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KEYSTONER
Keystone Capital Chapter
“Never Stop Serving”

DECEMBER 2024

Keystone Capital Chapter Joins Just For Today Recovery and Veterans Support Services for Mini Stand Down at its Outreach Center in Lemoyne Nov. 2nd

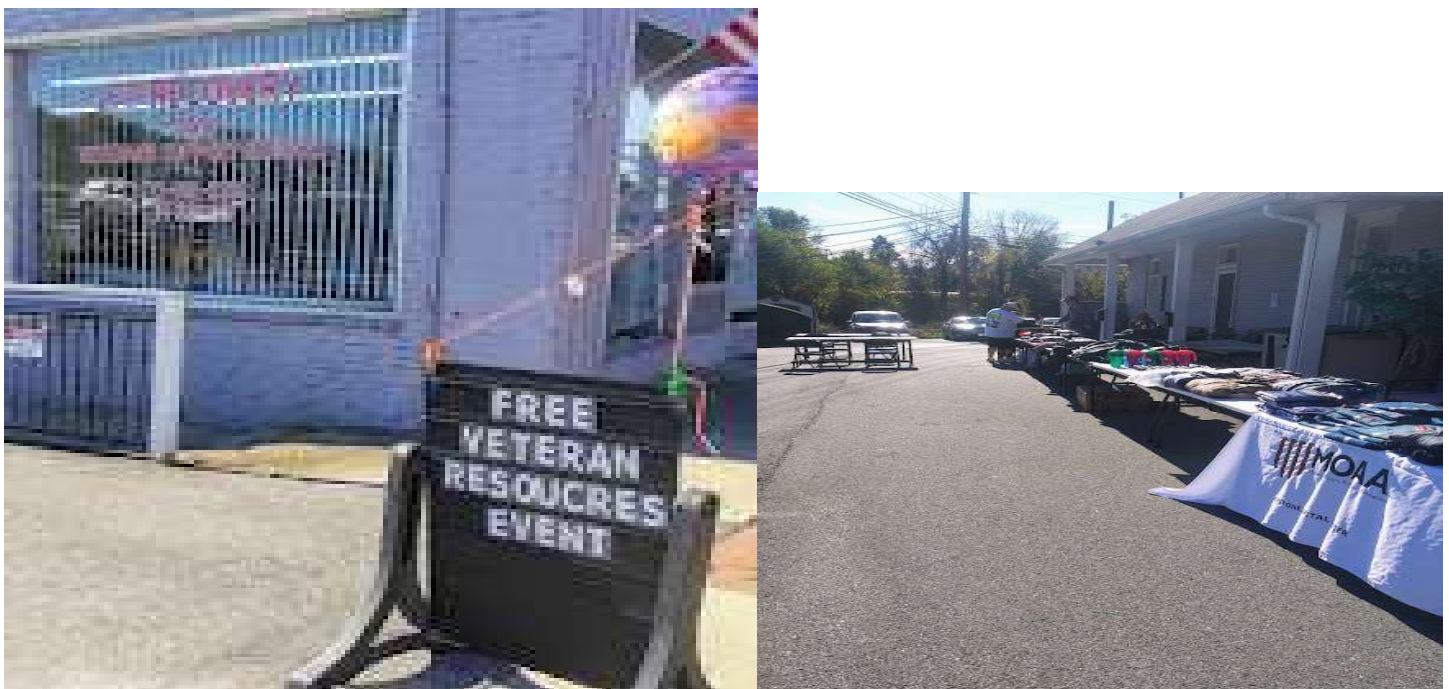


Photos by JFT Staff and Bob Gray, Keystone Capital Chapter. Keystone Capital Chapter President Bob Gray stands ready to distribute new clothing to veterans purchased through the MOAA Foundation Community Outreach Grant.

