



Jayhawk Chapter MOAA Newsletter



This newsletter is published bimonthly by the Jayhawk Chapter of Kansas, Military Officers Association of America, as a service to all members. The Jayhawk emblem is used with the permission of the registered trademark owner, the University of Kansas.

November Program:

Our guest speaker will be Paul Shaver,
who will share some interesting views of the North and South Poles.

★★★★★ CHAPTER
awarded for

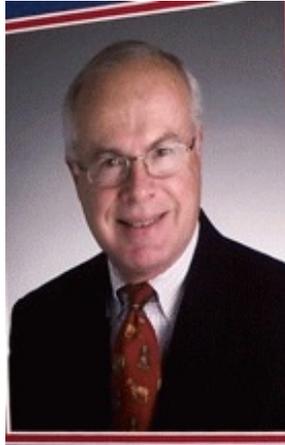
2002 / 2003 / 2005 / 2008
2009 / 2010 / 2011 / 2012

★★★ CHAPTER
awarded for

2004 / 2006 / 2007

President's Comments. . .

I hope that everyone continues to follow the discussions in Washington concerning the future of the DoD Budget with a focus on the proposed changes to military compensation and benefits even with Congress in recess. As all of us who have served know, it is the quality of our people that determines the success of every mission. MOAA, as the premier advocate for military personnel, will be a major voice in shaping this national debate. We in Jayhawk can play a role in this debate by using the information provided to us by MOAA to help in developing our personal opinions and making them known to our elected representatives. Of particular help in this effort to keep informed is the information from MOAA shared by John Halladay via email. I strongly recommend that you read these.



On a local level Ann and I will be in Washington the week of October 25th to receive the Jayhawk Chapter's Five Star Level of Excellence Award. We look forward to being able to display it from our Chapter flag at our November meeting. We also received a nice thank-you note from Col Barry Wright for his evening with us in September.

I want to remind everyone about our November 18th dinner meeting at the Lawrence Country Club where our guest speaker, Mr. Paul Shaver, will speak on his experiences in the Arctic and Antarctic. I look forward to seeing you there.

Ed

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1 November 2014

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*** Reservations should be sent
to Jim Cooper by
12 November**



JAYHAWK CHAPTER NEWS

Why are there no penguins at the North Pole ??

Intrigued by remote regions of the world, our November speaker, Paul Shaver, has logged 60,000 miles in four trips to the Arctic and Antarctic. He will show you the amazing differences between the North and South --- including the ... Animals -- Plants -- People -- Climate.

Dean Bevan attended the KU Army ROTC Jayhawk Battalion Wall of Fame ceremonies on September 27.

* * * * *



Army News MAJ Davis McElwain, USA

Greetings Jayhawk Chapter!

The fall 2014 semester has been an exciting time in the Jayhawk Battalion! As the United States Army Cadet Command changes direction in its approach to developing future Army officers, life at the Jayhawk Battalion has changed as well. In lieu of the traditional "Field Training Exercise," our program conducted its first "Leadership Development Exercise." This year's event included the KU



executing a plan to accomplish each obstacle within the challenge course. In years past, this challenge would have been assigned to an MS III or IV Cadet. This year, MS Is and IIs took charge and demonstrated their ability to think critically and achieve results. The result is a group of Cadets who have experienced earlier opportunities for leadership development, in-turn improving the long-term success of the Jayhawk Battalion.

This semester we also had the distinct pleasure of welcoming six new members of the JBAA Wall of Fame. To the newest inductees: Congratulations! It was an honor to welcome you home. It remains important that Cadets

Adams Campus Challenge Course, a road march, and an M4 familiarization firing exercise at the Lawrence Fraternal Order of Police range. The Cadets were challenged with developing, briefing, and

understand the foundations of leadership and opportunity that ROTC and experience as an Army officer can provide.

Thank you for being a living role model for our Army's future leaders. And as always, thank you for your support of the Jayhawk Battalion.

WE BUILD LEADERS!

Check out our website at www.armyrotc.ku.edu for more details on these events, and take a look here

<http://armyrotc.ku.edu/2015-ranger-buddy-competition>.

Additionally, find us on Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/KUArmyROTC> and follow us on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/KUArmyROTC>

ALL IN!

JAYHAWKS LEAD THE WAY!



