

Coastal Carolina Clarion Newsletter

January 2021 issue



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CCMOAA – President’s Message for 2021

Wishing you and your families a Happy New Year! Thank you for your support this past year. Now that 2020 is behind us, I would like to concentrate on the many positive contributions our Chapter accomplished this past year – please see [The Year That Was](#).

For 2021 we are looking to continue our run of success by:

- Fully integrating Pitt, Lenoir, Greene, and Wayne counties into the Coastal Carolina Chapter and welcoming our new members.
- Establishing Coastal Carolina Membership Satellite in the Goldsboro area.
- Awarding up to five scholarships to deserving students throughout our catchment areas.
- Awarding several Leadership Medals to JROTC and ROTC Cadet students.
- Continuing to work with Local, State and Federal legislators in advocating for our active-duty veterans and their families, along with our retirees.
- Remain engaged with local veteran services organizations (VSOs) in outreach and planned activities.
- Continuing to raise money for our scholarship program by supporting our local Wreaths Across America program.
- Providing opportunities to serve by volunteering, serving on the Planning Committee, or participating as sponsor for Travelling Vietnam War Memorial - “The Wall That Heals” (April 6 -11). If you would like to volunteer, please go to [SignUp.com](#)
- When the wraps come off, creating events where the membership can once again get together.

Our Chapter is always looking for volunteers to assist with our many initiatives. Please contact me (bottom of the page) if you would like to contribute in 2021!

2020 – The Year That Was

The year 2020 had all the trappings of a really bad year, however, members of CCMOAA were continually recognized for their efforts to remain positive and create a year to remember. Here is your year in review:

1. National, NC Council of Chapters, and Chapter Awards:

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- a. Level of Excellence Award – 5 Stars (2019)
 - b. Marvin J. Harris Communications Award – 5 Stars (2019)
 - c. National Website Award – 5 Stars (2019)
 - d. North Carolina Council of Chapters Membership Award
 - e. MOAA Leadership Award (James Dargan)
 - f. Heavy Lifter Award (Mark and Cheryl Sandvigen) (2019)
2. National recognition of our chapter for our efforts in “Storming the Hill.” Legislatively we had a banner year with the most significant being MOAA halting the congressionally directed military treatment facility (MTF) restructuring and DoD’s plan to cut over 17,000 military medical billets. Another significant accomplishment the repeal of the Widows Tax.
 3. We were asked by the NC State Council of Chapters to incorporate Eastern Carolina MOAA and expand our coverage area. Our chapter stepped up and 2021 will be another year of firsts as we integrate Pitt, Lenoir, Greene, and Wayne Counties into our Chapter.
 4. As a chapter we awarded medals and certificates to JROTCs and ECU ROTC members for sustained excellence in both academics and military comportment.
 5. Members showed their generosity by buying at the commissary then donating the food to those less fortunate through the Craven County Food Bank. Well done!
 6. We handed out five \$1000 dollar scholarships to: 1) college students applying for a second year, 2) to the Arapaho Charter School (a first), and 3) to first time college attendees.
 7. One of our newest members was featured nationally on Purple Heart Day. As the face of CCMOAA, Kevin Hynes stated on the film, “The Purple Heart is not an award you want to get”. It became the byline for MOAA’s tribute to the 351,000 Vietnam veterans who received the Purple Heart.
 8. As a token of thanks, solace, or remembrance to those who served in harm’s way defending our lives and freedoms, our own past-President, Marie Sensig was presented with a Quilt of Honor.
 9. Our members were extremely generous with their time for both the Vietnam Wall and Wreaths Across America. While the Wall was ultimately cancelled, the efforts of our CCMOAA Chapter in contributing and volunteering for Wreaths Across America showcased once again your generosity of spirit.
 10. We scheduled, rescheduled, cancelled, and postponed a year’s worth of events until we could finally corner a winner with our Winter luncheon for Toys for Tots. The donated toys filled vans to over-flowing with our members having to assist in getting the toys to where they needed to be.
 11. Participated in four North Carolina Council of Chapters State meetings - three Virtual.
 12. Uninterrupted support for our veterans at the Kinston Veteran’s Home.



Veteran Benefits – [National Parks and Federal Lands](#) – Beginning on Veterans Day, 2020, Gold Star Families and U.S. Military veterans are granted free, lifetime access to more than 2,000 federal recreation areas, including national parks, wildlife refuges and forests. This free access program is a way to thank you for your service and to encourage you to explore recreational opportunities on our public lands and waters. If you have an ID card, then you qualify for this benefit.

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ID Card Changes - The Defense Department is replacing its 30-year-old identification cards for military families, retirees, and civilian workers in an effort to upgrade the cards and avoid security risks. Michael Sorrento, director of the Defense Manpower Data Center, said **cardholders don't have to scramble for the new IDs; your old cards do not need to be replaced until they expire or the phase-out date of January 2026 has been reached.**

If your card is expiring, not all facilities will have the ability to make the new cards (only 20 as of this writing), so check first. The new ID cards will no longer look like the old

cards we were issued but look more like the new Common Access Cards (CACs) without the chip.