The chapter was awarded a MOAA Community Grant for \$1,010.00 to purchase clothing for a veterans Mini Stand Down on November 2, 2024, at Just For Today (JFT) Recovery and Veteran Support Services outreach center in Lemoyne. Over 26 veterans stopped by that day to pick up jeans, coats and thermal underwear from MOAA and other clothing provided by JFT, local churches and the American Legion Auxiliary. Items not picked up by the end of the

Stand Down were placed in JFT's veteran clothing closet for veterans released from treatment centers with only the clothing on their backs. It was cool but sunny, so we set up outside next to the main street for visibility. Scott had lined up a barber to come in on his day off to give veterans a free haircut. Then a women stylist came in and volunteered to cut women's or men's hair. They were busy cutting hair most of the morning. Smoked Brisket and baked beans headlined the lunch menu and was prepared on site by JFT's Veterans Service officer, Scott Young. JFT has a smoker and gas grill on their long side porch for larger events and get togethers. Another Minit Stand Down is scheduled at JFT for March 8, 2025 and other veterans service organizations are being invited to participate by invitations through the Capital Area Veterans Coalition, which JFT is a founding member. Keystone Capital Chapter has secured \$300.00 in 2024 Chapter Grant money towards the March Stand Down and is requesting another \$300.00 Chapter Grant for 2025 to purchase clothing for the event. Chapter members will be kept informed as the date get closer to schedule volunteers to man the table at JFT.

The Keystone Capital Chapter is applying for a 2025 MOAA Charities Community Grant for the Capital Region Veterans Coalition's second annual Active, Guard, Reserve and Veteran Family Day event at the Mechanicsburg ELKS Club. The event was well attended last year, and they have decided to schedule it again in June 2025. The organizations rented bounce houses, provided games for the children and service officers were available for veterans and family members. This is a great opportunity for our MOAA chapter to support the many Active, Guard and Reserve families, as well as younger veterans, in our local community. The ELKS Club has a large outdoor space in the rear with a picnic pavilion and lots for room inside should the weather change. More information to come on planning.



Photos by Bob Gray, Keystone Capital Chapter President

The Keystone Capital Chapter Dinner meeting



Photo by Bob Gray, Keystone Chapter

Chapter members gathered for a dinner meeting in July at the Penn Harris Hotel. The chapter invited three guests to provide an update on their veteran support organizations. Janet Klinger reported DOG TAGS was gaining veterans in the program after COVID. She still enjoys working with veterans and their dogs to give them freedom. She is the only original member left from the programs beginning. Their program has trained over 70 veteran's dogs to become their service dogs. Scott Young and Steve Barndt from Just for Today (JFT) Veterans Support Services in Lemoyne told chapter members they now have locations in Millersburg, York city and just opened a joint office in Harrisburg with another organization. Scott planned a joint mini stand down with Keystone Capital Chapter on November 2nd at their Lemoyne location. Future Stand Down plans include a Minit Stand Down at JFT on March 8th like the November stand down, providing clothing, haircuts, lunch and help with any VA related questions. JFT has a Service Officer scheduled almost every week so it is easier for veterans to see a service officer or make an appointment.

Future dinners will be held at area restaurants, as the cost of using the Penn Harris has become too expensive. They charge a \$100.00 set up / tear down fee and we must have \$250.00 minimum purchase in food service, or they bill the chapter for the difference. Any member that has a good suggestion for a local restaurant or club for a dinner meeting please let Keith Beebe or Bob Gray know so they can check it out with you.



Additional information

For information or if you need help for the Survivor Benefits Program (SBP) please call 1-800-321-1080.

If anyone knows of an ill or recuperating chapter member, please contact Jan Beebe at 717-761-5335. She will send a card from the Chapter.

To join the Keystone Capital Chapter, contact our Membership Chairman Keith Beebe at 717-761-5335. Email: keith.beebe@verizon.net. He would be glad to speak with you and answer any questions. Membership application is the last page of the newsletter.