MAJ Davis McElwain

The newsletter is only as good as the material available, so each member is requested to forward news and other items of interest to the editors.



Navy News

CAPT David Schweizer, USN



Greetings from the Jayhawk Navy!

We are half-way through the Fall academic semester here at the University of Kansas, and the Battalion is keeping busy with a handful of activities in and around Lawrence.

Last month, eight Midshipmen and two unit staff competed in the September 11th Patriot's Run in Olathe, Kansas. Our team set out to break the existing course



distance record of 73 miles set by a Marine Corps unit in 2012. Running hard all night, our team crushed the previous records, setting a new record of 80 miles

in 9 hours and 11 minutes — a record they intend to break again next year. Pictured above are eight members of the ultramarathon team. From left to right in the back, MIDN Corey Bredeson, MIDN Matt Jefferis, MIDN Nick Castans, MIDN Stephen Walker and MIDN Bryan Neely, with MIDN Kieran Bateman, LT Joel Wheatley and MIDN Jacob Schaffer pictured in front. Not pictured are MIDN Nick Herren and GySgt Dawud Hakim.

In more recent news, the Battalion celebrated the Navy's 239th birthday during our October 15th lab period with a customary cake cutting ceremony. MIDN 4/C Charlie Richmond led the way as the Battalion's youngest member, cutting the cake with CAPT David Schweizer, our Commanding Officer.



One of this semester's most anticipated events is the upcoming Joint Service Ball. Hosted annually by all of the ROTC's on campus, the ball is a formal dinner followed by ceremonies for the commissioning seniors. The Battalion looks forward to the ball every year as a chance to interact with the other services and entertain their guests. Festivities usually conclude with the Navy Battalion taking over the dance floor for a night of good natured fun.

The Midshipmen are also preparing for the Veterans Day, which is traditionally a weekend full of activities for all of the services. The Battalion will participate in the Veteran's day run around campus, hold a flag ceremony with the other services, and capstone the weekend by standing guard at each of three war memorials on campus. All located on Memorial Drive, the Vietnam War Memorial, Korean War Memorial, and WWII Memorial (the Campanile) are guarded by a vigil of members from each service for a continuous 24 hours.

As this semester presses on I'm looking forward to all of the events we have in store, and in rounding out the semester with another edition of this newsletter. As always, thank you for your continued support!

Rock Chalk and Go Navy!

CAPT David Schweizer

SALVATION ARMY BELL RINGERS

Checkers - 06 December 2014

- | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|
| 1200 - 1300 | John Mosher & Dean Bevan |
| 1300 - 1400 | Gerald & Ruth Rutledge |
| 1400 - 1500 | Ray & Jean Finch |
| 1500 - 1600 | John & Shirley Halladay |
| Alternates: | Mike Miller & Al Ballard |



Air Force News

LtCol Brian Salmans, USAF

Greetings from Det 280, the Flying Jayhawk Wing,

We have been having an exciting and productive fall semester so far.

Detachment update:

The AFROTC Arnold Air Society hosted a Regional Conference in Kansas City. The cadets did an outstanding job lobbying for the conference and planning and executing it.

The cadets recently finished a field leadership exercise on the KU West Campus. Several exercises were included, such as an expeditionary Air Force deployment scenario in an Afghanistan-like environment. The cadets practiced key leader engagements, advising, urban operations, and force protection objectives.

The cadets and cadre had a great time at the Joint Military Ball on 24 Oct 14. With around 400 attendees, the cadets got to socialize with other cadets and midshipmen as well as officers and spouses. At the same time, they got the opportunity to learn one of the important military traditions of the Military Ball. The KU Army Detachment planned and implemented the successful event. COL Eric L. Walker, (presently stationed at Fort Leavenworth as the Director for Special Operations within the Combined Arms Center (CAC)), as the guest speaker, gave an outstanding presentation about military leadership.

Coming up:

Veterans Day activities will be the highlight of cadet activities for November. Air Force ROTC will once

again host the 24-hour vigil that will take place at three veteran memorials here on campus for Veterans Day remembrances.

Cadets should receive their Air Force Specialty Codes (their Air Force jobs) in November.

Det 280 will host a career day in November. Officers from neighboring bases will discuss jobs and Air Force life with the cadet corps.

