

Green Valley Chapter · DESERT DUSTER NEWSLETTER
April 2023 · Spring Issue

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



We hope you will be able to join us for our Scholarship dinner on May 9. Details of this event are outlined on page 3 of this newsletter.

We are always looking for new members to join the Board to share ideas. Please let me know if you have interest in serving on our Board. We meet at Friends in

Deed at 9 a.m. on the first Wednesday of the month from September thru May. Our next meeting is May 3.

If you have not yet renewed your membership, we hope you will soon. It is renewals that help us maintain our 5-Star Level of Excellence status as well as meeting the needs of the military community. Dues form is on pages 6 and 7 of this newsletter.

Our Chapter has established a Facebook page that it can be accessed at: facebook.com/GVMOAA/. Please follow and Like us.

MOAA on a National basis continues to support veterans and the military community. At the end of April Advocacy in Action will be taking place in Washington DC. Members from National MOAA and State Associations will be meeting with members of congress to gain support for issues important to the military community. This year the key issues are:

- 1. BAH The housing allowance for Active-duty members was reduced to 95% from 100%. MOAA is working to restore the allowance to 100%.
- 2. Reinstatement of Tricare Pharmacies that have been closed.

For more detailed information about MOAA's goals for this year <u>click</u> <u>here</u>.

You can let your voice be heard by registering with the "Legislative Action Center." Pre-loaded letters are generated so that you can contact your Senators and Congressman on key issues important to the military community. You can find instructions to register on page 9.

(President's Message, continued... next page)

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SCAN OUR OR CODES

GV MOAA WEBSITE





GV MOAA member page of GREEN VALLEY/SAHUARITA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

QR Codes: What are they & how do I scan a code?

Find us on Facebook: facebook.com/GVMOAA

VISIT: MOAA.org/takeaction

MOAA's "Never Stop Serving" Podcasts



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The upcoming event for the Chapter before our summer break is: Scholarship Awards Dinner May 9th Grill on the Green: 5:00 PM.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at our upcoming events. Meanwhile, stay safe, stay healthy, and stay positive.

Elliott Jones 1LT USA (former) 2022-2023 Chapter President Green Valley Chapter, MOAA

NEVER STOP SERVING

GRANT AWARD ANNOUNCED

Peggy McGee



After Dick Newman's passing, MOAA needed to find a new grant writer pronto. It was **COL Ken Cottrill, USA (Ret)** to the rescue. Ken submitted a grant proposal to the Overwatch Alliance also known as the ASMBA STAR Foundation. His efforts resulted in the award of a \$3500 grant to the Chapter that will take care of two requirements that come under the Military Assistance umbrella of the Scholarship and Military Assistance Fund.

With the grant money the Chapter will be able to donate \$2000 to the 162nd Fighter Wing, Arizona Air National Guard within the next month to support their Food Locker. The Food Locker is used by the junior enlisted airmen who need non-perishable foods to tide them over until their next pay day. The remaining \$1500 will be used for the *Turkeys for the Troops* donation to provide gift cards enabling 30 airmen to purchase all they need for a very festive Thanksgiving dinner for their families.

Our sincere thank you to the Overwatch Alliance for making these two projects a reality.



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SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS DINNER SLATED FOR MAY 9

Peggy McGee, 2nd Vice President/Programs



The annual Scholarship Awards dinner will be held at Grill on the Green on Tuesday, May 9 starting at 5 p.m. for a social period followed by dinner at 5:35. Cost of the meal will be \$30. The reservation form with menu options can be found on page 4. A vegetarian meal is available by request.

We will be awarding three scholarships to high achieving JROTC cadets at the dinner. This year we are able to increase the amount of each scholarship from \$1500 to \$2500 to help keep up with the increasing costs of higher education.

One very special scholarship will be awarded **in memory of 1LT Dick Newman** who served in many capacities on the Chapter Board to include two terms as president of both the Chapter and the Scholarship and Military Assistance Fund. Dick successfully wrote the grant requests that ultimately funded both the scholarship and the *Food for the Troops/Turkeys for the Troops* programs for a 10-year period. This scholarship will be awarded to a cadet from the Air Force JROTC unit at Nogales High School.

