

SURVIVING SPOUSE

PACMOAA Membership offers surviving spouses an opportunity to engage MOAA at the grassroots level and experience camaraderie with other military members. Sherry Ferki, MAJ, USA (Ret) has served as the Surviving Spouse Liaison since 2019. While some are content to attend chapter functions and socialize, other surviving spouses choose to continue serving through their chapters and engage in roles such as Surviving Spouse Liaisons, Chapter Officers, or Committee Members. Surviving spouses successfully lead some Councils and Chapters! MOAA reports often hearing from surviving spouses that participating in the local chapter was one of the best things they did during their survivor transition.

The Surviving Spouse Advisory Committee strongly encourages all surviving spouses to participate at both the National and Chapter level. Membership at the national level gives you access to benefits and services including The Military Officer Magazine containing articles and valuable information about our advocacy on Capitol Hill, changes in TRICARE, TRICARE For Life, commissary and exchange benefits, Cost of Living Adjustments, and more.

The MOAA Surviving Spouse Advisory Committee (SSAC) originally established in 2004 as the Auxiliary Member Advisory Committee (AMAC) with the Committee changing the name to “Surviving Spouse Advisory Committee” (SSAC) in 2015 to more accurately describe the particular membership population the Advisory Committee serves. However, the mission of the Committee remains the same, representing the interests of all surviving spouse members, ensuring they continue to feel a part of our military and MOAA family, and raising the awareness of MOAA National Councils, and Chapters about the needs and issues of surviving spouses.

The Committee is composed of six surviving spouse members who are appointed for a term of three years. Each year new members replace two of the six. Each Committee Member is assigned an area of the U.S. and works with the Surviving Spouse Liaisons in that area to dispense valuable information and serve as a point of contact for surviving spouses in their Council and Chapters.

Surviving Spouses were a driving force behind the passage of the repeal of the “widows tax” (SBP-DIC offset) in 2019 with the passage of FY 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). This tax will gradually be reduced starting in 2021 by 1/3 each year until completely eliminated in 2023.

Resources for Surviving Spouses

Surviving Spouse Corner published on MOAA website every month and in PACMOAA newsletter frequently. <https://www.moaa.org/content/about-moaa/meet-our-leaders/surviving-spouse-advisory-committee/surviving-spouse-corner/>

Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter: Formed in 2018, meets monthly, alternating between social events and programs.

- Some 2023 programs include an Overview from MOAA President and Chief Executive Officer, Lt. Gen. Brian Kelly and an update on TAPS (Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors) which is available 24/7 for all members of military families.
- You can download a membership application at https://www.moaa.org/uploadedfiles/mssvc02_application_2023.pdf
- For questions, contact mssvc02@gmail.com

Virginia Military Widows Property Tax Waiver Facebook group instead of Virginia Military Widows: SBP-DIC Offset. Focused on increasing eligibility from KIA to Line of duty.

- **One of 2024 JLC Objectives:** This bill passed in 2022, was presented again in 2023 as a constitutional amendment for the 1st reading and passed and needs to be presented and passed for a 2nd reading in 2024 in order to be on the 2024 ballot as a Constitutional Amendment.
- Unfortunately, when this proposed constitutional amendment was written, it didn't change the language of the initial bill from voluntary to mandatory application. Thus at this time, local governments are not required to provide this tax relief for the surviving spouses. That will have to be addressed later but a constitutional amendment will get more notice of this issue throughout the state!

Archived MOAA Webinar: Preparing a Spouse or Family Member for Survivorship (2023) at <https://www.moaa.org/content/benefits-and-discounts/transition-and-careers/transition-center-webinars/preparing-a-spouse-for-survivorship/>