Cadre update:

TSgt George White will PCS on 17 Nov 14 for a Defense Intelligence Agency job at Charlottesville, Virginia. TSgt White has provided invaluable leadership development and administrative support for four years of cadets at Det 280. Many junior officers in the Air Force have started off their careers with a solid foundation thanks to TSgt White. A replacement NCO is tentatively scheduled to arrive in February 2015.

MOAA Jayhawk Chapter, thank you again for your support. Detachment 280 is looking forward to what I know will be a very challenging and yet rewarding year of training our Air Force's future officers.

Very Respectfully,

Lt Col Brian Salmans
Commander, Air Force ROTC Det 280

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 Legislative Update, 29 August 2014:

President Unveils Mental Health Efforts

On August 26 President Obama announced 19 executive actions aimed at improving mental health care for servicemembers and veterans.

Although many of the announced initiatives are already in place or have been under development for some time, there are several new initiatives focused on improving mental

health treatment and support for currently serving and veterans and reducing the incidence of suicides in both the currently serving and veteran populations.

The new initiatives include:

- * Supporting a warm hand off from DoD to the VA by enrolling all servicemembers receiving mental health treatment in the DoD's In-Transition Program to ensure they are connected to a VA provider;

- * Altering the VA drug formulary to match DoD's to allow servicemembers to continue using the same medications once enrolled in the VA;
- * Expanding the popular mental health peer support programs to primary care settings in both VA and DoD; and
- * Providing all first responders on military bases and DoD locations with opioid overdose reversal kits.

MOAA Legislative Update, 05 September 2014:

Review Boards to Consider PTSD

Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel announced September 3 that DoD will now consider service-related Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) when considering a veteran's petition to upgrade their discharge status.

The policy applies to veterans of any era who received a less than honorable discharge from service and received a subsequent documented PTSD diagnosis.

The new policy stems from recent attention paid to petitions from Vietnam veterans seeking to upgrade their discharge status based on previously unrecognized PTSD. In these cases, PTSD was not recognized as a diagnosis at the time of service and, in many cases, diagnoses were not made until decades after service was completed.

Review boards are being asked to liberally consider petitions for changes in discharge status for veterans who have PTSD, and to waive the typical 15 year time limit in these cases.

The effects of successful petition can be profound. Servicemembers who receive a less than honorable discharge can be denied access to many of the services, care, and benefits to which they could be entitled. It can also hurt job and housing prospects.

MOAA Legislative Update, 12 September 2014:

Coalition Honors Legislative Champions

The Military Coalition (TMC) — an influential consortium of 33 military and veterans' groups cochaired by MOAA — presented its highest leadership awards Sept. 11 to Sen. Kelly Ayotte (R-N.H.) and Rep. Jeff Miller (R-Fla.) for their leadership in protecting the vital interests of servicemembers, retirees, and veterans and their families and survivors.

MOAA Legislative Update, 19 September 2014:

Commission Seeks Benefit Preferences

The congressionally chartered Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission (MCRMC) recently started sending out targeted surveys as part of its ongoing review of military compensation and benefit programs. The survey is designed to help the commission understand and assess the value and preferences of the compensation and benefits received.

MOAA received several inquiries from members selected to participate in the survey, wondering if the survey is legitimate or to be trusted. The survey is official, and MOAA encourages people who want to make their preferences known to take it.

Feedback received from servicemembers who took the survey has been mixed. Several sections of the survey are confusing or have poorly phrased questions.

MOAA Legislative Update, 26 September 2014:

Army Chief Issues Dire Warning

Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno issued a grave warning about the continued threat of sequestration and its impact on national security. "It will be very difficult for us to lead around the world. Fiscal year 2016 is a breaking point."

"I'm not seeing peace breaking out all around the world in [2016]."

The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 provided some relief from sequestration in FY 2014 and 2015, but unless Congress acts on a broader debt reduction plan, sequestration will return from FY 2016 through 2021. The ramifications of these cuts would be severe.

The meat-axe sequestration cuts would eliminate about \$9 billion from Army funding in 2016. Gen. Odierno says those cuts would have a "significant degradation" on the force.

Sequestration is forcing Army leadership to not only make tough choices, but to move forward with drawdowns in more aggressive ways — like notifying soldiers in combat zones that they are being forced out.

