



Jayhawk Chapter MOAA Newsletter



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September Program:

Our guest speaker will be LCDR Richard E. N. Federico, JAG Corps, U.S. Navy.
His topic will be "The Rule of Law in the War on Terror,
Lessons from Guantanamo Bay."

☆☆☆☆☆ CHAPTER
awarded for
2002 / 2003 / 2005 / 2008

☆☆☆☆ CHAPTER
awarded for
2004 / 2006 / 2007

The President's Corner . . .

Dear Jayhawk Chapter Members and Friends:

It's almost fall. I hope that you all had an enjoyable summer.

We received some great news in July – we were recognized by MOAA as a Five-Star Chapter for 2008! That's a string of seven straight years during which the Jayhawk Chapter has been honored as either a Four-Star or Five-Star Chapter. For the most recent award, we owe special thanks to Bernie Kish for his work as President in 2008 and for expressing our accomplishments so well in the application to MOAA; to John Halladay for his work on the Give Me 10! program (remember that we won First Place in the Give Me 10! contest for our chapter category in 2008) and his service as Chapter Secretary; to Shirley Halladay for the newsletter and for all the support she gives the chapter; to Stan Sneegas for his service as our Chapter Webmaster; and to all the other officers, past and present, for their continuing efforts to make the Jayhawk Chapter one of the best in MOAA!!



During our last meeting, our speaker was 2nd District Congresswomen Lynn Jenkins, who gave a clear and very candid assessment of current events in Washington, D.C. Her presentation was followed by questions and answers, and she stayed after the meeting for as long as members wanted to talk. It was an honor, once again, to have one of our top elected officials share their views with the chapter.

As we get back into the new school year, it's time to remind everyone about the General Clay Comfort Scholarships, which our chapter presents annually to an outstanding cadet or midshipman in the each of the ROTC programs at KU. Thank you for your ongoing support. Please see the inside of the back cover of the Newsletter for how to contribute.

Finally, please join us on September 15 when our speaker will be Lieutenant Commander Richard Federico, JAG Corps, U.S. Navy, who will speak on "The Rule of Law in the War on Terror: Lessons from Guantanamo Bay." I think that you will find it to be an interesting and enlightening presentation.

I wish you all the best,

Dave

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1 September 2009

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*** Reservations should be sent
to Jim Cooper by
10 September**



JAYHAWK CHAPTER NEWS

Winners of the 2008 Levels of Excellence Awards – all six active Kansas Chapters were recognized!!

Category III (200-299 members)	Category IV (120-199 members)	Category V (fewer than 120 members)
* Wichita - 5-Star	* Jayhawk - 5-Star	* Sunflower - 5-Star
* Kaw Valley - 4-Star	* Santa Fe Trail - 4-Star	* Flint Hills - 4-Star

On 11 August, **Charles Heller** was promoted to full Professor, Department of Command and Leadership, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. Congratulations, Charles, on another milestone!!!

Ensign Andrew Arnold, son of members **Tom and Francie Arnold**, has just departed on his first Navy deployment to ports in the Western Pacific and Southeast Asia. Andrew was commissioned as a Navy Supply Corps Officer last fall from Officer Candidate School in Newport, completed Supply Division Officer School in Athens, GA, in May of this year, and in July reported aboard his first ship – USS BLUE RIDGE, flagship of the U.S. Seventh Fleet based in Yokosuka, Japan. Tom and Francie are looking forward to a trip next spring to visit Andrew in Japan.

John and Raelean Finch (son and daughter-in-law of **Jean and Ray Finch**) are headed to Afghanistan as part of the surge in forces in Operation Enduring Freedom. Both are officers in the Army – Raelean will be stationed in Kandahar, while John will be deployed to Zabul province. Keep them in your thoughts and prayers.

John & Shirley Halladay just returned from a 10-day, 2100 mile round-robin trip to Hot Springs, AR, to visit John's daughter; Huntsville, AL, to visit Shirley's son (who was directing "The King & I"); Rainsville, AL, to visit a fellow MARS operator; Chattanooga, TN, to spend the night with John's grandson; and Lexington, KY, to see Shirley's cousin. In spite of rainy weather most of the trip, they managed to get in two rounds of golf – Hot Springs and Huntsville.