One of the scholarships is made possible by the generosity of our Community Partner, Bob and Evie Sanchez. As a Community Partner, they pledged to donate a minimum of \$2,500 to the Scholarship and Military Assistance Fund on an annual basis. Bob, who is the Area Manager for Guaranteed Rate Mortgage Financing, is especially committed to helping those who have served in the military. This scholarship will be presented to a cadet graduating from Walden Grove High School.

The other two scholarships were made possible by our very successful sale of Jim Click raffle tickets in 2022 and the generosity of our members who made donations throughout the year. In addition to the traditional 50-50 raffle at the dinner, we will also be selling Jim Click raffle tickets.

This year one lucky person will win a 2023 Ford Bronco Raptor. Second-place prize is two round trip first-class tickets to anywhere in the world commercial aircraft fly. The third-place prize is \$5,000 cash. Tickets are \$25 each (cash or check payable to MOAA S&MA Fund), with all ticket sale monies remaining with the Chapter. Winning names will be drawn on December 14, 2023.



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MAY DINNER RESERVATION FORM

(This reservation form may also be found on the GreenValleyMOAA.org website)

9 May 2023 · Social time 5 PM · Dinner 5:35 PM

Grill on the Green - 5800 S. Camino Del Sol, Green Valley

Please make your reservations by MAY 1st

Reserve places Cost: \$ (\$30 per person)
MENU CHOICES:
#1. Chicken Marsala – mashed potatoes and seasonal vegetables. #2. Top Sirloin – mashed potatoes and seasonal vegetables.
Included: Strawberry Shortcake for dessert, and non-alcoholic beverage (coffee, iced tea, water). Vegetarian option is available upon request. Cash bar available.
Check # Mail check and reservation form to: Attn: GV MOAA Reservation Mail check and reservation form to: MOAA of Green Valley · PO Box 1535 · Green Valley, AZ 85622-1535
RANK: NAME: (please print)
MENU CHOICE (#):
Member/Guest name:
Member/Guest name:
Member/Guest name:
Member/Guest name:
If you require a ride to the meeting, program or event please check here:
If you cannot get your reservation and check mailed timely, or if you have made a reservation and find you cannot attend, PLEASE CALL (leave a message if no answer): Peggy McGee 520-207-6188 or by email: peggy@greenvalleymoaa.org . Your chapter is charged for all ordered meals even if they aren't served. Please bring a check or exact cash amount to the meeting.



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MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Jack Bundy, 1st Vice President/Membership

Our Chapter membership continues to be strong with 85 members and 27 registered auxiliary spouses. We have added six new members since the first of the year and we are happy to welcome two of those new members who are also retired military officers who are serving as training officers in the two JROTC units we sponsor at Rio Rico and Nogales High Schools. So, a special welcome to Lt Col, USAF (Ret) Scott Roxburgh and LTC, USA (Ret) Ronnie St. Clair with whom we work closely to provide JROTC Scholarships to their students each year.

We continue to collect Green Valley MOAA Chapter Dues for 2023. A total of 57 members and 16 spouses have paid for their 2023 renewal. If you have not yet sent in your dues for 2023 and are so inclined to do so, we would really love for every member to provide their support to our organization. For those of you who have not yet paid and would like to renew your membership, you can send in your dues with the Membership Information - Application and Renewal Form which you can find on our website: MOAA Chapter - Green Valley, Arizona (greenvalleymoaa.org). The 2-page renewal form can be found on pages 6 & 7 of this newsletter. Dues are \$25 per member and \$15 for a spouse, should you wish to register your spouse.

NEW NAME TAGS FOR OUR CHAPTER:

We are pleased to announce the MOAA Green Valley Chapter Board has approved the purchase for new, very colorful name tags for our members and spouses. The chapter will cover the expense of the name tags for those who wish to order them; however, we will welcome a donation from members who wish to pay for their new tags themselves in order to help defer the cost to the Chapter. Suggested donation is \$6 per name tag. Here is what the new name tags look like:

If you would like to order a new name tag for yourself and/or your spouse, simply send an email to Jack Bundy, jhbundyaz@gmail.com with the particulars and he will order you a new one.



We look forward to seeing all of our members and spouses at our next events! See the schedule for each upcoming event on our website and on page 12.



