



The Council Crier First Quarter 2022

VCOC Officers 2022-2024

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The Quarterly Newsletter of the Virginia Council of Chapters of the Military Officers Association of America

Fellow VCOC Members,

With our first Council Crier for 2022, we tell the story of an active and engaged Virginia Council of Chapters. In start, our Legislative Affairs team strongly advocated during both the Virginia General Assembly 2022 and MOAA National Advocacy in Action 2022. After two years of meeting virtually, our Council reconvened at the Virginia War Memorial for our First quarter meeting. As we continue with Advocacy in Action season, keep sending in those letters as provided in the MOAA Magazine. We also encourage each VCOC member to take action by going to the MOAA National website: [Advocacy in Action 2022](#). Make your voice heard.

To chapter visits in the first quarter of 2022, I have had the opportunity to swear in the Portsmouth Area Chapter Officer Slate, also visit the Potomac Chapter, provide a Legislative Affairs update. Many thanks for the opportunity to visit with both chapters.

With this issue of the Crier, I would like to emphasize the importance of developing and maintaining long term relationships with our legislators, both State and Federal

levels. Legislation is complex and often long term in nature, sometimes taking years of effort. With Legislative Advocacy at the centerpiece of the MOAA VCOC Mission, fostering long term relationships with our legislators is key to crafting and ultimately passing legislation.

To this reminder, we thank the entire Virginia Delegation, Federal and State levels, for their steadfast support and team work with our Council.

Thank you for your dedicated service to both the Virginia Council of Chapters and Military Officers Association of America.

CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret)
President
Virginia Council of Chapters



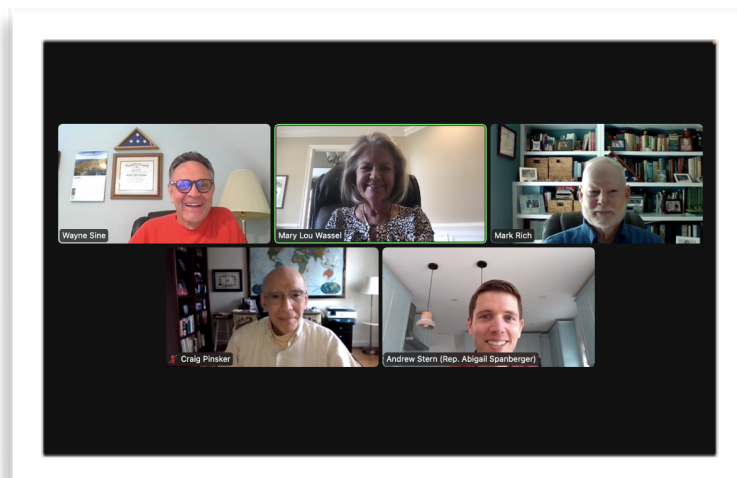
Richmond Area Chapter Advocates During Advocacy in Action 2022

RACMOAA President Col Mark Rich, USA (Ret)

The Richmond Area Chapter of MOAA (RACMOAA) successfully conducted their first two Advocacy in Action virtual meetings with congressional representatives. On April 12th the RACMOAA team met with staff from Representative McEachin and on April 21 they met with staff from Representative Spanberger (VA 07).

The congressional staffs were very knowledgeable, supportive and had even co-signed one of the bills. We are looking forward to meeting in person and virtually with our third representative.

Pictured below, Richmond Area Chapter Team, Mr. Andrew Stern, Office of Representative Gail Spanberger (VA 07): CAPT Mary Lou Wassel, USN (Ret), COL Mark Rich, USA (Ret), LTC Craig Pinsker, USA (Ret), Mr. Wayne Sine.



VCOC Advocacy in Action 2022

CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret)
VCOC President

MOAA Advocacy in Action Campaign Topics 2022

1. Military Pay Raise at 4.6% per the Employment Cost Index (ECI). MOAA supports the full pay raise for all and will guard against any reductions to fund pay-table overhauls.

2. The Richard Star Act. This bill would end an unjust offset faced by tens of thousands of combat-injured retirees who were unable to complete 20 years of service due to their combat injuries. Retired pay is for completed years of service paid by DoD, while disability compensation is for lifelong injury paid by the VA. Two different payments for two different purposes. To reduce retired pay because of a disability is an injustice.