In Memoriam: Barbara M. Grodi, widow of **Wilmont C. "Bill" Grodi**, passed away 20 August 2009 at Lawrence Memorial Hospital. Services were held 25 August at Warren-McElwain Mortuary, with burial to be in Hampden Cemetery in Denver. Mrs. Grodi was born in Colorado Springs and raised in Portland, CO. She married Bill Grodi in 1946, and he preceded her in death in November 2007. Survivors include their daughter Cheri Woolsey, her husband Tom and two grand-children.

From Jim McMurray: The AARP Tax-aide program at the Lawrence Senior Center is looking for some additional volunteers for the coming 2009 tax preparation season. This is a free electronic tax filing service provided especially for local seniors and low income citizens. Volunteer tax preparers of all ages and backgrounds are welcome. You will receive training on using the IRS supplied "Tax Wise" computer filing program, can set your own volunteer work schedule beginning 1 February 2010, and will be compensated for travel expenses. If interested, contact one of our MOAA chapter members listed below. Jim McMurray, Col, USAF (ret.) at 856-4098 mcmurray@sunflower.com or Jack Connolly, COL, USA (ret.) at 865-3985 connjac@sunflower.com.

From Ron Meyers: It was with deep regret that I read of the death of Charles Brown, Air Force Retired, in the August 11 Journal-World. While the obituary did not mention it, he was my first Professor of Aerospace Studies when I was on the staff at KU. He and his wife Joyce, who died several years earlier, were good friends as well, and we frequently played bridge with them.

I did not have a color television at the time and was invited to Lt. Col. Brown's to watch the first Super Bowl in 1967. Unfortunately I did not even know that he was living in Lawrence. I do not know if he had been in poor health which prevented his membership in MOAA, but I am sorry I did not get to visit him after he moved back here.

From Alan Van Loenen: Anyone interested in the American Civil War? There is a Lawrence, KS Sons of Union Veterans (SUV) Camp in Lawrence. Sgt Samuel J. Churchill - Camp # 4, SUV Dept of Kansas meets every third Thursday of the month at the Watkins Museum, starting a 7:00 PM. Not every meeting, but many of the meetings have a guest speaker that gives a presentation related to American Civil War history; the general public is encouraged to attend the meetings. It is preferred that you have an ancestor that was in the Union Army during the Civil War, but this is not a requirement to become a member of the Lawrence SUV camp.



Army News

LTC John Basso

Greetings Fellow MOAA Members,

We had an exceptionally busy and productive summer; we hope that your summer was productive but much less hectic. The main event for the summer continues to be the Leadership Development and Assessment Course (LDAC) – often called "Warrior Forge" – held at Fort Lewis, Washington. We sent 22 cadets who performed exceptionally well. For the first time in recent memory, we had no cadets return in a "needs improvement" status; less than a third of all programs achieve that distinction. Among our best in the brigade performances were our Physical Fitness and Land Navigation pass rates. Much of the credit for those results goes to my exceptional team of non-commissioned officers: MSG John Peacock, MSG Jason Woodbury and SFC Joe Masarik. MSG Woodbury gets special mention as the Army was bright enough to promote him to Master Sergeant effective August 1st. Those three fine Soldiers along with CPT Aaron Cornett, CPT Steve Beard and LT Jason Boothe also all supported the summer training at Fort Lewis and Fort Knox.

Our cadets were also fortunate enough to attend a number of military skills schools where we had a 100% pass rate. We

now have three new Airborne-qualified Jayhawks, two new Air Assault qualified Jayhawks, and two Jayhawks who did helicopter flight training and one who did Special Operations support. We also sent a cadet to Senegal for a military culture and language internship and a cadet to Slovakia. I led the 21-day trip to Slovakia and can report that the 24 cadets from around the U.S. who conducted the training are much more culturally fluent (and much more physically fit as we did a week at the Slovak Military Academy that proved to us that our NATO colleagues are exceptionally capable in the mountains).

Finally, as we begin school, I'm happy to report that we have over 35 new cadets and our total strength is over 120 for the first time in decades and reflecting a growth of over 50% in the program over the past two years. We thank you for your support.

Rock Chalk!

LTC John Basso



Navy News

CAPT Carl Carpenter, USN



Greetings from the Jayhawk Navy!

The new academic year has gotten off to a busy start for the KU Naval ROTC Unit. We have added 27 new students to the battalion – 20 freshmen midshipmen, five new Navy Seaman-to-Admiral program Officer Candidates and one new Marine Corps Enlisted Commissioning Program student. This brings total enrollment up to 79, a slight increase in the size of the battalion over the 78 students who began the academic year last August. We are very impressed with the quality and enthusiasm of our new students and look forward to the contributions they will make to the Unit over the next four years. Please join us in welcoming them to the battalion!