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Military Officers Association of America Green Valley, Arizona Chapter PO Box 1535 · Green Valley, AZ 85622-1535

2023 Chapter Membership/Renew Dues

Chapter D	Dues: (Regular-	\$25; Spouses-\$15)		
Membersl MOAA.	hip Dues \$	Make check payabl	e to: Military Offic	ers Association of Green Valley or GV
PLEASE I	PROVIDE THE	INFORMATION BELOW:		
Na	ame:			_New Renewal
Ra	ank:	Branch of Service:	(Status)	National #
Sp	oouse/Partner_			_
Ac	ddress:			
Cit	ty, State, Zip			
DC	OB (Month/Day	/Year)		
Ph	none:		E-Mail:	
S	cholarship	& Military Assistanc	e Fund \$	Donation.
Make che Fund.	ck payable to:	Green Valley MOAA Scholar	ship and Military	Assistance Fund or GV MOAA S&MA
	•	ny meeting or mailed to Mil Box 1535, Green Valley, AZ	_	sociation of America, Green Valley,
		SEE REVER	SE SIDE (next pa	ge)



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Previous work and/or volunteer experience
Description of training, leadership and knowledge that may be pertinent
PLACE A CHECK NEXT TO YOUR DESIRED CHAPTER AREAS OF PARTICIPATION:
Fundraising or Assistant
Public Relations or Assistant
Scheduling & managing Chapter events or Assistant
Grant writing or Assistant
Chapter secretary or assistant
Chapter Treasurer or assistant
Community Partner Programs committee member
Historian
Chapter Liaison to military units
Chapter Liaison to JROTC units
Chapter Liaison to Green Valley Chamber of Commerce or Assistant
RETURN THIS NEW MEMBER QUESTIONNAIRE WITH YOUR CHAPTER APPLICATION/RENEWAL
FORM.



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MOAA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Darren Venters, Legislative Affairs, Transition Liaison



Congressman Juan Ciscomani has been selected by his colleagues to serve on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee in the 118th Congress. Ciscomani (AZ CD6) is a co-sponsor of the **Major Richard Star Act**, H.R. 1282 and S.344. He is among the 247 co-sponsors. If passed, the **Star Act** would provide concurrent receipt for service members unable to complete 20 years of service due to combat-related injuries. Other members of the Arizona delegations supporting H.R. 1282 and S.344

are Senators Kelly and Sinema and Representatives Grijalva, Lesko, and Gallego.

Juan Ciscomani introduced bipartisan legislation to cover costs for veterans seeking job training in high-tech industries. The <u>VET-TEC Authorization Act</u> permanently funds the Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET-TEC) program, which is a five-year pilot program under the Department of Veterans' Affairs. The program currently has an 84 percent graduation rate for the 12,000 veterans who have already completed it. The Ciscomani-Khanna bill permanently extends funding for the program, making it available to future generations of veterans.

The **Arizona Legislature** convened on 9 January and is scheduled to adjourn April 22. Military related or veteran issues have not been at the forefront of this session. Senate Bill 1375 that will include USPHS and NOAA personnel in the state income tax exemption like active-duty Armed Services members and military retirees already get has passed the Senate (18/11/0) and the House Military Affairs (15/0/0) committee and will be voted on by the full House soon. Check the Arizona Department of Veteran Services weekly updates to veteran issues legislation at: https://dvs.az.gov/legislative-updates.. To find your state legislator click Find My Legislator (azleg.gov).

MOAA relies on your support to move priority legislation through Congress. Please log in to https://www.moaa.org/Login to access the pre-formed advocacy letters to send to your Legislators. See the article titled **How to Navigate the Legislative Action Center** on page 9 for detailed instructions on how to access and use the Center.

To see MOAA-Supported Legislation click here: MOAA | Action Center (quorum.us)

Question of the day: How many bills or resolutions have been introduced or reported by committee and await further action in Congress? Find the answer in this issue of the newsletter.



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HOW TO NAVIGATE THE LEGISLATIVE ACTION CENTER

Elliott Jones, USA 1LT (Former), President

If you are NOT registered with the "Legislative Action Center"

- 1. Go to MOAA.org
- 2. Click on "Advocacy"
- Click on "Legislative Action Center"
- 4. Click on red box in upper right "Sign Up."