3. The Stop Copay Overpay Act. This bill would reduce mental health copays that were more than doubled through military health system reforms. Mental health is increasingly important and getting attention on the Hill due to pandemic impacts and the effects of social media on children's well-being. This issue impacts currently serving families on TRICARE Select, working age retirees and their families.

As of this writing, VCOC MOAA Advocacy in Action 2022 appointments, via virtual, in person or phonecon are as follows:

1. 21 January 2022, 24 January 2022: Offices of Senator Tim Kaine (D VA), and Senator Mark Warner (D VA) . VCOC President CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret) previewed the MOAA Legislative Priorities 2022.

2. 11 April 2022: Office of Senator Tim Kaine (D VA), VCOC Vice President CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret), VCOC President Linc Smith, USNR, MOAA Member Services Representative Ms. Libby Michael.

3. 12 April 2022: Office of Representative Don McEachin (VA 04), Richmond Area Chapter Team: CAPT Mary Lou Wassel, USN (Ret), COL Mark Rich, USA (Ret), LTC Craig Pinsker, USA (Ret).

4. 18 April 2022: Office of Senator Mark Warner (D VA), VCOC Vice President CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret), VCOC Secretary LtCol John Down, USAF (Ret), HRC-

MOAA Member CAPT Bookie Boland, USN (Ret), MOAA Member Services Representatives Ms. Libby Michael and Ms. Kristian Spraggins.

5. 21 April 2022: Office of Representative Abigail Spanberger (VA 07), Richmond Area Chapter Team: CAPT Mary Lou Wassel, USN (Ret), COL Mark Rich, USA (Ret), LTC Craig Pinsker, USA (Ret).

6. 21 April 2022: Gerry Connolly (VA 11), Mt. Vernon Chapter Team: CDR John Prevar, USN (Ret), MOAA Member Services Representatives Ms. Libby Michael and Ms. Kristian Spraggins.

7. 21 April 2022: Office of Representatives Don Beyer (VA 08), Mt. Vernon Chapter Team: CDR John Prevar, USN (Ret), VCOC President CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret), MOAA Member Services Representatives Ms. Libby Michael and Ms. Kristian Spraggins.

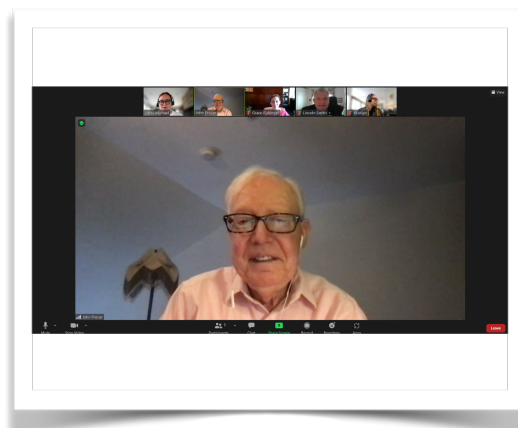
8. 23 April 2022: Office of Representative Rob Wittman (VA 01), RACMOAA Team: CAPT Hardy Josephson, USN (Ret), CAPT Mary Lou Wassel, USN (Ret), Mr. Wayne Sine.

9. 25 April 2022: Representative Elaine Luria, (VA 02), VCOC Vice President CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret).

10. 5 May 2022: Office of Representative Bobby Scott (VA 03), PACMOAA President COL Bill Smith, USA (Ret), MAJ Sherry Ferki, USA (Ret), COL Hal Hostetler, USA (Ret).

MOAA VCOC Advocacy in Action 2022 featured screenshots, as follows:

21 April 2022: Mr. Matt McLaughlin, Office of Representatives Don Beyer (VA 08), Mt. Vernon Chapter Team: CDR John Prevar, USN (Ret), VCOC President CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret), MOAA Member Services Representatives Ms. Libby Michael and Ms. Kristian Spraggins.



