



Heartland of America Chapter

-- **We Never Stop Serving** --
-- **We Are One Powerful Voice** --
--- **for Every Officer at Every Stage of Life and Career** ---

***** **July 2022** *****



If you are not in this picture, you missed a good time with your MOAA friends. They missed you and hope to see you at the next MOAA dinner in August. (take the survey at the newsletter end)

Next Dinner Meeting ??
AUGUST 17th at Johnny's Cafe, 4702 S. 27th St. Omaha

Check out our website at www.heartlandMOAA.us or call (402)339-7888

The Bulletin Board

is the Newsletter of the Heartland of America Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America. Content is from members, MOAA's [Take Action](#), [Legislative Action Center](#), and other military-oriented sources. Material used is public domain or attributed as to source and copyright. Our editorial policy is the same [non-partisan policy as MOAA](#).

Lt Colonel Patrick L. Jones, USAF(Ret) Editor & Webmaster - (402)650-4457

Volume XXXVI

Number 7

July 2022

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Our speaker for our June dinner meeting was John Hilgert, Nebraska Director of Veterans Affairs. A Nebraska native, he attended Gross High School and the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. He graduated with a degree in business administration in 1986. He then attended Creighton University Law School and received his JD in 1989. He then entered the Army and served in the Trial defense Service at Fort Riley, Kansa. This was followed by service in Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm for which he was awarded the Bronze Star. He then served in Legal Assistance in the Staff Judge Advocate in the 1st Infantry Division (Mech) office.

After serving as a fundraiser for a non-profit, he ran to represent South Omaha in the Unicameral. He won and served two terms from 1995 to 2001. After leaving the Unicameral, he was appointed by Governor Mike Johanns to his current position. John was retained in his position by Governor Heineman and eight years later by Governor Ricketts.

John, speaking without notes, gave us an overview of the major functions of his office starting with helping veterans identify and access benefits. There is a wide range of county, state, and federal benefits related to education, employment, finance, health care, housing, legal assistance, recreation, taxes, and more. Veterans should contact their County Veterans' Service Officer (CSO) or a State Service Officer. While the State Service officers are employees of the State, the office is located in a separate facility in Lincoln. It should be noted that County VSOs are employees of the county.



A second major mission for Veterans Affairs is the administration of the State's Veterans Homes. They are located in Scottsbluff, Kearney, Norfolk, and Bellevue. The homes had been administered by the Department of Health and Human Services but in 2017 they were transitioned to Veterans Affairs. It was a smooth transition and John's management skills have contributed to the success of the four homes. One challenge that the homes have had recently has been staffing. The limitation on the number of veterans in the homes is having adequate staff. John responded to this nursing shortage by raising wages and offering paid certified nursing assistant (CNA) training. This paid training can continue for individuals seeking to become a registered nurse (RN).



Our speaker, John Hilgert, receiving our Heartland Chapter Challenge Coin from our chapter President, Dan Donovan.

An additional wing is being constructed at the Bellevue home that is intended to be a day-care facility.

John recently appeared with Governor Ricketts and the Secretary of Health and Human Services to announce a new project to reduce the veteran suicide rate in Nebraska.

John does an outstanding job. One can sense his empathy and strong feelings when he discusses the "heroes." Whether they are residents of the homes or meeting with a veteran service officer, he seeks to give Nebraska veterans the respect and treatment they have earned. His solid leadership has been recognized by the leaders of our veteran organizations. They respect John and hope he will be retained by the next governor.

This is a reminder that we have no dinner meeting in July, but you are welcome to attend the Board meeting at 11:30, Thursday, August 11th at the Special in Bellevue.

Our August 17th speaker will be John Hanson, the President of the Offutt Advisory Council. He has been involved with the base for several years, is an excellent speaker, and has a wonderful sense of humor.