5. Fill out the information required and submit.

You are now registered with the "Legislative Action Center"

Next:

- 1. Go to MOAA.org
- 2. Login to your MOAA account
- 3. Click on "Advocacy"
- 4. Click on "Legislative Action Center"
- 5. Under "Active Legislative Campaigns" Click on "Write" (in a black box) to the right of the issue you want to write about.
- 6. When you click "Write" the next screen will be populated with letters to both of your Senators and to your Representative.
- 7. Scroll to the bottom and click on "Submit Selected Letters."
- 8. You are done!



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Robert D. Lewis, Chaplain

I hope everyone had a blessed Easter. My hope for all of you is that the Easter message will remain in your heart throughout the year.

I was recently asked about forgiveness. "How many times can the faithful be forgiven"? Understand that we are inclined to sin. The world around us is evil. Even with our best efforts...we all fall short, in thought, word and deed, by what we have done and what we have left undone. I often wonder what God thinks when we come to Him seeking forgiveness.

I recently took a longer cruise than normal. I had dear friends watch my two mini-golden doodle dogs. You know, I really missed them when I was gone. I often thought... I wonder if they miss me?

Well, when I came home, I emptied the luggage from the car, then went immediately to my friends to pick them up. The reunion was more than I expected. We laughed...lots of licks and jumping and running around with excitement. When it was time to go, they both ran to the car and jumped in. When we got home the excitement started all over again. After settling down they finally came over to snuggle next to me and looking at me you could tell we were all so happy to be together again.



For the faithful, when we "come home" to Jesus in prayer asking for forgiveness, He is still reaching, still welcoming. His arms are open. His eyes are

smiling. No fear or rejection here. We can boldly approach the throne of grace with confidence to obtain mercy and grace (Hebrew 4:16). Jesus said, "I tell you there is rejoicing in the presence of angles of God over one sinner who repents." (Luke 15:10)

May the Lord bless you and keep you!

TRAVEL TOILETRIES NEEDED

Peggy McGee



If you will be travelling during the summer and staying in hotels, please consider bringing home any unopened bottles of shampoo, conditioner, lotions and shower gel for the homeless veterans served by the VA hospital in Tucson.

They would also appreciate receiving toothpaste and brushes, razors and shaving cream, sunscreen and hand sanitizer. You may bring these items to any MOAA event during the year.



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JROTC NEWS

Marianne Rogers Faust, Director/JROTC Liaison

The NJROTC Awards Night was held on Wednesday, 29 March, at the Sahuarita Unified School District Auditorium. Several representatives from various Veterans organizations in Pima County were there to present awards to some impressive cadets.

I presented the MOAA JROTC Award Medal to Cadet/Lieutenant Isabella Sizer for having demonstrated outstanding citizenship, personal responsibility, and service to our community and country as a member of JROTC. Additionally, I presented our MOAA coins to Cadet/Seaman Nailia Collazo, Cadet/Petty Officer First Class Karson Darre, and Cadet/Lieutenant Commander Shayla Blair for their exceptional leadership in the NJROTC program.

Other members of our board will attend the Awards Nights later in April in Rio Rico for the AJROTC and in Nogales for the AFJROTC. We hope you will be able to join us for our annual awards dinner on Tuesday, May 9th at Grill on the Green. The registration form is on page 4.

SAVE MONEY ON YOUR TAXES AND HELP THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Peggy McGee



Now that tax season is over, you may be looking for some ways to reduce your taxable income for Tax Year 2023. One way to do that is to make a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) to the MOAA Scholarship and Military Assistance Fund or other charity of your choice. A QCD is a distribution from your Individual Retirement Account (IRA) to a qualified charity. You must be age 70½ or older to make a qualified charitable

distribution. A qualified charitable distribution is not taxed nor is it included in your taxable income.

A QCD is a direct transfer of funds from your IRA custodian, payable to a qualified charity. Funds distributed directly to you, the IRA owner, and which you then give to charity, do not qualify as a QCD.

A QCD can be counted towards satisfying your required minimum distributions (RMDs) for the year.

Please contact your financial advisor or Brokerage Manager for your IRA should you have questions about or to sign up to make a Qualified Charitable Distribution.