18 April 2022: Mr. Gene Garland, Office of Senator Mark Warner (D VA), VCOC Vice President CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret), VCOC Secretary LtCol John Down, USAF (Ret), HRCMOAA Member CAPT Bookie Boland, USN (Ret), MOAA Member Services Representatives Ms. Libby Michael and Ms. Kristian Spraggins.



21 April 2022: Mr. Matt McLaughlin, Office of Representatives Don Beyer (VA 08), Mt. Vernon Chapter Team: CDR John Prevar, USN (Ret), VCOC President CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret), MOAA Member Services Representatives Ms. Libby Michael and Ms. Kristian Spraggins.



23 April 2022: Office of Congressman Rob Wittman, (VA 01), RACMOAA Team: CAPT Hardy Josephson, USN, (Ret), Congressman Rob Wittman, CAPT Mary Lou Wassel, USN (Ret), LCDR Wayne Sine, USN (Ret), Veteran Council Meeting at the VFW Mechanicsville, VA.



VCOC Advocates at Virginia General Assembly 2022

Col Monti Zimmerman, USA (Ret)
VCOC Legislative Affairs Chair

For the past three legislative sessions I have worked to correct an inequity in property tax relief. I consider that there are four groups that deserved tax relief on the basis that if groups above and below the gap had it, it was only "the right thing to do" to ensure that the gap was corrected. Initially, tax relief was granted to what I call group one, three, and four.

Group One: Surviving spouses of those who were killed on active duty.

Group Three: Veterans who are rated 100% disabled by the Veterans Administration.

Group Four: Surviving spouses of group three.

This left a gap of surviving spouses whose military spouse died on active duty but was not killed by enemy. This group included many who died in the combat zone by accident, friendly fire, or of a medical condition.

In July 2021, VCOC voted to approve this as a MOAA initiative to bring to the JLC (Joint Leadership Council for Veteran Services), the governor's non-partisan political appointed board. Also, I brought the MOAA initiative forward to the JLC. I edited the white paper I wrote, on the spot, to ensure it was incorporated as a MOAA initiative. I was introduced to Military Surviving Spouse and a member of the NOVA MOAA chapter, Edith Smith. With her help, we created a core of 29 surviving spouses to assist with this issue.

In October, working with Edie Smith and Traci Volkie, we gained the support of Delegate Kathy Tran of Springfield to become the patron sponsor of the bill. Also, the JLC listed the initiative as JLC Initiative #2. This gave it significant credibility as one of the top three initiatives.

In January, Delegate Tran's legislation was designated HB 957.

In February, it moved through the committee process in the House, where another delegate who did not understand the importance of a "legal" definition of a "surviving spouse." The change in definition would have forced every single applicant for the benefit to obtain an Attorney General ruling that they would qualify. The House passed this unanimously,

In March, when we took this to the Senate committee system, Traci and I implored Benjamin Hermerding, Delegate Tran's Chief of Staff to restore the original definitional language to that language that I put in the white paper. This eliminated the need for an Attorney General ruling. The amendment passed unanimously, followed by the committee endorsing the bill unanimously.

The bill was signed into law on April 5th, to go into effect on July 1st, 2022.

On March 3, 2022, members of the Virginia Council of Chapters attended the Virginia General Assembly and Veterans Caucus Legislative Reception. Pictured below, CAPT Mary Lou Wassel, USN (Ret), RACMOAA, COL Monti Zimmerman, USA (Ret), VCOC Third Vice President, CAPT Hardy Josephson, USN (Ret), RACMOAA, CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret), VCOC President, and LTC Craig Pinsker, USA (Ret) RACMOAA.



Pictured below, CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret), VCOC President, Senator Bryce Reeves (R 17th), COL Monti Zimmerman, VCOC Third Vice President.



Pictured below left: CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret), VCOC President, Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin.

Pictured below right: CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret), VCOC President, Virginia Lieutenant Governor Winsome Sears.



VCOC Reconvenes Quarterly Meetings at Virginia War Memorial

The Virginia Council of Chapters met at the Virginia War Memorial, April 6 2022, Richmond, Virginia. The meeting included two guest speakers, Surviving Spouse Ms. Maria Kelly and Virginia Commissioner of Veterans Services Dan Gade. During the meeting, Ms. Kelly and, Mr. Steve Hornsby, Former Marketing Director of Patriots Colony, Williamsburg were both voted and unanimously approved as honorary VCOC Board members.