Since moving our dinner meetings to Johnny's, we have noticed a decline in the number of attendees. There are very few options as to where we can meet. It had been almost 40 years since I had been to Johnny's. The price is right (last month the most expensive option was 26 dollars) and the food and service are good. Please consider coming to our meetings. (See survey on page 19)

.Dan Donovan - d.donovan1@cox.net - 402-339-7888

Army Swiftly Backpedals on Policy Dropping High School Diploma Requirement

(MOAA NL 26 Jun, By Steve Beynon, Military.com, 30 June)

After only a week, the [Army](#) has swiftly reversed a new policy that would have allowed potential recruits to enlist into the force without a high school diploma or GED, according to an internal memo reviewed by Military.com and confirmed by a spokesperson.



The Army, [along with the other services](#), faces an ongoing crisis to fill in the ranks amid a convergence of issues, including [an increasingly competitive civilian job market and the military](#) losing some public awareness in the absence of a major conflict. So far, the Army has only hit about 40% of its [recruiting](#) goals this year.

On June 23, the service said that it would drop the requirement for completing high school under the condition that enlistees quickly ship out to boot camp, setting a deadline of Oct. 1 to begin training.

However, the move was met with some mockery online and accusations of it being a desperate measure, lowering standards to fill in the ranks wherever the Army could.

"Some people have frankly become very self-conscious of the news coverage," an

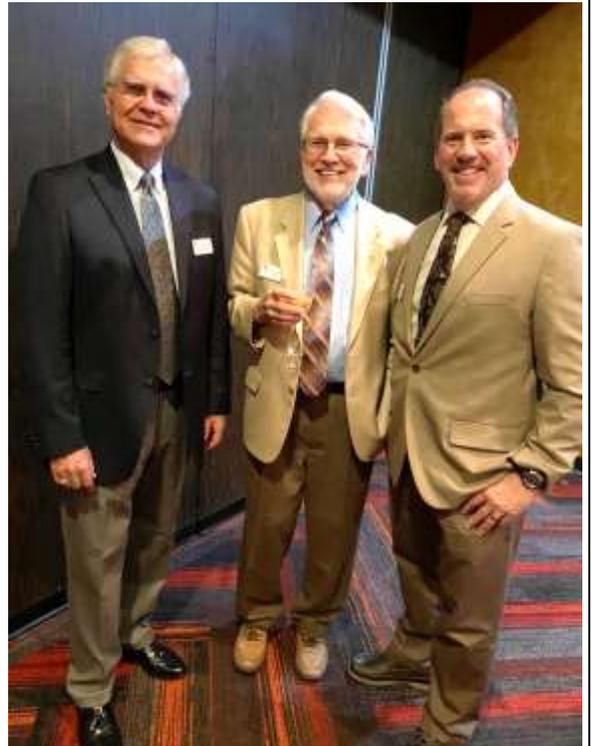


Hmm-m, it seems the photographer snapped this picture of Lydia Glinka, Linda Olson, and Linda Nelson while they were intent on listening to his story.

Army official with direct knowledge of the policy change told Military.com.

The service has relatively few options for changes it can implement quickly, so officials have chipped away at the margins where they can.

The potential recruits who would have been exempted from the high school requirement had to be 18 and score at least a 50 on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery, or [ASVAB](#), an SAT-style quiz to measure a potential recruit's academic ability. That was a higher threshold than normal, with a 31 being the minimum score for anyone else. Scoring at least a 50 would likely qualify an individual for a healthy roster of the Army's jobs.



Doug Pikop, Jack Nelson, and Mark Olson are always enjoying our dinner meetings.

A lack of education plays a relatively small role in disqualifying potential recruits, with most issues related to minor criminal infractions and intense scrutiny on past minor medical and mental health issues. Only about one-fourth of young Americans are even eligible to serve, with the top problem being obesity.

Multiple sources with direct knowledge on lifting the requirement for a high school diploma or GED said that policy makers were concerned about legitimate reasons a candidate might have not finished their schooling, and raising the bar on the entrance exam was a good control factor to not lower education standards. One Army official told Military.com the lift on requiring diplomas could return.

"A score in the 50th percentile on the ASVAB is a good score," the Army official, who spoke to Military.com on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the press on the subject, said. "So, if someone doesn't have a GED or high school diploma, but they score well on the ASVAB, meet all other requirements, then military service could potentially be a great option for their future."