Play Ball! The first weekend of March 2021, Kinston NC and Granger Stadium will host the cadets from the US Military Academy and the US Air Force Academy in a weekend of baseball. While all the events are being finalized for the 5th, 6th, and 7th of March, the dates are set so be sure to mark your calendars to get your tickets early. I will continue to publish updates for this event ensuring you are kept informed of times, events, and safety precautions.

Action Center – MOAA has published our national priorities for the upcoming legislative year. Click on the title and see our position, and the changes to the bills. You can show your support by clicking on the “Support Link” at the bottom of each description. You can also cut and paste the descriptions into your legislator’s email and fire them off. Remember, busy people must be told six times to have the information stick and become something they would advocate for.

MOAA’s 2021 Legislative Priorities

By: MOAA Government Relations Staff

Here are MOAA’s priorities for advocacy as the 117th Congress begins its work. Our focus remains on all eight of the uniformed services and their service-earned entitlements.

As protecting health care and service-earned benefits continues to be a challenge, MOAA will press forward in engaging Congress to shape outcomes in these vital areas.

There are steep hills before us. Our nation has a rising debt of more than \$27 trillion, and a deficit of more than \$3 trillion. In view of this, MOAA anticipates robust attempts to control federal budgets, reduce or eliminate unprogrammed expenditures, and reduce entitlements.

Please follow the link below to get a more in-depth explanation. <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2020-news-articles/advocacy/moaas-2021-legislative-priorities/?ite=2154&ito=2538&itq=93f61d7e-61bc-4791-8583-1f51084ffd91&itx%5Bidio%5D=17976>

VA’s New Web Feature, Phone Number Target Common Veteran Complaints

By: Amanda Dolasinski

Beneficiaries now can update their contact information via their [VA.gov profile](#), and the change will synchronize across VA networks. Veterans can enter demographic information – including a phone number, email addresses, home addresses, and disability ratings one time and have it change across networks addressing health care, disability compensation, pension benefits, claims and appeals, and the Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) program. Previously, if a veteran needed to change any demographic information, he or she would be required to call each individual VA network where that information is on file. (Veterans still must connect with separate offices to change details regarding education and home loan benefits, CHAMPVA, Veterans’ Mortgage Life Insurance, and The Foreign Medical Program.)

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24-Hour Hotline

The administration also has officially launched the My VA hotline, which will serve as the starting point to all VA contact centers and will help veterans find the right person to address their needs. Veterans can call 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411) with the option to press 0 to be immediately connected with a customer service agent to answer questions or connect to the appropriate VA expert. The hotline operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The VA conducted a pilot phase of the hotline from Oct. 1, 2019, to Sept. 31 of this year, [per a VA press release](#). During that time, more than 1.3 million people called the VA contact center. The VA also maintains the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255, by chat at veteranscrisisline.net and by text message at 838255. The VA also maintains the White House VA Hotline at 1-855-948-2311 which can be used “for Veterans and their families to share compliments and concerns,” per the release.

Here’s How to Avoid COVID-19 Vaccine Scams

By: Shane Ostrom

Now that the coronavirus vaccine is being deployed to the public, you will need reliable sources of information to stay up to speed on the relevant issues. It’s too much to cover in one article, so this article includes links to the most comprehensive information regarding insurance coverage as well as vaccine procedures and timelines. And remember, scams are rampant — beware of criminals. Medicare and TRICARE cover the vaccine at no cost to you, so if anyone asks you to share your private health care information or pay for access to the vaccine, it’s a scam.

Things to know about scams:

- You can’t pay to put your name on a list to get the vaccine.
- You can’t pay to get early access to a vaccine.
- Don’t share your personal or financial information with anyone who calls, texts, or emails you promising anything related to the vaccine or health care.
- Hang up the phone or delete any emails or texts that ask you to do anything. Do not click on any attachments or links in emails or texts. Nothing is as it seems. Scam attempts look very real.

Use only reliable sources to get information about the vaccine, like:

- [Medicare](http://www.medicare.gov/medicare-coronavirus) (www.medicare.gov/medicare-coronavirus)
- [TRICARE](http://tricare.mil/HealthWellness/HealthyLiving/Coronavirus/COVID-Vaccine) (For TRICARE information specifically regarding vaccines, go [here](#), tricare.mil/HealthWellness/HealthyLiving/Coronavirus/COVID-Vaccine. For one-stop-shop TRICARE information regarding coronavirus, go [here](#), tricare.mil/HealthWellness/HealthyLiving/Coronavirus/Coronavirus-Articles.)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](http://www.cdc.gov/library/researchguides/2019novelcoronavirus/websites.html) (www.cdc.gov/library/researchguides/2019novelcoronavirus/websites.html)
- [National Institutes of Health](http://covid19.nih.gov) (covid19.nih.gov)
- [MOAA](http://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2020-news-articles/rollout-report-the-covid-19-vaccine-and-dod,-va,-medicare,-and-more/) (www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2020-news-articles/rollout-report-the-covid-19-vaccine-and-dod,-va,-medicare,-and-more/)

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