MOAA is a Nonpartisan Organization: The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is a nonpartisan military nonprofit organization that does not engage in partisan politics and works with all political leaders in moving military and veterans' legislation that will help the men and women who currently serve, the retired, their families and their survivors. The views presented in the *Keystoner* newsletter are those of the editor and do not represent the opinions of the Keystone Capital Chapter officers, PA Council members or represent the views of MOAA's national officers, staff, or Board of Directors. Bob Gray, Editor. Email: rl_gray@hotmail.com

PENNSYLVANIA LEGISLATURE

Bob Gray – Legislative Chairman
MOAA PA Council of Chapters
Legislative Information from the General Assembly
web site: <http://www.legis.state.pa.us>

Veterans Legislation introduced in the 2025 General Assembly

**Legislation that did not pass both
Houses in 2024 and has been
reintroduced in the current session.**

**SB 64 Sen Bartolotta -, Veteran Owned
Business Logo**

This legislation will recognize and promote veteran-owned businesses in the Commonwealth through the design and use of a special logo. **This legislation was Senate Bill 438 of last session.** Under this bill, we will show our commitment to the entrepreneurial efforts of veterans throughout Pennsylvania with the goal of increasing awareness and success of their small businesses.

**SB 129 Mastriano -Veterans Home
Advisory Council Improvements**

I will re-introduce **SB 933**, which would help reform and strengthen the oversight

of our six State Veterans Homes.

Currently, each Veterans Home has an Advisory Council. Our legislation will:

1. Stipulate that the Advisory Councils are to advise the State Adjutant General on resident care, management, operations and compliance of facilities in order to ensure high-quality health care and well-being of resident Veterans.
2. Revamp the councils to include 15 members – 1 appointed by the Senate President Pro Tempore - 1 appointed by the Speaker of the House - 10 from recommendations by the PA War Veterans Council (all of whom are to be Veterans from the local community) - and 3 from recommendations by residents of the Veterans Home (1 of which shall be a family member of a current or former resident) -- with staggered terms.
3. Require the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs to provide a subject matter expert to be available for each of the Advisory Councils' meetings.
4. Place an open meeting requirement on the Advisory Councils.
5. Require an Annual Report on our Veterans Homes Advisory Councils to be provided to the General Assembly.

SB 130 Sen. Mastriano Notice of VA Burial Benefits for Veterans

In the near future, I plan to reintroduce **SB 1139**. This legislation would require licensed funeral directors, funeral entities or cemetery companies to notify the county veterans affairs director of a deceased serviceperson having legal residence in the county and to notify the decedent's family with the contact information for the county veterans affairs director. This legislation is aimed at assisting the families of our

deceased service personnel during their most difficult times by connecting to the county director, who will be able to guide them through any available benefits for deceased servicepersons and their families.

SB 144 Sen. Mastriano -Global War on Terror Bonus

In the near future, we plan to reintroduce **SB 1316**, legislation that will award a monetary bonus to Veterans of the Global War on Terror (GWOT) – which includes Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF).

Pennsylvania has a long and proud history of recognizing the service and sacrifice of our veterans. We support those serving our country over an important time spectrum; as an individual service member while enlisted, as a family during deployment, and as a veteran once honorably discharged from the military. One unique, historical recognition has been the granting of a monetary bonus for service during an active theater of war. Our Commonwealth has made this acknowledgment following service in the Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II, the Korean Conflict, the Vietnam War, and the Gulf War. It is one more way to express our gratitude for the sacrifices made during armed conflict.

if the service member was KIA. By locating veterans to award the bonus, there will then be a better opportunity to connect veterans with additional programs and services at the state and federal level.

SB 146 Sen. Baker - Enhanced Review of Veterans 'Trust Fund Grant Applications

Far too often, our veterans return to their civilian lives without the knowledge of programs which have been created to assist them. The result is disheartening: the resources set aside for veterans in need may remain untouched while many of them continue to fight for their livelihoods.

