



# The OWRC Briefing Board

The Newsletter of the Ohio Western Reserve Chapter, An affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America

February 2025 | Volume 25 Issue 2 | OWRC.net and MOAA.org

For questions contact the Chapter President and Webmaster at [andy@andrewemanuele.com](mailto:andy@andrewemanuele.com)



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From National MOAA

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## February 2025 President's Notes

Well, February as a winter month is holding to its name. The forecast shows repeated cold outbursts from the north. But, have no fear, as there are lots of things to do!

1 Feb is Ice Cream for Breakfast Day. The 2nd, of course, is Groundhog Day. A weather celebration. Or cook it and eat it. One of the nicknames for the groundhog is the whistle pig. The 8th is National Boy Scout Day. The 12th is National Freedom to Marry Day. The 14th is Valentine's Day - naturally, after all weddings. The 15th is Remember the Maine Day. And the 22nd is Cook a Sweet Potato Day.

There are lots of other events in addition to the above.

Speaking of events, we have a Saturday luncheon, 22 February, at D'Agnese's Restaurant at 11:30 a.m. Located at 566 White Pond Drive in Akron. More information will be provided as we get closer. Hope to see you there. Take a look at the restaurant and the menu here [Home - D'Agnese's Italian Restaurant](#)

Andy has set up an online donation form for us to buy an OWRC paver to be installed at the new Veterans Memorial Park in Norton OH. The city asks for all donations to be paid by Saturday 1 March. So please consider a donation. We have purchased memorial pavers at the MAPS Museum, the Clinton Memorial Park, and the Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery at Rittman. Use this link to make your donations [Donation for Norton Veterans Cemetery](#)

## Future Chapter Activities

### It's Tax Time...Want some help?

Did you know Veterans and their families have multiple no-cost options for having their income taxes prepared? The VA offers a convenient list of links to tax preparation and electronic filing services that will help ensure you keep more of your hard-earned money on Tax Day. [Click here for complete details.](#)

The Summit County Veterans Service Center on Waterloo Rd in Akron also offers free tax preparation service. [Visit this link for free Tax Prep Service](#)

Certain eligibility requirements apply for some of these services, so be sure to review them carefully and find the option that works best for you.

### REMINDER

**The deadline to file and pay your income taxes is April 15!**



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## Save the Date

One of the Premier Chapter events for the year is the **ROTC/JROTC Award and Recognition Dinner** to honor the outstanding ROTC and JROTC cadets for 2024/2025. We will again host this event on **Thursday, 10 April 2025**, 1800 – 2100, at Guy’s Party Center, 500 E. Waterloo Rd, Akron, OH 44319. This is scheduled a little earlier than usual, but the timing of Easter and school breaks is driving the date.

### Michael’s A.M.

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**Join OWRC  
Members Every  
Wednesday  
1130 hours**

**1562 Akron  
Peninsula Rd.  
Akron, OH  
44313**

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## You have a little more lead time here.

The Christian Business Men’s Connection (CBMC NE Ohio) **2025 Akron Leadership Prayer Luncheon** is scheduled on May 8. They are hosting their 2025 Akron Leadership Prayer Luncheon at Todaro’s Party Center. The speaker this year is Jeff Struecker, an author, pastor, and former United States Army Ranger who was involved in the [Battle of Mogadishu](#) in 1993.<sup>[2][3][4]</sup> He also participated in the 1989 invasion of Panama ([Operation Just Cause](#))<sup>[2][3]</sup> and in Kuwait during [Operation Desert Storm](#).<sup>[2][3]</sup> Struecker has co-authored five published books.<sup>[5]</sup> Struecker was portrayed by [Brian Van Holt](#) in the 2001 film [Black Hawk Down](#). In 2017, he was inducted into the Army Ranger Hall of Fame.<sup>[6]</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeff\\_Struecker](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeff_Struecker) His topic will be Fearless Leadership.

Information about attending is at this web site: [2025 Akron Leadership Prayer Luncheon Registration, Thu, May 8, 2025 at 11:30 AM | Eventbrite](#)

## News about your MyHealthVet or MyPay login.

### Prepare for VA’s Secure Sign-In Changes

Starting in March 2025, you no longer may sign in using MyHealthVet after 4 March 2025:

For DS Logon, that expires September 30th, 2025.

You must set up an account for Login.gov or ID.me.

In 2025, you’ll have two secure sign-in account options ([Login.gov](#) and [ID.me](#)) for all VA websites and apps. We’ll remove the My HealthVet option after March 4, 2025, and the DS Logon option after September 30, 2025. [Learn how to prepare for VA’s sign-in changes](#)



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## After Two Days of Confusion, Federal Funding Freeze Put on Ice

By: MOAA Staff

A Jan. 27 [memorandum from the Office of Management and Budget](#) instituting a temporary pause of all federal agency grant, loan, and financial assistance programs [was blocked by a federal judge Jan. 28](#) and then [rescinded Jan. 29](#) before MOAA and fellow advocacy groups could fully ascertain its potential effects on the military and veteran community.