This was a busy summer for the students. Forty-four of them attended summer training: 34 went on Navy summer cruises, six attended USMC Mountain Warfare training in California, and four successfully completed the very demanding USMC Officer Candidate School in Quantico, VA. Many other students took summer courses here at KU. Our

new freshmen went through a challenging five day Orientation and Indoctrination (O&I) course at Fort Riley, KS, in early August and performed superbly under the instruction of a capable group of upper classmen instructors.

As many of you know I relieved CAPT Arnold as the KU NROTC Commanding Officer and Professor of Naval Science on August 22nd. For those of you I did not meet at the Change of Command, I wanted to take this opportunity to briefly introduce myself. I am a Surface Warfare Officer with 29 years of service and was most recently assigned for four and a half years as Commanding Officer of Afloat Training Group Western Pacific stationed in Yokosuka, Japan. My wife Maria and I have spent 22 of our 29 years of military service overseas and although we thoroughly enjoyed our overseas tours, I am very happy to be back in the U.S., and am particularly excited to be serving here at KU. I believe there is no more important or rewarding responsibility than preparing young men and

women for service to our country, and I can't think of a more enjoyable place to be doing this than here in America's heartland. Although Maria and I are not Midwesterners, the warm

welcome we have received since arriving has made us feel very much at home in Lawrence.

CAPT Carl Carpenter



Air Force News

LtCol Gena Stuchbery, USAF

Aloha, MOAA Friends!

It was another busy summer for Det 280. Where to begin? Rolling back to May, I'd like to introduce our newest staff member, Ms Jane Gnojek, University Support Staff. Ms Gnojek is no stranger to KU, having served most recently as the Business & Ops Manager at the Life Span Institute/Beach Center on Disability. Her spouse, Vince Gnojek, is the professor of saxophone on the music faculty. Jane is already making an impact on our detachment – redesigning our website, bringing new order to our front office and getting our uniform program in ship shape to start the year. We're glad she's part of our team!

Sticking with the cadre, TSgt Morales was selected to help train two Field Training encampments at a deployed location in Mississippi, as part of the AEF Team. From Self Aid/Buddy Care, to convoy ops, air base defense and wing ops, over a 45-day period her team trained over 800 cadets. As a "pyro", her job was to create fog and friction by attacking the cadets as they practiced their new skills in Taji village, an Iraqi village built on Camp Shelby. Per TSgt Morales, she had "an amazing experience".

TSgt Gomez also worked hard, keeping the det running while Sgt Morales was away and completing his MBA at University of Phoenix. He also earned the NCO of the Quarter award (Apr-Jun) for the Holm Center (HQ AF Officer Accessions & Training – includes ROTC and OTS). We're extremely proud of both of our NCOs – true professionals who bring credit to the uniform every day.

Capt Edmonds escorted 18 cadets during a three-week professional development training at Goodfellow AFB in San Angelo, TX. Operation Air Force is an amazing opportunity for cadets to see what life is like being in the Air Force. Students were assigned and rotated to different units and sponsors throughout their visit. Cadets took away a newfound focus on what they want to do – some were inspired by different careers they got to shadow – and all enjoyed the experience of applying what they'd learned during their freshman year and the interaction with new cadets, NCOs and officers.

Our condolences went out to Major Marsteller's family on the loss of his father-in-law in July. After a difficult and stressful summer, we're glad to have Gary back with us.

Turning to cadet happenings, we sent five cadets to Field Training, with one earning distinguished graduate honors. One of our seniors returned as a Cadet Training Assistant – only the

best FT grads get selected to come back the next year as staff – Awesome job, Cadet Rogers!

Six others enjoyed a variety of Professional Development Training (PDT) opportunities. Two Rising Sophomores experienced Operation AF at Kirtland AFB, NM and Eielson AFB, AK. Rising Seniors were also challenged. Cadet Breth earned his jump wings through the AF Academy Freefall program: "The nervousness turned to excitement after the second jump" and Cadet Koenig jumped into a cultural immersion tour of Morocco: "I learned more in those two weeks than I would have going to a semester-long class about Morocco. I hope others will get the same experience I did."