Army officials have made a number of small adjustments to make recruiting easier where they can without having negative impacts on the quality of soldiers enlisting. In a sign of the need for capable recruits, the service is offering up to \$50,000 enlistment bonuses, its highest ever, and allowing recruits to pick their first duty station with some limitations.

This was on top of existing benefits that have been key for [recruitment](#) for decades, including the [GI Bill](#), relatively cheap and easy access to health care and VA home loans -- all of which are still generally more generous than most entry level jobs for people without college degrees.

The Army has also picked low-hanging fruit such as [relaxing its tattoo policies](#), which is expected to impact only a few hundred recruits per



Having a great time, Ginny McBlain, Linda Nelson, Doug Pikop, Lorraine Purdum, Lydia Glinka, and Leslie Pahre look forward to seeing you next time!

year. In [an interview with Task & Purpose](#), Army Secretary Christine Wormuth has also expressed concerns that negative media attention on [scandals](#) and issues in the force, including [sexual assault and harassment](#), [suicide](#) and other [quality-of-life problems](#) faced by the rank and file, may be impacting recruiting. *Related: [Military Throwing Cash at Recruiting Crisis as Troops Head for the Exits](#)*



Lorraine and Dick Purdum were having a great time with Linda and Jack Nelsen but would like to have additional members join them. The camaraderie is great and the food pretty good too!

Lower Commissary Costs, Big Housing Stipends Pushed to Fight Inflation

(MOAA NL 22 Jun)

House lawmakers want to **bump up military housing stipends** and **drop costs of some commissary items** to combat the impact of inflation on family finances.

The bill details \$802.4 billion in defense spending next year, including a **4.6% pay raise for troops** to start in January. Both of those figures match proposals outlined by the White House earlier this year.

Outside advocates have said the pay raise — the largest for troops in two decades — may not be enough to counter higher prices for gas, groceries, and other household goods caused by rising rates of inflation.

But Officials from the House and Senate Armed Services Committees have said that raising military pay even higher is problematic, because the mark is also used to set pay raise levels for civilian federal workers.

The bill includes nearly \$250 million earmarked for housing stipend improvements and another \$500 million for commissary support, both designed to get more money into military families' pockets.

Committee staff said the extra housing stipend would increase the monthly payouts to troops by 1%. Currently, Basic Allowance for Housing rates cover about 95% of local rent and housing costs. The authorization bill change would lift that to 96%.

Housing rates are calculated based on rank, location, and family status. For a mid-career enlisted service member with dependents living in Texas, the extra 1% would mean about \$170 more in housing support next year. For the same service member living near San Diego, it would mean about \$350 more a year.

Military housing allowances were increased by an average of 5.1% in January, but some families saw even higher boosts. Last fall, as rent rates climbed nationwide, military leaders used existing budget flexibility to temporarily raise rates in 56 markets.

Both the housing and commissary provisions would have no impact until 2023, and the proposals will have to survive multiple rounds of congressional debate in coming weeks.



MOAA's and Heartland Chapter's Missions are the Same.

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, working to support military and their families at every stage of life. It actively petitions Congress on behalf of the military community on issues affecting the career force, the retired community, and veterans of the uniformed services. MOAA offers a wide range of personal and financial services exclusive to MOAA members. Whatever the stage of a career, MOAA membership delivers benefits geared specifically to you – and your family. You become part of the strongest advocate for our military and their families. Those with prior officer service in any of the eight uniformed services can become members. Consider joining today because every voice counts! You will be protecting not only your earned benefits but for all serving today. Our Heartland Chapter also focuses on state and local issues, interfacing with the Legislature and the Governor. We provide a really great environment for camaraderie and mutual support with our meetings, speakers, newsletters, website, and community involvement. We are like family.

As MOAA does, WE NEVER STOP SERVING....

We are One Powerful Voice –

For every officer at every stage of life and career...

Join Us !! You will be glad you did!