During her talk before the board, Ms. Kelly told an impassioned story of her husband, COL Paul Kelly, USA, who died while serving on active duty in Afghanistan.

Pictured below, VCOC President CDR Linc Smith welcomes Ms. Kelly as an Honorary VCOC Board Member.



A New York Times Article dated September 18, 2018 by Patricia Kime, entitled, “Seeing Signs: Proof that her husband is with her, “ echoes Ms. Kelly’s talk.

”He was known as the Senator, an officer who shook hands with everyone he met, asked thoughtful questions, listened intently to others, regardless of rank. He was a helicopter pilot who flew UH-60 Black Hawks, but he wasn’t manning the stick on Jan. 20, 2007, the day his life ended near Baquba, Iraq. He was a passenger, returning to Baghdad after checking on a National Guard combat unit. He was due home to Stafford, Va., in March and had scheduled several vacations — one to visit his elderly parents in Beavercreek, Ohio, another to Germany to celebrate his 10th wedding anniversary. He planned to return to Virginia, continue working for the Guard and, together with his wife, Maria, raise his two young sons to manhood.

Instead, Col. Paul Kelly was laid to rest in two separate plots in Section 60 at Arlington National Cemetery — one that is his alone; the other, a shared grave of commingled body parts belonging to the dozen soldiers who were on the Black Hawk when insurgents shot it out of the sky. Kelly has been gone now for more than 11 years, but his family and friends say his spirit, essence and warmth remain with them on Earth. It’s in small signs that they feel his love and know, with unwavering faith, that they will see him again.”



Pictured above, Virginia Department of Veterans Service Commissioner Dan Gade, who followed Ms. Kelly with his presentation. Author of "Wounding Warriors: How Bad Policy is Making Veterans Sicker and Poorer," his Department of Veterans Services (DVS) welcome video may be viewed on YouTube at: [Welcome from New DVS Commissioner Daniel M. Gade](#).

Commissioner Gade has both a Master's and a PhD in public policy, having taught at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, NY and American University, DC. He served at the U.S. Department of Labor for one year, also running for U.S. Senate in Virginia. He has led the Veteran's Coalition for Virginia. In 2022, Governor Youngkin appointed him as Virginia DVS Commissioner.

During his talk, Commissioner Gade highlighted DVS support of three state cemeteries and two nursing homes, with two new homes underway. He also spoke of DVS Veterans claim service support and military spouse support programs for some 109,000 Virginia woman veterans.

Commissioner Gade's top points were threefold. First, the challenges of federal data integration, which are hindered by data privacy issues. With about 730,000 veterans, the Veterans Administration won't tell Virginia the location of Virginia Veterans. Second, the Veterans Administration is not properly assisting with the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program, which helps affected survivors and their dependents in obtaining benefits. Finally, he highlighted an increase in suicide among Virginia veterans, noting 70 percent are men over 50, an area which needs further attention.



Pictured above, VCOC President CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret) presented Commissioner Gade a Certificate of Appreciation in appreciation for his service to the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Commissioner Gade also talked about the “Not Invented Here” Syndrome with DVS, which involves the need for improved partnerships with MOAA, Veterans of Foreign Wars and Wounded Warriors.

Commissioner Gade spoke of “moving the needle” on veterans affairs and a number of areas where DVS needs to improve. He mentioned need for an external evaluation of DVS, such as from a university. He said DVS is recognizing “innovation champions” from within the staff in order to obtain good ideas - to include awarding of up to \$1,500 per quarter in top awards for ideas of innovation. The Commissioner closed by saying he looks forward to DVS being mission partners with VCOC, also big goals from the Virginia Joint Leadership Council (JLC).

Congresswoman Elaine Luria Hosts First Meeting of the Hampton Roads Veterans Advisory Council

Representative Elaine Luria (VA 02) hosted the first meeting of a newly established Veterans Advisory Council on April 25, 2022 at her Virginia Beach Town Center District Office. The purpose of the Veterans Advisory Council is for members to learn about major progress, successes, and initiatives in the community, also hear updates from council members and for Congresswoman to update stakeholders on her priorities and accomplishments in Congress.