Two fifth year seniors received capstone PDTs – reserved for our best and brightest. Cadet Langley (Civil Engineer) worked in an AF RED HORSE squadron at Nellis AFB, NV, before going to the AF Academy to help build a house for the a Native American tribe in New Mexico. Cadet Sifers (Acquisition/Scientist) spent his summer in Rome, NY, as part of the ACE Cyber Security Boot Camp, "the most intense and rewarding experience in my ROTC tenure", that included cyber warfare games and 8-mile fitness runs. Only 28 cadets from across AFROTC were selected for this elite program.

Perhaps the biggest news comes from our recruiting. Capt Edmonds established two more cross-town agreements adding Haskell Indian Nations University and Johnson County Community College to the list of schools whose students can participate in AFROTC at KU. We've also teamed up with the Army, Navy/Marines, and the KU Admissions office to host an ROTC Info Day, which will be held on 4 Nov 09. We hope this will be a successful event that will educate more qualified students about ROTC opportunities.

Finally, we just completed our largest new student orientation in several years: 35+ new cadets joined our program, bringing our total enrollment to over 80 students. Capt Edmonds asks, "If you know of any potential prospects, let us know and we'll contact them immediately. Thanks!"

We're looking forward to another exciting year! And if we seem a little pre-occupied these next few weeks, it's because we're prepping for an IG Unit Compliance Inspection in September. We'll see you on the other side!

Regards,

Lt Col Gena Stuchbery

From Gary LaGrange, President, Kansas Council of Chapters:

Help us Learn...Give us Hope continues to grow. Donations have reached the 115,000 pound mark and school supplies are sent frequently to both Iraq and Afghanistan. The Ministry of Education and the US Embassy in Baghdad have asked our help in restoring the English libraries in each of Iraq's 15,000 schools so in addition to school supplies we have sent 25,000 pounds of books with another 10,000 pounds nearly ready to go. We need many more. Beginning this school year, English is compulsory beginning in the 3rd Grade. The need in Afghanistan is tremendous and we are working with a USAID contractor searching for a way to reach into the Federally Administered Tribal Agencies of Pakistan where illiteracy is 90% or worse in most areas.

Your help is needed more than ever as we reach out to these needy children. Among many emails, a Pashtun father sends this message in an email just last week,

"Sir

To tell you how much we are excited about having school supplies you sent and so much. We cannot believe we have so much. The back bag that Nasir give us is for me the teacher and it has enough for two pencils for all childs and things other to. Never before have we this. To our childs it is a gift from Allah as a dream. I pray to Allah for you to be able to help more for all school childs here. It is our biggest dream."

Jamal, teacher, Khyber Agency

Please continue to help us reach out to educate these children and bring moderation to an area so full of discord.

Thank you,

Gary

MOAA LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

This is a summary of the many items MOAA produces each week on legislative activities.

Those who have e-mail receive the full Legislative Updates each week.

MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for July 2, 2009:

GI Bill Transfer Site Goes Live. Thousands of service men and women already have completed a GI Bill Transfer Agreement in the first two days after the new DoD Transfer Eligibility Benefit (TEB) website went live.

Senate Pushes Interstate Compact. The Senate Armed Services Committee's markup expresses a Sense of the Senate on state implementation of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children and encourages all remaining states to adopt the legislation designed to help smooth school transitions for military children when their parents PCS.

In-State Tuition Set for Military Families. As of July 1, military members, spouses and their college-aged youth are now guaranteed in-state tuition at public colleges and universities in the state where they reside or are permanently stationed.

Uncertainties Ahead for Ground Forces

The 30th of June was the last day for U.S. combat forces in Iraqi cities, villages and localities. Some military advisers will remain in urban areas but combat units have departed. This is a significant step towards returning security responsibility to the Iraqi government and the exiting of US forces from one of the longest conflicts our country has ever engaged in.

Seven years of war have left military members and their families overstressed and there is no relief in sight as forces shift to counter insurgents in Afghanistan.

MOAA strongly believes we must continue to grow our ground forces in the Army and the Marine Corps in order to increase the "dwell time" for our overstressed troops and their families between combat rotations. The FY 2010 defense authorization bill authorizes an additional 15K for the Army and an additional 30K for the succeeding fiscal years, FY 2011-12. But the current baseline budget does not reflect the 30K increase. The nation can't afford to dither on the funding for these needed increases.

The added end strength is essential for sustaining operations in Afghanistan, maintaining force readiness, and providing some relief to worn-down military families

MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for July 10, 2009:

Free Preventive Care Coming

Starting September 1, DoD will waive copayments for some preventive services for TRICARE beneficiaries under age 65.