One such program is the Veterans' Trust Fund (VTF). As you may recall, the VTF is a non-lapsing fund under the jurisdiction of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs whose mission is to assist and support our veterans and their families. The VTF issues grants to statewide charitable organizations that assist veterans, veterans service organizations, and county directors of veterans' affairs. Funds are received from drivers' license and vehicle registration voluntary checkoffs, proceeds from 'Honoring our Veterans' and 'Honoring our Women Veterans' license plates, and grants/gifts/donations, among other sources.

My legislation amends Title 51 to create a VTF Grant Evaluation Committee. This legislation requires the DMVA's internal review committee, which presently administers the VTF grant process, to include 5 members appointed by the Adjutant General and 4 members appointed by the Legislature. Doing so will help to better identify underserved regions of our commonwealth while increasing awareness. Veterans

deserve our very best and this proposal seeks to boost the noble work of the VTF.

A listing of bills the PWVC supported in 2024 but were not passed and have not been reintroduced for the new session.

These issues are supported in the PWVC Legislative Goals for 2025, and we request this legislation be introduced in the current session.

Increase the amount of the Veteran Blind and Amputee Pension. During the PWVC Legislative Committee presentation to legislators during the Legislative Breakfast at the Capitol on March 20th, the PWVC Legislative Committee asked House legislators what happened to the efforts to increase the amount of the Blind and Amputee Pension from \$150.00 to a higher amount. Legislators stated that DMVA replied they agree with a \$50.00 increase to \$200.00 but it was clarified later that they would need a supplemental budget increase in that line item to support the increase. The PWVC Legislative Committee was told that a new bill would have to be drafted with the \$200.00 figure. The Committee will ask when a new bill is going to be drafted and request a COLA provision be included in that bill as well to incrementally increase support to our Blind and Amputee veterans. It is not known yet how the Exclusion of VA disability payments and income from the Blind and Amputee Pension from any Commonwealth programs has benefited these veterans in accessing more services and programs.

Protection Against Claims Sharks. The VA has not yet imposed penalties for businesses not accredited by the VA taking

advantage of Veterans seeking to file claims for benefits under the Pact Act. VA has been posting warnings in their weekly VA emails and on their website to warn veterans and find a veteran's service officer at no charge. Businesses are charging higher fees than VA accredited organizations and businesses are permitted to charge a veteran. **Senate Bill 1145** has been introduced to add language to PA Title 51, CS, Military and Veterans Affairs, that places a criminal charge of misdemeanor of the Third degree on individuals or businesses that do not follow the directions and guidelines of federal law in 38 CFR 14.636, required of VA Accredited organizations and businesses. While this is some deterrent, the legislation resides in Title 51, Military and Veterans Affairs. This bill was referred to the Senate VA&EP Committee April 5, 2024, with no action taken to date.

PWVC Initiatives that continue to be pursued in 2025

Veterans Justice Project. The PWVC Legislative Committee sent a letter requesting the Senate Judiciary Committee support the immediate passage of Senate Resolution 196 to provide a needed and timely review of how well our state is administering justice to those veterans mentally or behaviorally injured during military service. Senate Resolution 196 was passed by the Senate on August 16th. A report is due to the Senate in 15 months, September 2025 on the effects of PTSD and TBI on veterans in the criminal justice system.

Rich Hudzinski is continuing to explore ways to effect administrative changes in the courts regarding Veterans Justice.

HR 404 Rep. Pielli Urging Congress to Support the MAJ Richard Star Act –

Referred from the House VA&EP Committee May 6, 2024. Bill was laid on the table June 27, 2024. PWVC Legislative Committee to contact and ask for Combined House and Senate Joint Resolution.

The Legislative Committee will determine if there is support in the legislature to pass a Joint Resolution to transmit to Pennsylvania's Congressional delegation to encourage them to cosponsor federal legislation for the Richard Star Act.

Lower Dauphin High School Establishes JROTC Battalion



Photo by VFW Commander John Gyger, by permission. Junior Cadet Samples received the MOAA Leadership Certificate and medal. Bob Gray also presented the PA Council James Brokenshire Leadership challenge coin.