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HONOR FLIGHT LETTERS

Peggy McGee

A heartfelt thank you to the Chapter members who wrote a total of 177 letters to the veterans who went on the recent Honor Flight to Washington DC. During all the return flights, "Mail Call" is held and the veterans are presented letters of appreciation from school children, other veterans and friends and family thanking them for their military service. For this flight a record number of letters, 947 to be exact, was turned in to Honor Flight Southern Arizona by Chapter member Carin Kaiser who collected and counted all the letters. For many of the



veterans who feel that their service was not appreciated, these letters are often reread several times after they return home.

The next Honor Flight will be held in the fall. We hope others will write letters too. As soon as we get the date of the flight, we will send out a message and put it in the newsletter.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS for 2023

19 January – Luncheon 11:30 AM Location: Dominick's, Green Valley

16 March - Dinner 5 PM Location: Grill on the Green

9 May – Scholarships Award Dinner 5 PM Location: Grill on the Green

21 September – Luncheon 11:30 AM Location: TBD

The Board of Directors
meetings are the 1st Wed. of each
month 9-10:30am at the Friends in
Deed Building, Green Valley.
Members are welcomed to attend...
join us! There are no Board
meetings in June, July or August.

MOAA MISSION



The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is a nonprofit veterans' association dedicated to maintaining a strong national defense and ensuring our nation keeps its commitments to currently serving, retired, and former members of the uniformed services and their families and survivors. Membership is open to those who hold or have ever held a warrant or commission in any component of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard, Public

Health Service, or NOAA and their surviving spouses.



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WHY JOIN MOAA

MOAA's greatest mission is to improve the lives of those who serve and their families. Membership is open to active duty, former, retired, and National Guard and Reserve commissioned and warrant officers of the uniformed services and their surviving spouses. **JOIN MOAA**

2023 OFFICERS, DIRECTORS & CHAIRS



MOAA Legislative Update (article): How many bills or resolutions have been introduced or reported by committee and await further action in Congress?

Here's the answer!
Bills awaiting Congressional action total 3,979.

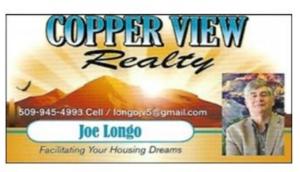


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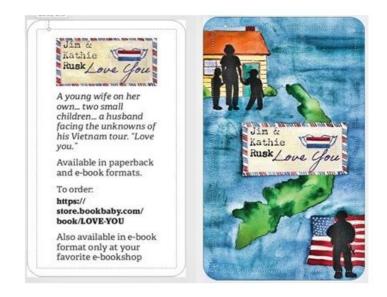
A special "thank you" to our sponsors who support MOAA of Green Valley with a sponsor ad.













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MOAA NATIONAL NEWS

From MOAA's President: Call to Restrict VA Benefits Breaks Faith with Veterans

The American military has been an all-volunteer force for nearly 50 years, and that force has served well in protecting our American freedoms and way of life. A scant 7% of our population chooses this path of service, and our country has asked a lot of those volunteers, particularly over the last 20-plus years.

Many of our servicemembers deployed into Iraq, Afghanistan and other locations across the globe as much as six or more times. They lost brothers- and sisters-in-arms. Many were even exposed to toxic chemicals via burn pits. Nevertheless, these volunteer servicemembers continued to fulfill their commitments and serve honorably.

As we approach the 50-year anniversary of our all-volunteer force, it is disheartening to read a call to action from *The Washington Post* to strip away disability pay and benefits to reduce the VA's growing budget. The April 3 editorial endorses means-testing disability compensation for those harmed by their service, plucking a line item from the Congressional Budget Office biannual report that examines a wide range of cost-savings ideas. The CBO report is always eye-opening and designed to offer outside-the-box ideas many which they admit could be difficult to implement. They are correct.

Means testing is typically utilized to ensure those truly in need can receive unearned benefits like social insurance or welfare aid as part of a government grant or gift. Military and veteran health care benefits are not gifts or grants: They are earned based on the sacrifices and commitments made by volunteers and their families. We don't means test federal medical benefits in any other part of the government, with the president paying the same premiums as the lowest-ranking civilian employee. And unless we want to disincentivize service, or disincentivize success after service, we shouldn't means test the benefits military members and veterans have earned through their sacrifices, either.