More specifically, copays will be dropped for screenings for colorectal, breast, cervical, and prostate cancer.

Immunizations and well-child visits for children under age six also will be free of any copays.

This change comes as a result of MOAA-supported legislative guidance in the FY2009 Defense Authorization Act. The intent of the law-change was to ensure that fee structures don't discourage beneficiaries from obtaining needed preventive care.

The hope is that encouraging greater use of preventive services will lead to earlier detection and treatment of certain conditions. This should result in reduced reliance on high-cost treatments and help beneficiaries live healthier and longer lives.

Although the implementation date is September 1, 2009, the law makes the free coverage retroactive for qualifying services received on or after October 14, 2008.

Beneficiaries who were charged a copayment or deductible for any of those services since Oct. 14, 2008 can file a claim for reimbursement through their TRICARE contractor - but any such retroactive claim can't be filed before September 1st.

Unfortunately, despite MOAA's best lobbying efforts, the final law-change didn't include Medicare-eligibles in this initiative. Armed Services Committee leaders tried to include them, but were prevented from doing so by congressional budget rules that require a dollar in program reductions for each additional dollar spent on care for Medicare-eligibles. Their creative efforts to try to get around that requirement were frustrated in the end. Our hope is to rectify that situation in the future.

MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for July 24, 2009:Senate Passes Defense Bill

After more than a week of debate and consideration of more than 300 amendments, the Senate passed its version of the FY2010 National Defense Authorization Bill (S. 1390) late Thursday night, July 23 by a vote of 87 to 7.

One key amendment was Sen. Bill Nelson's initiative to end the deduction of VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) from military Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuities. Upon learning at 8:00 AM Tuesday that the amendment would be considered that same afternoon, MOAA sent out a special alert to legislative update subscribers. This alert generated nearly 13,000 messages to the Senate in support of the amendment in under 6 hours, resulting in the amendment's adoption. Thanks to all who participated in this time-sensitive action to help military widows.

We're pleased that several other MOAA-supported amendments were adopted by the Senate including:

Sen. Joe Lieberman's (I-CT) amendment to increase Army manpower levels by 30,000, starting in FY2010.

Sen. Frank Lautenberg's (D-NJ) amendment emphasizing the need to sustain a military health benefit consistent with the unique demands and sacrifices inherent in a military career, and the need to find other ways of cutting DoD health costs besides shifting costs to retirees.

Sen. John Kerry's (D-MA) and Saxby Chambliss' (R-GA) amendment to provide reserve retirement age credit for all post-9/11 active service.

Sen. Charles Schumer's (D-NY) amendment (with inputs by Sen. John Cornyn, R-TX) to protect military absentee voting rights by authorizing electronic communications and limiting the counting of absentee ballots based on technicalities (e.g., lack of notarization).

Sen. Barbara Boxer's (D-CA) amendment (prompted by MOAA's discussion with her staff) expressing Congress's view that the Secretary of Defense should use existing authority to implement Flexible Spending Accounts for currently serving members so they can set aside pre-tax money to pay out-of-pocket health and dependent care expenses, just as all other federal and major corporate employees can.

Sen. Richard Burr's (R-NC) amendment to give military spouses the option to elect the same state of domicile as their servicemember spouse.

Unfortunately, several other amendments we were hoping for were not acted upon, including Sen. Harry Reid's (D-NV) concurrent receipt amendments and Sen. Lindsey Graham's (R-SC) amendment to authorize a one-year reduction in the reserve retirement age for each two years served beyond the 20-year point.

The proposal to phase out the disability offset for medically retired members, regardless of length of service is still very much alive, though, as it was included in the House bill.

Next, House and Senate leaders will be appointed to a conference committee to resolve more than a thousand differences between the House- and Senate-passed versions of the defense bill, including difficult issues on procurement, detainees and more. In the past, these difficult negotiations have usually dragged on into October, November or beyond. It's possible that Congress will have an incentive to expedite defense bill negotiations this year in order to clear the legislative decks for action on national health reform. But that remains to be seen.

MOAA will be lobbying hard to retain the key personnel and compensation provisions in the final bill.

Hearing Highlights Family Needs

A July 22 House Armed Services Military Personnel Subcommittee hearing reinforced that access to healthcare providers - both on and off installations - continues to present a serious challenge for many military families. With military medical personnel deployed, there's an increasing reliance on civilian providers. But many civilian doctors don't accept TRICARE due to low reimbursement rates and administrative hassles.