Keystone Capital Chapter president Bob Gray participated in the MOAA 2024 Advocacy in Action event in Washington, DC



Photo: Courtesy of Rep. Chrissy Houlahan's staff

From left, Rep. Houlahan's Communications Director Aubrey Stuber, Keystone Capital Chapter president Bob Gray and MOAA staff escort Kevin Lilley. Aubrey is a Lieutenant in the PA Army National Guard Aviation Brigade looking forward to attending flight school.

In his role as the Pennsylvania MOAA State Council Legislative Chair, Bob Gray accompanied Council president Nick Taylor to Washington, DC for the annual MOAA Advocacy in Action campaign. Between Nick and Bob all of Pennsylvania's 18 Representatives and two Senators officers were contacted and a meeting with staff was conducted. The teams left issue papers with the main facts of their issues and the MOAA legislative staffer that is working on the issue. While most of the congressional staff are young, they are knowledgeable about the issues. It was a long day but very rewarding talking with congressional staff. MOAA legislative staff say it is five miles of walking between offices during the day of meetings. A great day.

Federal Legislation

NATIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR HIGHWAY

By Keith Beebe, Past President PA Council of Chapters

The country now officially has a National Medal of Honor Highway. It is U.S. Route 20, coast to coast through 12 states from Oregon to Massachusetts. At 3,365 miles in length, it is the longest highway in our nation.

Initially each individual state established legislation designating its section of U.S. Route 20 as their (State) Medal of Honor Highway. The states are Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, and Massachusetts.

The individual (State) Medal of Honor Highway honored the respective state's recipients of the nation's highest military award.

To earn the Medal of Honor a member of the Armed Forces had to act with **conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty during combat at the risk of one's life against an enemy of the United States.**

About 60 percent of all 3,515 Medal of Honor awards presented since 1863 are connected with the 12 states. The remaining 38 states account for about 40 percent of all recipients.

The next step was to work with Congress to establish a National Medal of Honor Highway. A National Medal of Honor Highway would honor all 3,515 recipients and any future recipients from all 50 states and territories.

U.S. Senator Ron Wyden of Oregon and U.S. Representative Mike Kelly of Pennsylvania each initiated legislation in their respective Congressional chambers to "designate United States Route 20 in the States of Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, and Massachusetts as the "National Medal of Honor Highway". Multiple military and veterans organizations including the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) sent letters of support to Congress for the legislation.

U.S. Senate Bill 1478 passed in the Senate and then the U.S. House passed it. On December 17, 2024 the President signed the legislation. It became Public Law No. 118-154 and is now officially established the National Medal of Honor Highway.



Graphic from Bend Heroes Foundation, used by permission,



Photo: PA House of Representative's Audiovisual Department by permission

PA War Veterans Council Reviews Legislative Goals for 2025 Session

By Bob Gray, PA War Veteran Council Legislative Committee Chairman

At the end of each year the PA War Veterans Council, composed of Pennsylvania's 15 congressionally recognized veterans' organizations, reviews legislative goals accomplished during the year and revises its goals for the next session of the General Assembly. These goals are not always on the legislature's mind, or the bills are not moving during the session. The War Council provides their goals to the legislature each year and explains why they are important to improve veteran's lives. The legislative goals for the 2025 session were approved by the members of the PA War Veterans Council and forwarded to the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees. The goals: pass legislation to establish a Global War on Terror Bonus for the veterans of Pennsylvania, Increase the amount of the Blinded and Paralyzed Veterans Pension beyond \$150.00 per month, Guard Against Claims Sharks by Restoring a penalty for businesses and individuals charging veterans to help them with their VA claims or offering to help them file a claim for a fee, Revise the Disable Veterans Real Estate Tax Exemption program to include spouses of servicemembers classified as P.O.W. and Missing in Action and unmarried spouses that move back into the state, Properly Maintain the Veterans Transportation Network, Make Veterans Justice more fair(ask if individual is a veteran, presentencing medical review if TBI or PTSD is suspected, Increase in County Veterans Courts), Support the Reorganization of the state Department of Veterans Affairs and Request the PA Senate and House of Representatives support a joint resolution to support the MAJ Richard Star Act to let Pennsylvania's congressional delegation to support the new bill.



