided thousands of dollars in scholarships to seven worthy JROTC graduates, during its lifespan. George and Lucy would be proud!

*Information submitted by MOAA Member Tom Smith

Local and National Topics of Concern



**Veterans “Stand Down”
Event at Schutte Park
on 20 September
(Donations Requested)**

From Bay-to-Bay News:
<https://baytobaynews.com/stories/planning-for-the-september-20-veterans-stand-down-at-dovers-schutte-park-is-well-underway.133665>

From Veterans Awareness Center (includes detailed info and registration link):
<https://www.veteransawarenesscenter.com/stand-down>

2024 Army Ten-Miler (13 October)

From U.S. Army Ten Miler
Site:
<https://www.armytenmiler.com/live-race-info/>

State Tax Exemptions (State-to-State Comparison)

From MOAA Magazine:
<https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2024-news-articles/finance/state-tax-update-latest-from-both-coasts-on-work-to-exempt-retirement-pay/>

Work Rules for Vets with 100% Disability

From VA News (video):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sLxXckXNP5U>

Transitioning Into Medicare, and Tricare for Life

From MOAA Magazine:
https://www.moaa.org/content/topic-and-landing-pages/moaa-member-exclusive-transitioning-into-medicare-and-tricare-for-life/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=TMNsend&utm_content=jj5pOIfKmqMAMHJh1eJHNA==+DE+ATFHsRM+1+ERet+P+CC

Federal Budget Shortfall for VA (\$15 Billion)

From the American Legion:
<https://www.legion.org/veteransbenefits/262588/legion-joins-other-vsos-calling-congress-immediately-fund-15-billion-vet-veterans-education-fund>
 va?utm_campaign=Source+Code+Here&utm_content=BE NEFITS&utm_term=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Adestra

2025 COLA Forecast

From Military Times:
<https://www.militarytimes.com/veterans/2024/08/19/vets-may-see-only-a-small-cost-of-living-boost-in-benefits-next-year/>

“Claims Predators” Advisory

From MOAA News:
https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2024-news-articles/finance/warns-veterans-to-watch-out-for-claims-predators/?utm_source=newletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=TMNsend&utm_content=jj5pOIfKmqMAMHJjh1eJHNA==+DE+ATFH
 SRM+1+ERet+P+CC

*Editor's note: In DE, this bill died in the Senate Banking Committee. See related article in this newsletter entitled Legislative Wrap-up, HB 272

Article 125 Pardons Granted by President Biden

From U.S. Dept. of Veterans
Affairs:
[https://department.va.gov/pr
esidential-proclamation-
violations-article-125-ucmj/](https://department.va.gov/pr
esidential-proclamation-
violations-article-125-ucmj/)

MOAA's State Report Card- 2024

From MOAA Magazine:
<https://www.moaa.org/content/state-report-card/statereportcard/>

Chapter President's Chat

Headquarters and Hindquarters...

After receiving a dispatch from the Civil War General John Pope addressed from "headquarters in the saddle," President Abraham Lincoln quipped, "The trouble with Pope is that he's got his headquarters where his hindquarters ought to be."

Over the summer, our chapter kept its headquarters well above its hindquarters. As you will read in the newsletter, we continued to stay busy as members of MOAA even while our meetings were suspended for the summer.

- Many bills benefiting veterans made it to the governor's desk. There were some we worked hard on that fell short. We will continue to push the best of the bills forward.
- With Ann Devers' assistance, we moved our "default" cemetery from Arlington to Bear, as chapter members requested.
- Mike Orlando became a board member of the First State Military Academy. He will continue to run our JROTC program but no longer have a vote for the recipients of our awards.
- Treasurer Tom paid all bills to the schools for our scholarship winners.
- Judge Bill Witham swore in Joel Gartner as the Deputy Recorder of Deeds for Kent County. Several MOAA members attended the ceremony.
- Doug Hudson and I will meet with Congresswoman Blount Rochester's acting chief of staff soon. We were scheduled for this week but he postponed due to COVID. He set up the meeting; we do not know his agenda, but we will



come with MOAA talking points used at the April AiA event.

- One of our members has been winning the fight against cancer, with great strides made over the summer!
- Bill Welser planned, organized, and executed an Honor Flight—a very big deal in a very short amount of time.
- Thanks to all of you who voted, I was selected as Public Official of the Year in a readers' choice situation called Stars of Delaware.
- Perhaps there were other achievements, so we can go around the table and catch everyone up in September.

At our September meeting, we will learn about a passed bill allowing veteran court attendees to get their licenses back to get their lives back on track. We will also learn from our speaker about the tremendously successful Incarcerated Veterans program in Sussex County. Here are veterans who once had their headquarters and hindquarters mixed up but are now getting a new lease on life.

Never Stop Serving,
Gene

Upcoming Dover MOAA Meetings

19 September

17 October

21 November

19 December



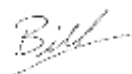
Newsletter Submissions

The *Dover MOAA Newsletter* is slated for publication on the Friday prior to each monthly meeting, and is disseminated electronically via email to all members. Input is welcomed from Chapter members, as well as relevant information from members of the community.

We will also accept the submission of opinion articles, with the understanding that the eventual publication of any items is subject to the discretion of the Chapter Newsletter Editor, and Chapter President.

Please submit all items via email to me directly at: colwjalexander@gmail.com. You can also contact me via cell phone (voice or text) at 302-521-4781.

Thank you for your support in helping make our newsletter a distinguished channel of information for our MOAA members!



Bill Alexander

Help Us Grow & Stay Informed!

Please share the news of membership in our great chapter with any eligible uniformed services members and veterans with whom you come into contact. Here's the link to our membership form: <https://dovermoaa.org/chapter-membership>

And, check out our Facebook page for the latest news and info:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/8509355691721>

Never Stop Serving...