

**CONTACT:**

Susan Stalder  
(703) 838-0546  
Nancy Carr  
(703) 838-0545  
Email: [pr@moaa.org](mailto:pr@moaa.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Military Officers Association of America recognizes military and civilian champions of Greater Colorado Springs, Colo., area**

Alexandria, Va. (Oct. 28, 2013) — The third annual [Military Officers Association of America \(MOAA\)](#) Community Heroes Award Night will be held Friday, Nov. 15, from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Antlers Hilton in Colorado Springs, Colo. during the [2013 MOAA Annual Meeting](#) and events Nov. 14-16.

In its third year, the [MOAA Community Heroes Award Night](#) will recognize six individuals and groups, selected from within military and civilian communities in the Colorado Springs area, who exemplify service to military and veterans' communities including wounded warriors.

[Lee Woodruff](#), author, contributing reporter with "CBS This Morning," and cofounder of Bob Woodruff Foundation, is the mistress of ceremonies. Entertainment will be provided by "[In the Stairwell](#)" — the U.S. Air Force Academy cadet a cappella singing sensation.

"We are privileged to recognize some of the outstanding members of the Greater Colorado Springs area who devote their time and energy to support the military and veterans' communities, including helping wounded servicemembers," MOAA President Vice Adm. Norbert R. Ryan Jr., USN (Ret), said. "I would like to thank executive sponsor United Healthcare, patron sponsor United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Pipe Fitting Industry, and gold sponsor USAA for their support in recognizing these champions," he added.

There will be approximately 500 attendees at the event, including the award winners and their colleagues and families and representatives of MOAA's board of directors, staff, and membership. The event is open to the public. Tickets are \$45, free for currently serving and available at [www.moaa.org/hero](http://www.moaa.org/hero) or by calling 1-800-234-6622.

There are two award categories: Military Champion and Civilian Champion. Three awards will be given in each category. The award winners are

**Military Champion**

- **Master Sgt. David Carr, USAF** - Carr consistently provides invaluable support to military members in the Colorado Springs area through his volunteer efforts at Peterson AFB and in the community. As a military liaison for the Pikes Peak or Bust Rodeo for the past three years, he has coordinated more than 200 military volunteers, enabling the rodeo to donate annually about \$50,000 across Fort Carson, the U.S. Air Force Academy, and Peterson AFB and Schriever AFB in support of military morale and wellness programs.
- **50th Operations Group Standardization and Evaluation Division** - The 39 hand-picked members have devoted themselves to the best possible care and support to wounded warriors,

military members, and veterans and their families. Throughout 2013, the members dedicated themselves to numerous wounded-warrior efforts. Aside from wounded-warrior efforts, the unit coordinated three major events to support local and national veterans.

- **The Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC) of the 1st Space Brigade** - The HHC has fostered an environment of teamwork and selfless service. The amount of work that has gone into volunteer time, charities, community organizations, and soldier-to-soldier assistance is commendable.

### **Civilian Champion**

- **Cmdr. Milady “Bunny” Blaha, USN (Ret)** - The news in the winter of 2009-10 about homeless citizens in Colorado Springs inspired Blaha to help homeless veterans. She started by volunteering with the Veterans Affairs Homeless Programs. In three years, Blaha has spent more than 2,000 hours assisting local veterans and active duty servicemembers.
- **The El Paso County Homeless Veterans Coalition** - A 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, composed of volunteers and created to organize the El Paso County Veterans annual Stand Down event to help homeless veterans, which it has done every year since 1999. The Stand Down identifies homeless veterans who are eligible for VA benefits and services and gets them into the system. It promotes community awareness of the existence and the needs of homeless veterans and generates ongoing community support.
- **The Home Front Cares (THFC)** - Though THFC was initially established to support active duty military families affected by deployments, its support has shifted during the past nine years to veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, especially veterans with disabilities. (Approximately 75 percent of the veterans they serve are disabled.) Since 2009, the percentage of their assistance directed toward veterans has risen from 43 percent to 82 percent. THFC has raised more than \$5 million and helped more than 2,250 servicemembers and veterans and their families.

To read full [biographies](#) of the award winners, go to [www.moaa.org/hero](http://www.moaa.org/hero).

The award is a signed and numbered print of [“Perseverance.”](#) an original by artist and retired Army Sgt. Peter Damon.

Damon is an Iraq War veteran who lost both arms while serving at an airbase outside Balad, Iraq, in October 2003. After losing his limbs, painting became a therapeutic outlet that grew into a passion for fine art. A mainly self-taught artist, Damon has been painting full-time since recovering from his injuries.

# # #

### **About MOAA:**

Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is the nation’s largest officers association with more than 380,000 members from every branch of service, including active duty, retired, National Guard, Reserve, and former officers and their families and survivors. MOAA is a nonprofit and politically nonpartisan organization and an influential force in promoting a strong national defense. MOAA represents the interests of service members and their families in every stage of their lives and careers, and for those who are not eligible to join MOAA, Voices for America’s Troops is a nonprofit MOAA affiliate that supports a strong national defense. For more information, visit [www.moaa.org](http://www.moaa.org) or [www.voicesfortroops.org/](http://www.voicesfortroops.org/).

**NOTE:** For contact information on awardees for media interviews, please email [pr@moaa.org](mailto:pr@moaa.org), call (703) 838-0545 or 0546.

Members of the news media who wish to be added to our media distribution list for MOAA news releases, please contact [requestnews@moaa.org](mailto:requestnews@moaa.org). Visit MOAA’s Multimedia & Press Room at <http://www.moaa.org/media/default.htm>.