In addition, the timing of this proposal could not be worse, and this idea would prove disastrous for preserving a military force 100% dependent on volunteers and already struggling to recruit. The newspaper's Editorial Board turns a blind eye to sacrifices made by our servicemembers and the promises made to our war veterans. Such actions would undermine landmark legislation like the PACT Act, which will provide benefit to 5 million veterans exposed to harmful and cancer-causing toxins while deployed.

We fought the War On Terror in a new way, a protracted engagement where many of the same men and women endured multiple combat deployments. The burden of these wars was borne by a far lower percentage of our nation's citizens than ever before. Advances in battlefield medicine mean more from the Post 9/11 generation were wounded in action, not killed in action. For those who are injured in the line of duty, they may apply for service-connected disability payments to rectify the harm received fulfilling their commitment in service to our nation. As the CBO states, "VA paid about \$110 billion in disability benefits, four times the amount that it paid in 2000 (after removing the effects of inflation)."

Missing from the report is recognition of 20 years of war and the millions of new servicemembers, veterans, and surviving families. In 2001, we had more than 2.3 million veterans receiving disability compensation. After



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two decades, that figure rose to more than 5.2 million.

We also can't discount what's still owed to our Vietnam veterans, many whose medical ailments were only just now recognized as related to exposure to toxins.

We readily and willingly accept lawmakers must always remain positive stewards of taxpayer money. We must also be clear as to what not honoring past obligations will mean to the future of the all-volunteer force with the Post 9/11 generation now holding the biggest influence over whether or not they'll recommend service to the next generation. How will that proposition look under means testing?

When someone raises their right hand, swearing an oath to our nation, they are offering their service in an open-ended commitment. Our nation makes a promise back. We swear that we will care for them if they are injured, attempt to make them whole for the harms of service, and care for their family if they make the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of our nation. Not that we'll only do that if you fall below some artificial financial gate. There is an obligation and commitment made by our government that must be met.

We should never forget, minimize, or ignore the true cost of war and the human toll we pay for our freedom. To means-test service-connected disability payments does exactly that. This attempt to balance the budget on the backs of those who serve and have served is a violation of a social contract we must dismiss outright.

MOAA Joins Other Veterans Groups to Review PACT Act Implementation

MOAA's work to secure long-overdue toxic exposure reform legislation on behalf of millions of veterans succeeded last year, but efforts to ensure the new benefits and screenings provided by the law are far from over.

The VA has been working hard to meet the high demand of claims ever since the Aug. 8 signing of the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act. In late March, the department hosted an offsite meeting in Atlanta with over 50 VA leaders, veteran service organizations (including MOAA), and congressional staff members on hand to discuss the implementation process, examine ongoing projects and future plans, and identify room for improvement going forward.

Josh Jacobs, VA's senior advisor for policy performing the delegable duties of the under secretary for benefits emphasized the ongoing need for transparency and accountability from VA during the event. Days later, VA Secretary Denis McDonough spoke on the need to increase veterans' trust of the department. Over 450,000 veterans have filed claims since the PACT Act was signed into law last August, which is only about 10% of those who may be eligible.

Of the nearly half a million claims filed in the past eight months, over 150,000 have already been completely processed. As the number of claims continues to grow, the VA has conducted massive hiring events across the country, with a plan to hire over 8,000 new employees by the end of 2023.



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VA officials also emphasized efforts to increase training for employees facing changes to their workflow processes brought on by the bill, which introduced 20 new toxic exposure presumptive conditions.

The law also significantly increases the number of exams conducted by the VA. Over 2.1 million toxic exposure screenings have taken place since mid-August of last year. The increased examinations and new processes mean that, on average, claims are taking longer to complete. The VA is committed to ensuring that all claims made by veterans are examined thoroughly and in a timely manner.

All veterans deserve world-class health care and their earned benefits, and the VA wants to ensure the needs of all veteran populations are being met. To see whether you may be eligible to file a PACT Act-related claim, contact the VA for more information:

Online: VA.gov/PACT

On the app: VA: Health and Benefits On the phone: (800) 698-2411

The **Desert Duster** Newsletter is published by the members of the **Green** Valley Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA). The newsletters are sent electronically to Chapter members and posted on our website's **News and Events page** (in a downloadable PDF format).

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facebook.com/GVMOA

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Bundy