If sequestration were to continue, the Army could be reduced to 420,000 soldiers by FY 2019. In testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee in April, Gen. Odierno said that a force level of 450,000 soldiers would "pose a significant security risk;" at a force level of 420,000, the Army would "not be able to execute the defense strategy."

MOAA strongly feels that if the services have to continue to drawdown they use the tools Congress has already provided to drawdown with dignity.

But Congress must also address the root of this problem and repeal sequestration. You can help by sending your legislators this MOAA-suggested message.

MOAA Deploys to Camp Lejeune

MOAA hosted its 10th Military Spouse Symposium last week in Jacksonville, NC at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune. This was the first MOAA Spouse Symposium to be held on a military installation.

The symposium, titled "Keeping a Career on the Move®", opened with a spouse and policy panel where local experts discussed local education and employment opportunities, state and federal policies, and national programs that military spouses can use to navigate their career trajectory.

In her keynote address, Maureen Casey, Managing Director, Military and Veterans Affairs, JPMorgan Chase & Co. addressed the employment challenges confronting military spouses today. Citing MOAA and Syracuse University's Institute for Veterans and Military Families' (IVMF) Military Spouse Employment Report, Casey told spouses in the audience, "the study showed that 90 percent of you are underemployed and many of you earn less than your civilian counterparts. These numbers were shocking to me and just completely unacceptable...It's not your skills or your desire or your attitude that has been to blame. It's been

the military lifestyle... These challenges not only make it hard to find a job, they make it nearly impossible for a military spouse to have a career.”

The second panel, “Real Spouses, Real Stories,” brought together local military spouses who have had success navigating their careers. Panelists shared tips, best practices, and their experience with the audience.

MOAA’s Career Transition team provided several on-site services and career development presentations focused on preparing military spouses for career entry, re-entry, or the next step in their professional journey. Among these were, “Resume Writing Strategies for Military Spouses,” which covered the basics of resume development, with an emphasis on approaches to address resume gaps and “LinkedIn Best Practices,” a seminar designed to assist spouses in creating a compelling profile, utilizing their current networks for employment opportunities, and understanding the rules of engagement in an online professional networking environment.

MOAA Legislative Update, 03 October 2014:

Where Do Your Legislators Stand?

The summary below shows the positions of your senators and representative on a number of key issues important to MOAA members. This summary reflects legislators’ status as cosponsors of MOAA-supported bills rather than actual votes on the issues, except as noted in the explanations below.

Senators are listed first, with Representatives listed below the Senators by state.

- + means the legislator has cosponsored one of the associated bills listed below or has voted for a similar provision in committee or floor action.
- means the legislator has not cosponsored any of the relevant bills or voted against a bill that contained the initiative.
- * means your legislator has not had the chance to vote on the associated issue in the Senate defense bill process.
- ^ means your legislator has not cosponsored or voted on an issue, but it has since been resolved.

Note 1: Your legislator identification is based on your mailing address in your MOAA membership record unless you have given MOAA a separate voting address.

Note 2: Many congressional/committee leaders have a policy against cosponsoring bills on issues within their purview.

Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) legislation would reduce or end the deduction of VA survivor benefits from SBP annuities or increase the amounts payable to survivors subject to deduction. A “+” indicates Senate cosponsorship of S. 734 (Nelson, D-Fla) or House cosponsorship of H.R. 32 (Wilson, R-SC).

Concurrent Receipt legislation would reduce or eliminate the deduction of VA disability compensation from military retired pay. A “+” indicates Senate cosponsorship for S. 234 (Reid, D-Nev.) or House cosponsorship of H.R. 303 (Bilirakis, R-FL) or H.R. 333 (Bishop, D-Ga.).

Guard/Reserve Retirement legislation would more fairly credit active duty service toward early Guard and Reserve retirement eligibility. A “+” indicates Senate Armed Services Committee members who voted favorably a draft of the defense bill (S. 2410), Senate cosponsorship of S. 240 (Tester, D-Mont.), or House cosponsorship of H.R. 690 (Latham, R-Iowa).

Military Spouse Jobs legislation would authorize tax credits for employers who hire military spouses or credits for military spouses who incur re-licensing/credentialing expenses associated with a military-ordered move between states. A “+” indicates Senate cosponsorship of S. 759 (Casey, D-Pa.) or House cosponsorship of H.R. 1620 (Cartwright, D-Penn.).