Federal Legislation

Use this link to look up bills introduced in

Congress: www.congress.gov

Tips to Engage Your New Lawmakers (and Enhance

MOAA's Advocacy Efforts) By Jennifer Goodale, MOAA Staff

With a new congressional session underway, this presents a valuable opportunity to connect with your legislators and advocate for the uniformed services community.

A few simple steps can help MOAA build strong grassroots connections and advance our legislative agenda.

Join MOAA's Legislative Action Center

MOAA's Legislative Action Center is your gateway to staying informed and taking action on pressing issues. The online portal allows you to [find your elected officials](#), [track legislation](#), and [learn about key priorities](#) like housing improvements, health care access, and pay increases. You can also send messages directly to your lawmakers urging support for MOAA-

endorsed legislation; campaigns will begin as new legislation is filed.

Signing up ensures that your voice, and those of your fellow advocates, contributes to meaningful change at the federal level.

**[REGISTER TODAY: [MOAA's Legislative Action Center](#)
www.moaa.org/takeaction**

Reach Out to the Military Affairs Contact

Every congressional office has a staff member dedicated to military and veterans' affairs. Identifying and engaging with this point of contact can establish a direct communication line to your representative.

A well-crafted email introducing yourself, highlighting MOAA's advocacy priorities, and offering your perspective as a constituent can pave the way for a productive relationship. Personal engagement sends a strong message that military issues matter to voters in the district.

To connect with your lawmaker, visit their website and click the "contact" tab.

[RELATED: [MOAA's Priorities for the 119th Congress](#)]

Join MOAA's Legislative Action Center

By joining MOAA's Legislative Action Center, connecting with military affairs representatives, and participating in local

outreach efforts, you can help ensure our issues remain front and center. Together, we can champion the causes that matter most to servicemembers, veterans, and their families.

Take action today by visiting [MOAA's Legislative Action Center](https://www.moaa.org/legislative-action-center) , www.moaa.org/takeaction and joining the movement to create a stronger future for all those who serve.



Wreaths Across America

Keystone Capital Chapter continues to honor chapter members each year that have been laid to rest at Indiantown Gap National Cemetery. Wreaths are purchased by the chapter from the PAIGNA sponsor group.



Photo by PAIGNA - Indiantown Gap National Cemetery

Don't forget the Member Benefits you have with MOAA membership! Travel worldwide through MOAA Vacations, Insurance and Financial help through MOAA Insurance Plans and USAA, discounted rental on PODS moving and storage containers. A chapter member used the PODS discount to rent a PODS container to store furniture during floor refinishing.

There are many benefits waiting to be discovered such as MOAA Perks, like discounts on GE appliances and much more. Go to the MOAA website, www.moaa.org , and click on Benefits.



Keystone Capital Chapter Member Application

Name: _____
Rank: _____ Branch of Service: _____
_ Active _ Retired _ Former _ Reserve _ National Guard _ Surviving Spouse
Spouse Name; _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
Date of Birth _____ Telephone Number _____
Email _____

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

Are you a MOAA Member? _ YES _ NO
MOAA Number is known _____

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

For \$5.00 a month you can upgrade to PREMIUM membership, giving 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 www.moaa.org/join to learn more.

How did you hear about chapter involvement? _____
Are you a member of MOAA Chapter (s)? _ YES _ NO
If yes, which ones? _____

To complete enrollment:

Fill in this form and mail it to **Keith Beebe, 108 April Drive, Camp Hill, PA 17011** Keith can also be reached by phone at **717-761-5335** or **keith.beebe@verizon.net**