MOAA continuously monitors for threats to service-earned benefits as part of its work on behalf of those who serve and have served, their families, and their survivors. We will take action against any proposals that would diminish these earned benefits.

Prior to the Jan. 28 ruling and subsequent policy reversal, the VA made clear the memo would “have no impact on VA health care, benefits, or beneficiaries,” [according to a Jan. 28 statement](#) from Acting VA Secretary Todd Hunter. This included GI Bill benefits, which were to continue to both students and schools.

As outlined in the original memo, the freeze would not have impacted military pay, retired pay, survivor annuities, disability compensation, or Dependency and Indemnity compensation (DIC). There was no indication that TRICARE benefits would be affected, and administration officials stated Medicare and Social Security payments would continue.

Should the federal government reinstate the freeze as initially outlined in the Jan. 27 memo, these VA-based programs are assessed to be potentially at risk:

- Veteran suicide prevention grants
- Job assistance for veterans and spouses
- VA home loan benefits
- Grants to support and house homeless veterans
- Veteran legal services
- Programs ensuring veterans are honorably memorialized
- State veterans' homes
- Services to help rural veterans access care
- Recreational programs for disabled veterans

Veteran-specific job search programs and employment services for homeless veterans provided by the Labor Department also may be at risk, as are veterans treatment courts administered by the Justice Department.

MOAA will keep our membership informed of any updates on federal spending policy, along with any changes to your earned benefits stemming from new federal policy. Visit [MOAA's news page](#) for the latest details.

## Do Your Service-Earned Skills Translate to a Career in Diplomacy?

By: Kevin Lilley

Servicemembers and veterans considering a career in diplomacy may fear their experience in unrelated fields won't translate.

A doctor-turned-ambassador begs to differ.

“Veterans are mission-driven, reliable, and patriotic,” said Ambassador Aldona Z. Woś, M.D., who served as U.S. Ambassador to Estonia under President George W. Bush (2004-07) and is now president of the [Institute of World Politics](#) graduate school. “They are skilled at working in teams within organizational structures and have unique people skills, having navigated different environments, cultures and locations. . . . Whatever you did when you were in uniform has prepared you for a diplomatic career in ways a typical civilian education does not.”



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Woś is no stranger to career pivots: Her medical career ranged from private practice to teaching to industry consulting. After her time in Estonia, Woś became active in state-level government, serving as secretary of North Carolina's Department of Health and Human Services and overseeing more than 18,000 employees (and a budget nearing \$20 billion).

While service-earned skills will prove helpful in most any diplomatic field, some advanced education may be required to find a desired position, and the application process for such jobs can be time-consuming. Woś, who took over the IWP top job on an interim basis in early 2022, said many schools offering diplomacy-directed programs accept VA education benefits, and while finding a position can take time, "the wait is worth it."

"One can get a job to pay the bills during the application process," she said. "I encourage folks not to be put off by the length of the process and just go for it."

The reward for patience and persistence may be the chance to serve your nation in a wholly new, exciting capacity ... drawing on your time in uniform to strengthen your performance.

"As a veteran, your life experiences are a phenomenal credential," Woś said. "Whether it be in a graduate classroom or an embassy overseas, veterans with their unique, important perspectives and experiences have a tremendous amount to offer."

For more ways MOAA can support any career path you choose, visit our [Transition and Career Center](#).

## Urge Your Lawmakers to Secure Federal Job Protections for Military Spouses

By: Jen Goodale

Military spouses working for the federal government provide more than just an often-untapped skill set for their agency or department – their careers make it more likely for a servicemember to remain in uniform, despite frequent moves and other potential professional derailments.

For this reason, MOAA welcomes recent guidance from the VA and other federal agencies designed to exempt military spouses on PCS orders from recent Office of Personal Management (OPM) and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) directives regarding a federal hiring freeze, a return to in-person work for federal employees, and changes to probationary periods and administrative leave policies.

But not all agencies are making such exemptions part of their policies. And while some lawmakers are weighing in with letters to OPM and OMB urging consideration of exemptions for military spouses, they need to hear from you about how important this issue is to the financial wellbeing of military families, and to the health of the all-volunteer force.

Without this protection, the new guidance could negatively impact military spouses who have been offered federal positions, are in a probationary hiring status, or are currently working for the federal government.