TRICARE Rx Fee legislation would block proposed disproportionate TRICARE pharmacy copay increases. A “+” indicates an “aye” on House vote #240 for H.R. 4435 (the House defense authorization bill). Senators not on the Armed Services Committee receive an “*” indicating they did not have the chance to vote on this issue.

Active Duty Compensation legislation would block administration proposals to cap active duty pay and cut Basic Allowance for Housing benefits. A “+” indicates an “aye” on House vote #240 for H.R. 4435. Senators not serving on the Senate Armed Services Committee receive a “*” indicating they have not yet had the opportunity to vote on the issue.

Commissary legislation would block an administration proposal to cut commissary savings by 30 percent. A “+” indicates an “aye” on House vote #240 for H.R. 4435, cosponsorship of H.R. 679 (Walz, D-Minn), Senate Armed Services Committee members who voted favorably a draft of the defense bill (S. 2410), or cosponsors of S. 629 (Pryor, D-Ark.). Legislators receiving an “A” indicate they have not cosponsored or voted on the issue, but it has been since resolved.

Military Lending Protections Improved

On September 30, DoD announced improvements to the Military Lending Act (MLA) that will further protect servicemembers and their families from unscrupulous lenders.

The MLA – originally passed in 2006 – provides servicemembers and their dependents with protections from predatory lending practices. Congress tasked the Secretary of Defense to survey troops, financial counselors and legal assistance attorneys to determine the impact and prevalence of high-cost loans in the FY2013 defense bill.

DoD worked with federal regulators to study the issue and developed a number of new proposed protections for servicemembers and their families.

The proposed changes to the MLA include:

- * Establish a 36 percent cap on the annual interest rate charged for covered credit products—including credit cards—referred to as the Military Annual Percentage Rate.
- * Hold creditors responsible for providing military borrowers with additional disclosures, including a statement that they should seek other options than high-cost credit—to include financial counseling and assistance from the Military Aid Societies

- * Prohibit creditors from requiring servicemembers to submit to arbitration or waive their rights under the Servicemember's Civil Relief Act (SCRA)
- * Expand the definition of "consumer credit" covered by the MLA and bring any closed- or open-end loans within the scope of the regulation, with the exception of loans secured by real estate or a purchase-money loan (including a loan to finance the purchase of a vehicle).

In response to the proposed changes, MOAA President Vice Adm. Norb Ryan said, "MOAA welcomes the Pentagon's expanded rules that will help close the loopholes that continue to allow predatory lenders to prey on military members and their families. These new rules will strengthen the service member protections by reducing financial abuses."

Servicemembers and their families that wish to file a specific complaint on issues of deceptive financial products or services can do so with the [Consumer Financial Protection Bureau](#).

MOAA Legislative Update, 10 October 2014:

Amid Backlash, DoD Delays Therapy Cuts

In June, the government announced that it would simplify three existing policies to treat beneficiaries on the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) with the implementation of the Comprehensive Autism Care Demonstration. Previously, beneficiaries received Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) services through basic TRICARE coverage, the ECHO Autism Demonstration, or the ABA Pilot program.

Last month, the Department of Defense (DoD) announced that it would slash payments for autism services between 40 and 55 percent, from \$125 an hour to anywhere from \$50 to \$68 an hour. The scheduled cuts were set to take effect on October 20.

TRICARE provided written policy for the Autism Care Demonstration (ACD) in late September, only one month before the program was scheduled to begin.

After an uproar from the military community, DoD officials announced this week that it would delay payment cuts until April 2015.

Despite assurances from Defense Health Agency (DHA) officials that they would educate beneficiaries and providers to proposed changes, many are crying foul. The proposed payment cuts would have an immediate impact on military families.

According to a survey by Navigation Behavioral Consulting, a firm that works with children with autism, 95 percent of TRICARE providers would scale back services offered to autistic children. More troubling is that 22 percent said that they would stop treating military children altogether.

If the proposed payment cuts are enacted, almost 15 percent of military children with autism who received help in 2013, would be left without adequate coverage.

While MOAA is pleased to see a simplification of autism services into one program, we remain deeply concerned about proposed funding cuts.

MOAA is scheduled to participate in a review of the policy next week with DoD officials.