Pictured above, meeting attendees included Virginia DVS Commissioner Dan Gade, Mr. Gene Garland, Office of Senator Mark Warner (D VA), Ms. Janet Lomax, Office of Senator Tim Kaine (D VA), VCOC President CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret), also members of the Hampton Veterans Administration Hospital, American Legion, Virginia Department of Veterans Services, Veterans of Foreign Wars, pictured above. Full Council membership listing forthcoming.

During the meeting, Council members also shared how Congress could assist with a variety of veteran initiatives. Twelve members attended the otherwise informal Council meeting. The Council plans on meeting on a regular basis throughout the year.

Senior Logistics Leaders Course Students Complete Community Service Project in Petersburg, Virginia

Col Victoria Revilla, USA (Ret)
President, Southside Chapter

Six Army Sergeants attending the Senior Logistics Leaders Course at the Fort Lee Non-Commissioned Officers Academy take a “selfie” after completing their task

list in five hours given to them by Colonel (ret) Victoria Revilla as part of their community service project in downtown Petersburg, Virginia on 9 April 2022

Pictured below, Revilla (center with Army cap) is president and CEO of the Petersburg Area Art League (PAAL) and is starting up again the MOAA partnership that was halted at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. "What a great opportunity for an old colonel like me to still be able to take part in leading and mentoring these young NCOs" said Revilla, "it was a great birthday present for me to see their teamwork."



The team of sergeants spruced up the Art Park landscape and painted the outdoor stage and display panels in preparation for the upcoming children's Easter egg hunt and kick-off of the Music in the Art Park concert series that happens twice a month for the community. Military student officers and noncommissioned officers from Fort Lee volunteer their time and

COL Revilla makes the coordination in person with the school cadre to get the volunteer teams and also ensures that the appropriate certificates for their records are presented to each individual. "I talk to the teams about the latest military changes and the traditional role of MOAA, particularly in the legislative affairs area along with concerns about entitlements" comments Revilla. "We learn as young officers how to 'take care of the troops' and the best way to do it after you retire from active duty is to work

on getting the right legislation in place to take care of the military, veterans and their families.”

For the last three years the Southside Virginia Chapter, MOAA has funded scholarships for military kids from Fort Lee to attend Summer Art Camp at PAAL and the art center has been the location for several Southside Chapter’s High School Scholarship and ROTC Award ceremonies. According to COL Revilla, there are many opportunities to continue to serve out there, we just need to find those that are still willing to donate their time and take a lead in planning and executing the programs instead of worrying about getting older...”hanging out” with young sergeants is one option.

Col. Marvin J. Harris Communications Award Winners 2021

From the MOAA Website: “Each year, national MOAA holds the Col. Marvin J. Harris Communications Award Contest to identify councils and chapters that do an outstanding job communicating with their members and community. MOAA affiliates competed in two categories of competition: print and e-newsletters and websites. A panel of judges scored the submissions based on a set of subjective criteria, looking at both design and content. We are pleased to announce MOAA councils and chapters received 179 five-star awards and 44 four-star awards for their outstanding efforts.”

Virginia Council of Chapters awardees for 2022 are as follows:

Five Star

Virginia Council of Chapters (print newsletter and website)
Central Virginia Chapter (print newsletter and website)
Falcons Landing Chapter (print newsletter and website)
Heritage Chapter (print newsletter)
Heritage Hunt Chapter (print newsletter)
Mount Vernon Chapter (print newsletter and website)
Portsmouth Area Chapter (print newsletter)
Potomac Chapter (print newsletter)
Richmond Area Chapter (print newsletter and website)
Southwest Virginia Chapter (website)
Virginia Peninsula Chapter (print newsletter)

Four Star

Portsmouth Area Chapter (website)
Southwest Virginia Chapter (print newsletter)

A Will?

COL Vince Cammarata, USA (Ret)

VCOC Legal Council

Many people postpone writing a will. Maybe it's because we don't want such a tangible reminder of our mortality. Or perhaps we view the process as relinquishing the ownership of our property. Whatever the excuse may be for putting off the drafting of a will, many people do not realize that writing one actually prevents what is feared. In fact, a will may be the most important document that you ever write, because it allows you to select the persons who will receive what you own when you die. If you don't have one in place, you cannot select the recipients of your property and the state will determine how your property is divided.