### Recognizing the Need

Three executive orders (EOs) in the past 17 years recognized and addressed persistent un- and underemployment challenges military spouses face:

- [EO 13473](#), To Authorize Certain Noncompetitive Appointments in the Civil Service for Spouses of Certain Members of the Armed Forces (President George W. Bush)
- [EO 13832](#), Enhancing Noncompetitive Civil Service Appointments of Military Spouses (President Donald Trump)
- [EO 14100](#), Advancing Economic Security for Military and Veteran Spouses, Military Caregivers, and Survivors (President Joe Biden)



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These orders established and enhanced the federal noncompetitive hiring authority to [support military spouse employment](#). Provisions in the last five National Defense Authorization Acts (NDAA's) extended the hiring authority in recognition of the continued high unemployment rate – 21%, according to the most recent DoD data – and also expanded it to include DoD civilian spouses, State Department spouses, and intelligence community spouses.

The FY 2024 NDAA further clarified the importance of expanding remote and telework options for federally employed military spouses.

A VA memo issued Jan. 24 notes that the new federal policy “allows for exceptions for military spouses with permanent change of station orders. Current arrangements to include Domestic Employee Teleworking Overseas (DETO) arrangements will not be modified unless there is a basis for revisiting or revising the arrangement.” This memo should be a model for other agencies moving forward.

The same day, the Department of Health and Human Services issued an agency exemption to military spouses with permanent changes of station, noting, “Current Workplace Flexibility Agreements will not be modified unless there is a basis for revisiting or revising the arrangements.”

However, other department-wide guidance such as that issued by DoD and the Labor Department lacked similar provisions.

[Additional OPM and OMB guidance](#) on return-to-office plans issued Jan. 27 included language in a footnote exempting military spouses working remotely under language in the FY 2024 NDAA. However, without more specific direction from OPM and OMB, there are significant concerns military spouses on the move could face additional difficulties keeping, or securing, federal positions despite their qualifications.

Visit MOAA's Legislative Action Center and [ask your lawmakers to urge OPM and OMB to establish exemptions for military spouses](#) to ensure they can continue to make their valuable contributions to our federal workforce while helping support their families.



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## OWRC 2025 Executive Board

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<b>ROTC/JROTC Liaison</b> <b>VACANT</b>	<b>Newsletter Editor</b> <b>VACANT</b>

*Application for Ohio Western Reserve Chapter, an Affiliate of MOAA*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Military Status: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Component: \_\_\_\_\_ Branch of Service: \_\_\_\_\_ Rank: \_\_\_\_\_ Applicant DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse DOB: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Regular Member (Retired, Former, Active officer of the eight uniformed US Services) **Membership \$25/year**  
 Widow(er)-Surviving Spouse membership is available for surviving spouse of officers **Membership \$10/year**  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Primary Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Secondary Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 email: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Chapter Member Dues = \$25/yr January 1 to December 31, Annually.*  
 Newsletters will be emailed, check this box if you prefer USPS Mail

Make check Payable to OWRC-MOAA  
 Mail to: OWRC-MOAA P.O. Box 4272 Copley, OH 44321.  
 or go to OWRC Website <https://OWRC.net> for application and pay via credit card or PayPal.

Donation to (check one)  
 Stand Down  
 ROTC/JROTC Scholarship  
 Fisher house (Wade Park VA)  
 Enclosed is a check for: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **OWRC Purpose and Mission Statement**

To support the purposes and objectives of the Military Officers Association of America; promote camaraderie among the officer (retired, active and former) within the OWRC region and relationships with other veteran organizations; and support projects for those pursuing military service (ROTC programs) and assisting veterans (wounded, jobless and homeless).

### **Legislative Contacts:**

**MOAA Legislative Update** [MOAA | Legislative Action Center \(quorum.us\)](https://www.moaa.org/legislative-action-center) .

**President Donald J. Trump (R)** The White House 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. Washington DC 20500 Switchboard: 202-456-1414 [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)

**Senator Bernie Moreno (R)** SR-B33 Russell Senate Office Bldg. Washington, DC 20510 .

<https://www.moreno.senate.gov> Cleveland Office, Carl B. Stokes U.S. Courthouse 801 W Superior Ave., STE 1400 Cleveland, OH 443113 T: (216) 522-7272

**Senator Jon A. Husted (R)** U.S. Senate SR-198 Russell Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510 Phone:(202)224-3353

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**Representative Bill Johnson (R)** U.S. Congressional **OH District 6** 192 East State St. Salem, OH 44460 Phone (330) 337-6951 [www.billjohnson.house.gov](http://www.billjohnson.house.gov) or Washington, D.C. Office 2082 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515 Tel: (202) 225-5705 or 4137 Boardman-Canfield Road Suite 106 Canfield, OH 44406 T (330) 967-7312

**Representative Troy Balderson (R)** US Congressional **OH District 12.** 2429 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, DC 20515 (202) 225-5355

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**Representative Emilia Sykes (D)** US Congressional **OH District 13.** 1217 Longworth House Office Building Washington, DC 20515 Tel: (202)225-6265

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