DoD Principal Director of Military Community and Family Policy Art Myers said DoD leaders are visiting areas where there are provider challenges in hopes of finding a solution. Healthcare wasn't the only concern raised as military witnesses said families face troubles coping with separation, relocation and, in some cases, isolation.

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Rick West said, "How we support the families of those we put in harm's way defines us as a nation."

Discussion on the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration program ranged from very positive to some clearly defined concerns. Col. Cory Lyman, DoD's Assistant Director of Individual and Family Support, Reserve Affairs noted that the program is less than a year old.

Rep. David Loebsack (D-IA) cited complaints from his constituents that the program is not family-friendly and no longer includes the VA.

Rep. John Kline (R-MN) noted the program runs well in his state - with veterans' organizations and the VA included.

"We've got to make sure that across the board they have good experiences," said Lyman.

Rep. Carol Shea-Porter (D-NH) raised the issue of compensation for caregivers of injured troops, observing that many family members must give up their jobs to support wounded warriors. "We should compensate these families," she asserted, rather than leaving them "hanging over a financial cliff."

Rep. Joe Wilson (R-SC) observed that, while numerous programs have been implemented to help families in various areas in various ways, "I'm not convinced those efforts are fully coordinated and integrated."

The panelists also expressed their concern regarding the funding of family readiness programs. Currently the programs are funded through supplemental appropriations. The panel stressed the importance of funding these programs through base-line budgets.

MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for July 31, 2009:Coburn Stymies Concurrent Receipt Amendment

We were surprised to learn that Sen. Harry Reid's concurrent receipt amendment in the Senate version of the NDAA was stymied by Sen. Tom Coburn just before the final vote on the bill.

Sen. Reid's amendment would have phased out the disability offset for all chapter 61 retirees over a five year period. But concurrent receipt progress in this year's defense bill is still a very strong possibility, despite the failure of the Senate amendment.

National Guard Workshop Discusses Family Issues.

Volunteers, servicemembers, and staff gathered in Dearborn, Michigan for the annual National Guard Family Program Volunteer Workshop. Speaking to three packed sessions, Joy Dunlap, MOAA's Deputy Director, Government Relations for Military Family Issues discussed legislative issues under consideration and provided details on important programs such as GI Bill transferability, Career Advancement Accounts, and the deployment-related and wounded warrior caregiver provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act.

Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs Dennis McCarthy opened the session by noting the vital role that military families play. Cyclical deployments are part of the "new normal" for the Reserve component, he said. "The only way we can continue to do this is by having strong relationships in our families and with our nation's employers."

Participants noted that some states need more Military Family Life Consultants. In the current economic crisis financial consultants are also needed. Some units are now training a financial counselor on their staffs to have them always available.

The impact of deployments on the pocketbook and the people at home were clear in preliminary results shared from a Defense Manpower Data Center study of Guard and Reserve spouses. Among the top financial issues discussed by spouses were household repairs, childcare, increased phone bills, and a reduction in earnings. Other problems caused by deployment were increased stress, loneliness, and anxiety.

Guard and Reserve spouses also reported the following problems among their children as a result of deployments: fear and anxiety, distress over discussions of war, problem behavior at home, and problems at school.

In his opening remarks, McCarthy said, "Volunteers are the heart and soul of any family readiness program," adding, "We also know that volunteers need reinforcement."

General Craig McKinley, Chief of the National Guard Bureau praised the efforts of those attending, "You are the people who make us who we are today." But wear and tear on families and equipment is starting to take its toll, he noted, adding, "The minute we break the resolve is the minute we are finished as a nation."

MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for August 7, 2009:

President Vows to Protect TRICARE, VA. President Obama met with a group of military-oriented reporters this week to foot-stomp his intent that national health reform will protect military and VA beneficiaries' health benefits.

What About Medicare and TRICARE For Life?

Now let's take a look at how national health reform legislation would affect Medicare. That's a big issue for military retirees and survivors age 65 and over, for whom TRICARE For Life is a Medicare supplement. It also has the potential to affect beneficiaries under age 65, since TRICARE payment rates are tied to Medicare's.

First things first: Nobody can be certain what the effects will be at this point, because there are already four 1,000-page bills on the table and at least three more still to come.