Selection of Membership

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p>When you join MOAA, you become part of the strongest advocate for our military's personnel and their families. The stronger our membership is, the stronger our voice becomes. Consider joining today because every voice counts. Three membership levels to meet the needs of all Officers.</p> |  BASIC |  PREMIUM |  LIFE |
| Features of each Membership level | No-cost electronic Membership designed for today's junior officers. | Full access to MOAA's career resources, countless discounts on products and travel, & access to all of MOAA-exclusive pubs & news updates. Full access to a wide variety of member benefits for today's career officer. | Receive all the benefits that PREMIUM membership has plus exclusive privileges and benefits. |
| Membership Dues | Free | 1 year -\$48, 2 years - \$82 3 years - \$108 | Dues are based on your current age |
| Support of critical advocacy efforts to protect the benefits of the entire military community. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Electronic access to several of MOAA's news updates. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Discounts on products and travel. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Career transition resources MOAA helps transition efforts by hosting career fairs, resume critiques, training sessions & much more. | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Expert advice on your military pay & benefits MOAA's team of highly trained professionals can help you receive the military benefits you've earned through one-on-one counseling. | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Financial planning and investment advice | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Military Office magazine | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Access to all MOAA-exclusive publications | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Scholarships, interest-free loans, & grants | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| MOAA Chapters - Take advantage of the opportunity to get involved & meet fellow offices in your community. A PREMIUM or LIFE membership makes it easy. | Dues vary by Chapter. (Heartland Chapter of Ne is \$20 per yr) | New chapter members receive a voucher good for one year of chapter dues. | New chapter members receive a voucher good for two years of chapter dues. |
| Bonus travel rewards and discounts | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Initiation fee waived at the Army and Navy Club of Washington, D. C. | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Spouse Protection -membership benefits transfers if something happen to you. | | Auxiliary Annual DUES 1 Yr - \$43 2 Yr - \$73 3 Yr - \$97 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

National Membership Form

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is the country's leading organization protecting the rights of military service-members and their families. Those who belong to MOAA not only lend their voices to a greater cause, but they also gain access to extensive benefits tailored to the needs and lifestyles of military officers and their surviving spouses. MOAA members proudly hail from every branch of the uniformed services. To them, we have made the same promise that they have made to their country: Never Stop Serving.

THE LARGER OUR NUMBERS, THE GREATER YOUR VOICE.

**Why MOAA
membership matters.**



Select **YOUR** Membership: LIFE PREMIUM BASIC

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Dues to MOAA are not deductible as a charitable contribution for federal tax purposes.

Annual membership dues include a \$12 subscription to Military Officer magazine.

Send To: MOAA, PO Box 1488 • Merrifield, VA 22116-9820

For faster service, call (800) 234-MOAA (6622) or visit www.moaa.org/join.

LIFE
Membership Dues

Dues are based on your current age.

| | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| 50 and under | \$851 |
| Age 51-55 | \$801 |
| Age 56-60 | \$757 |
| Age 61-65 | \$692 |
| Age 66-70 | \$615 |
| Age 71-75 | \$529 |
| Age 76-80 | \$434 |
| Age 81-85 | \$332 |
| Age 86-90 | \$234 |
| Age 91-95 | \$145 |
| Age 96-99 | \$88 |
| Age 100+ | FREE |

PREMIUM
Membership Dues

One-Year PREMIUM

\$48 (Surviving Spouse – \$43)

Two-Year PREMIUM

\$82 (Surviving Spouse – \$73)



Three-Year PREMIUM

\$108 (Surviving Spouse – \$97)



BASIC
Membership Dues

FREE

Local Membership Form



Heartland of America Chapter
Military Officers Association of America
P.O. Box 1756
Bellevue, NE 68005-1756

LOCAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(Heartland Chapter members must also be a National MOAA Member)

Membership: Initial or Renewal

Annual local dues \$20.00 \$10.00 (new ones after 1 July) Aux. \$5.00

Benefactor Donor: \$50, \$100 or more _____

Last Name _____ First Name _____ MI _____

Nickname _____ e-mail _____

Street Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone(H) _____ W _____ Cell _____