What is a Will?

In simple terms, a will is a legal document that dictates how you want your assets to be distributed after you die. It's a fluid document because it has no effect until you die—you can change it whenever you want. To be valid, however, the document must comply with several requirements under state law— the number of witnesses, whether it must be typed or handwritten, and others—all of which are fairly standard state to state and very easy to satisfy.

A will includes specific directions on how you wish your estate to be distributed after your death, including provisions for any tangible personal property that you may own—jewelry, furniture, and the like— well as naming guardians for any minor children. It also indicates what sources will be used to pay any estate taxes and debts that are due, and it names an executor who will be responsible for the settlement of your estate. It ends with your signature, the signatures of required number of witnesses, and typically a notary public's oath about the validity of the various signatures.

Why do I need a Will?

Any type of person— married, divorced, single, childless, parent, in good health, in bad health— should have a will for the simple reason that without one, you cannot determine who should receive your property. Each state has a default plan for how

property must be distributed if you die without a will, with the default (and mandatory) scheme depending on your marital status, whether you have children, if you have any living parents or siblings, and other criteria. Furthermore, even if you die with no living relatives, the state will not permit distributions to a friend, a favorite charity, or any non-related person. Instead, the property will most likely end up going to the state.

No Will?

If you die without a will—known as intestate—the local court must monitor the estate’s administration even more closely. This is because the court—not a will—provides all of the authority to act. The administration and closing of the estate generally requires more court involvement, often more publicity, and definitely more red tape.

VCOC Officer and Committee Slate 2022 - 2024

President : CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret)
Second Vice President, Membership, CDR John Prevar, USN (Ret)
Third Vice President, Legislative Affairs, COL Monti Zimmerman, USAF (Ret)
Treasurer, LtCol Jim Stephan, USAF (Ret)
Secretary, LtCol John Down, USAF (Ret)
Immediate Past President: COL Boyd Nix, USAF (Ret)

Legal Counselor: COL Vince Cammarata, USA (Ret)
Chair Membership/Chapter Affairs Committee: COL Boyd Nix, USAF (Ret)
Surviving Spouse Chair: MAJ Sherry Ferki USA (Ret)
Chair, Legislative Committee: COL Monti Zimmerman (USA, Ret)
Vice Chair, Legislative Committee: LtCol John Down, USAF (Ret)
Public Affairs/Media Officer, Editor “The Council Crier” VCOC Webmaster:
CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret)

VCOC Meeting Schedule 2022

Third Quarter Meeting: July 12, 10:30am - 1:30pm, Virtual Meeting.

Fourth Quarter Meeting: October 11, 10:30am - 1:30 pm, Virginia War Memorial, Richmond, Virginia.

Military Officers Association of America

Organized February 12, 1929

Incorporated 1944

Preamble

- To inculcate and stimulate love of our country and the flag;
- To defend the honor, integrity, and supremacy of our National Government and the Constitution of the United States;
- To advocate military forces adequate to the defense of our country;
- To foster the integrity and prestige of uniformed service;
- To foster fraternal relations between all branches of the various Services from which our members are drawn;
- To further the education of children of Service personnel;
- To aid personnel of the Services from which our members are drawn, and their family members and survivors, in every proper and legitimate manner; and
- To present their rights and interests when Service matters are under consideration.

Sponsors

As with previous years, Patriots Colony sponsored the VCOC Biennial Awards Luncheon 2021, held at Ford's Colony Country Club, Williamsburg, Virginia. Many thanks to Patriots Colony for ongoing generous sponsorship of the Virginia Council of Chapters.



*For those who have served us,
only the best will do.*

We invite you to experience the camaraderie and the enriching lifestyle at Patriots Colony. Schedule a tour and enjoy a complementary lunch on us.

855-376-3800 | patriotscolony.org | 

Patriots Colony Independent Living, sponsored by Riverside Health System, is a Continuing Care Retirement Community exclusively for retired and former military officers and retired and former federal employees and their spouses. 

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