Three House committees have passed separate versions, and House leaders are now negotiating behind closed doors how to combine those into one. One Senate committee has approved its own bill, and another is working behind closed doors to develop an alternative that could win some bipartisan votes. If and when that happens, Senate leaders will have to find some ground between the two that can win Senate approval.

And then House and Senate leaders will have to work out a further compromise that both the House and Senate can pass and that the President will be willing to sign.

H.R.3200, the core bill in the House, also would:

- * Move vaccines (e.g., shingles) from Part D to Part B, a big plus for TFL-eligibles
- * Raise payments 5% for providers of psychiatric services to encourage them to see Medicare (and TRICARE) patients
- * Allow a 12-month Part B enrollment period and waive late enrollment penalties for disabled military

retirees under 65 - a major plus for wounded warriors

- * Provide \$100 million per year to combat claims fraud and abuse
- * Constrain growth in durable medical equipment, home health and certain other ancillary care through "market basket updates," "productivity adjustments" and other adjustments to payment formulas

The most fiscally austere bill is likely to come from the Senate Finance Committee, where Chairman Max Baucus (D-MT) is striving behind closed doors to reach a bipartisan agreement with fiscally conservative Republicans and Democrats.

Finance staffers have acknowledged that winning that agreement may end up entailing such things as higher copays on lab tests and further means-testing options (e.g., restricting annual inflation adjustments to Part B income thresholds so that more people end up in the higher Part B premium categories).

The Finance plan also calls for a commission to review Medicare spending in 2015-16, and, to the extent that it exceeds some inflation-adjusted baseline, propose a set of payment reductions to restore the funding balance. Under that concept, Congress would have a year to pass alternative legislation to achieve the same savings or let the commission-recommended cuts would go into effect.

Here's MOAA's bottom line:

Congress is not going to "kill Medicare" or "kill TFL"

Seniors are the most powerful voting bloc in America, and legislators aren't going to flagrantly disregard their interests

Many things in the health care reform legislation are positive for Medicare/TRICARE beneficiaries and seek reasonable cost constraints that minimize impact on beneficiaries

MOAA will keep vigilant to protect members' legitimate interests, and MOAA members need to respond with grassroots action when those interests come under attack

MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for August 14, 2009:

\$50 Military Widows: A National Embarrassment

Two years ago, Congress acknowledged the unfair financial penalties imposed on military widows whose sponsors' deaths were caused by military service, and authorized an extremely modest (\$50 a month) "first step" toward a fix.

But there's been no further near-term relief.

MOAA's Government Relations Director, in his August "As I See It" column, says a majority of senators and representatives have formally endorsed a fix, and it's past time for Congress to do right by military widows.

MOAA Opposes Photo Release

On August 13, MOAA President VADM Norb Ryan, Jr. (USN-Ret) signed letters to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD) urging them to bring the Detainee Photographic Records Protection Act (S. 1285/H.R. 2875) before the House of Representatives for a vote.

This legislation, passed by the Senate in June, would authorize the Secretary of Defense to bar release of detainee photographs under the Freedom of Information Act, provided the Secretary certifies to the President that disclosure would endanger US citizens or members of the armed forces or US employees deployed outside the US.

Several efforts have been made to include this provision in legislation coming before the House, but it has been dropped each time.

President Obama has asserted he will use every means at his disposal to prevent such disclosure, and efforts by some to use the courts to force disclosure have been stymied so far.

During Admiral Ryan's trips to Iraq, he was advised by senior US commanders that disclosure of detainees' photos would inflame the opposition and make US troops significantly more vulnerable to retaliatory violence.

MOAA believes strongly that the Secretary of Defense, with proper certification, should have statutory authority to deny release of photographic documents when release would significantly increase risks for US forces.

This is not a partisan issue. It has the support of the Commander in Chief, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and already has been approved by the full United States Senate.

You can help this important cause by urging your U.S. Representative's support to bring the matter before the House for a vote.

Military Spouses to Get Non-Compete Hiring

On August 12, the final regulations on the non-competitive appointment/hiring of certain military spouses were posted in the Federal Register. The regulations will take effect on September 11, 2009.

After that date, three categories of military spouses will be eligible for non-competitive appointments to jobs with federal agencies:

Spouses who are relocating with their servicemember on military orders

Spouses of 100% disabled servicemembers who were injured on active duty

Unremarried widows/widowers of servicemembers killed while performing active duty

The policy will pave the way for some spouses to potentially find jobs faster at their new location, and reduce their periods of relocation-related unemployment.