Rank _____ Service _____ Retired NOAA USPHS

Active Duty Regular Reserve Nat'l Guard Former Officer

Spouse's Name _____

National MOAA Membership # _____ Life Member? Yes No

Brief Bio: (entered service: branch: assignment summary: Interesting career anecdotes:

Signature _____ Date _____

Contact Chapter Officers for more info: President Dan Donovan - 402-339-7888,
Membership: Michael DeBolt 402-980-0554, **Surviving Spouse Affairs:** Martha Didamo -
402-292-2194, **Legislation:** Jeff Mikesell - 402-990-2713, **Treasurer:** Rene Dreiling 402-
740-3127, **ROTC:** Doug Pikop - 402-690-4338, **Personal Affairs:** Teri LeHigh - 402-291-
2713, **Hospitality & Reservations:** Ron & Lidiya Glinka, 402-672-2020, **Webmaster &**
Newsletter: Pat Jones - 402-650-4457, **Advertising & Recruiting:** Dick Doolittle 402-871-
8409, **Transition Liason:** Jack Nelson - 402-679-3725

(PLEASE UTILIZE OUR ADVERTIZERS ON FOLLOWING PAGES)

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You are our heroes."–

Pete Zekauskas

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ADVERTISERS SUPPORT US... LET US SUPPORT THEM !!

The advertisement for The Special Restaurant, Inc. features a green banner at the top with the text "The best in American food" in white. Below the banner is a photo of a sandwich and fries. To the left of the photo is a badge that says "2018 SARPY COUNTY PEOPLE'S CHOICE Awards WINNER". To the right of the photo is the restaurant's logo, which is a yellow oval with "THE Special" in red and black script, a sunflower icon, and "RESTAURANT, INC" below it. Below the logo is the text "Open: Tuesday - Friday 11am - 8pm Saturday & Sunday 8am - 2pm Closed Mondays". At the bottom, the address "303 Fort Crook Rd. N. Bellevue" and phone number "402-884-0441" are listed. A red banner at the very bottom contains the website "Thespecialrestaurantinc.com" in white.

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May They Not Be Forgotten:

I mean the men and women who have answered the call and paid the ultimate price so that we and future generations could have the freedoms so cherished by human beings. We must ever be vigilant and prepared to defend our way of life against those who would deny it. Callous politicians, power hungry egotists, corrupt individuals, adversarial religions, and even our latest self-oriented generations pose grave threat to the preservation of what many take for granted. Every citizen should take a few moments from time to time and reflect on the benefits we have in our country. They should give thanks to those who have served and preserved our way of life. Hopefully, they will also pledge to do their part to keep it so. - PLj



Wandering Mind of An Old Retired Guy



When you are retired, you have lots of time to ponder the way things are.

I asked a supermarket employee where the canned peaches were.... He said, "I'll see," and walked away. I waited and waited.

So, I asked another and he also said, "I'll see," and he walked away.

Finally, in the end I gave up and found them myself, in Aisle C.

Duh?

So-o-o-o, LIFE IS GOOD

**"GOOD FRIENDS ARE THE RARE JEWELS OF LIFE,
DIFFICULT TO FIND AND IMPOSSIBLE TO REPLACE!**

**TODAY IS THE OLDEST YOU'VE EVER BEEN, YET THE YOUNGEST YOU'LL EVER BE,
SO ENJOY THIS DAY WHILE IT LASTS." And SMILE.... It'S CONTAGIOUS !!!**



Heartland Chapter Questionnaire

**Remember the expression, “The more, the merrier”?
We ask you to make our meetings better with your presence
and ask for your suggestions to improve our programs and speakers.**

What would you like to see and hear about?

What would you like to tour or visit?

Would you support a dinner theater night?

Name a particular person you would like to hear

List other suggestions to make our meetings better

List subjects you like to hear about.

**Send your reply any way you can, return email, cut & paste, or hand-written, to –
Ron Russell (rrussell2@gmail.com) or 7950 Ponderosa Dr., Papillion, NE 68046**

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