Certain spouse categories DON'T qualify for the program:

- * Reserve component spouses whose servicemembers are attending service schools or engaging in training duties
- * Spouses who marry servicemembers after PCS orders are issued
- * Spouses who aren't physically relocating with the servicemember to the new location specified in the PCS orders
- * An agency may waive the geographic limitation if no Federal agency exists in that geographic area
- * Spouses married to 100% disabled servicemembers aren't restricted to geographic parameters
- * Spouses relocating in conjunction with retirement or separation orders (unless the retiring/separating member has a 100% service-connected disability)

Eligibility is limited to a maximum of two years after the date of the PCS orders, 100% disability award, or active duty death.

Jobs qualifying for the program can be found at www.usajobs.gov. (Reminder: the new program doesn't take effect until September 11.)

MOAA Lobbyist Switches Advocacy Hats

MOAA regrets to report that CDR John Class (USN-Ret), our lead health care lobbyist since 2004, leaves the staff today after five years of stellar service to MOAA and our members.

Fortunately, he will continue working with MOAA and supporting military beneficiaries in his new capacity as Vice President for Communications and External Relations with Aetna Government Health Plans, the firm selected as the new TRICARE contractor for the North Region (from Virginia to Maine).

MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for August 21, 2009:

More Member Questions

Here are some answers to the legislative questions most frequently asked by MOAA members over the last several weeks.

1) *Am I eligible for the Post 9/11 GI Bill? Do I qualify to transfer the benefit to my spouse or child?*

Servicemembers who have active duty service of at least 90 consecutive days since Sept. 10, 2001 qualify for Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits.

Any current member of the Armed Forces (active duty or Selected Reserve) who is eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill and agrees to complete the service required under the transfer policy may transfer their benefits to a spouse and/or dependent children.

For more information on GI bill benefits check out our Post 9/11 GI Bill Guide.

2) *When will we find out whether Congress will approve concurrent receipt or a fix for military widows' SBP?*

The House and Senate have approved separate versions of this year's National Defense Authorization Act. The bill now heads to conference committee to hash out the differences between the two versions of the bill. The House bill would phase out the offset for all medical (Chapter 61) retirees, and the Senate bill would eliminate the widows' SBP/DIC offset.

The conference committee will start in earnest when Congress reconvenes in September. Hill leaders hope to finish by the end of September, but that may prove optimistic.

In the past, the final bill usually hasn't been finished until October or November...or later.

3) *I rarely get responses when I write my legislator, do my letters and e-mails really matter?*

Each legislator's office has a different policy about how it responds to letters and e-mails.

The absence of a reply doesn't necessarily mean your legislator isn't listening. We've learned through experience that volume counts. The more mail legislators get on a topic, the more they pay attention to it. Legislators typically get inundated with inquiries on all kinds of subjects, and most give standard replies. When they get large numbers on a particular subject, staffers usually get tasked to craft an answer aimed specifically at that topic.

4) *I think most members of Congress don't understand what it's like to serve in the armed services. How many members of Congress have served in the military?*

The numbers of veterans in Congress has significantly diminished over the years. From the 70's to today the number of veterans in Congress has dropped by 75 percent. According to a recent report published by the Congressional Research Service:

There are 121 total legislators who have served in the military (five less than the last Congress) There are 96 veterans in the House and 25 in the Senate Their collective wartime service includes World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

5) *I enjoy the monthly "As I See It" column. How do I submit a suggestion for a topic?*

We encourage our readers to write a review of the monthly As I See It column, using the space provided at the end of the column. If you have specific suggestions please feel free to e-mail them to legis@moaa.org.

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There are no failures –
just experiences and your reactions to them.

MOAA WEBSITE: www.moaa.org

KANSAS COUNCIL WEBSITE: www.kansasmooa.org

JAYHAWK CHAPTER WEBSITE: www.jayhawkmoaa.org

*We are making progress,
but we are still asking for members
who can/will receive the Newsletter via e-mail.*

*Please let us know at
jwhalladay@sunflower.com*

2009 Jayhawk MOAA Calendar:

Tuesday 15 September MOAA meeting

Tuesday 17 November MOAA meeting

2010 Jayhawk MOAA Calendar:

Tuesday 19 January MOAA meeting

Tuesday 16 March MOAA meeting

Tuesday 18 May MOAA meeting



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*Here's wishing each and every one
of you a safe and enjoyable
Labor Day Weekend !!!*