MOAA Legislative Update, 17 October 2014:

DoD Issues New TDY Rules

Effective November 1, servicemembers traveling on long-term temporary duty will receive a flat rate per diem and depending on the duration, could mean lower reimbursement for military travel costs.

In an effort to drive troops to seek more cost savings, lodging for longer-term travel that exceeds 30 days, the Pentagon has modified the Joint Travel Regulation as follows:

- * On the travel day, service members will receive up to 100% lodging per diem of the locality rate and 75% meals and incidental expenses (M&IE).
- * For long-term temporary duty lasting 31 -180 days, the authorized flat rate is 75% of the locality rate (lodging plus M&IE) payable for each full day of temporary duty at that location.
- * For long-term temporary duty of 181 days (normally not authorized) or greater (in a single location), the authorized flat rate is 55% (lodging plus M&IE) of the locality rate.

The new flat rate per diem does not apply when government lodging or contracted government lodging is available and directed. Servicemembers will be reimbursed for actual lodging costs when staying in government lodging.

Fortunately in situations where a servicemember cannot find affordable long-term housing, they can provide justification to the TDY approving official for a higher temporary duty lodging stipend.

GAO Targets Compound Drugs

On October 2, GAO released a report that found TRICARE's handling of compound drugs was inconsistent with its own regulations.

Compound drugs are created when a pharmacist combines or alters medication ingredients to create a drug tailored to the medical needs of an individual. These drugs can be particularly important to avoid adverse reactions for some beneficiaries.

The problem lies with certain compound drugs that contain "bulk drug substances." Bulk drug substances are raw powders that are not usually approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). TRICARE policy states that it will only cover compound drugs containing FDA approved substances. Medicare and the VA follow similar policies.

However, the GAO report found that despite existing policy, TRICARE has been covering the costs of non-FDA approved compound drugs containing these bulk drug substances.

The average cost of a compounded drug that includes at least one bulk drug substance is \$557 per prescription, compared to \$53 per prescription for a compound drug containing only FDA-approved products.

In FY 2013, TRICARE covered more than 465,000 compound prescriptions, which cost \$259 million. Those figures represent only 0.3 percent of total prescriptions filled, but amount to 3 percent of TRICARE's total pharmacy costs.

The GAO recommended TRICARE follow its own policy and only cover compound drugs containing FDA-approved

substances. TRICARE officials agreed with the report's recommendations.

MOAA understands that TRICARE should align its pharmacy practices with its policies, but we remain concerned that some beneficiaries experiencing successful treatments using these compound drugs may be left to seek other means. TRICARE should search for other ways to reduce DoD health costs without adversely impacting affected beneficiaries. Every effort should be made to allow waivers to existing policy in these situations.

MOAA Legislative Update, 24 October 2014:

COLA Watch

It's official: the 2014 cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for military retired pay, SBP annuities, Social Security checks, and VA disability and survivor benefits will be 1.7 percent, effective December 1, 2014. It will first appear in the January checks, paid on December 31. The Consumer Price Index increased 0.1 percent in September to 234.170.

The 1.7 percent 2014 COLA represents a slight increase over last year's 1.5 percent increase.

However, two categories of military retirees won't receive a 1.7 percent COLA in 2014.

2014 Retirees: Some servicemembers who retired during calendar year 2014 will receive a somewhat smaller, partial COLA for this year only, because they weren't in retired status for the full year. Their partial COLAs generally reflect the amount of inflation experienced in the calendar quarters since they retired:

- Jan. - Mar. retirees – 1.7 percent
- Apr. - Jun. retirees – 1.3 percent
- Jul. - Sept. retirees – 0.1 percent
- After Oct. 1, 2014 – no COLA this year.

All members who retired during 2014 will receive full-year COLAs in future years.

REDUX Retirees: Servicemembers who entered service on or after Aug. 1, 1986 and who elected to accept a \$30,000 career retention bonus at the 15-years-of-service point agreed to accept reduced retired pay and COLAs as a trade-off for the bonus. REDUX retirees' COLAs are depressed 1 percent below the normal COLA rate, so they'll see a 0.7 percent COLA this year.

VA Launches New Study on Care

The Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014 (P.L. 113-146) fulfills a MOAA recommendation to Congress and the Administration for an independent commission to assess how the VA health system could be improved for our nation's veterans in the 21st century.

MOAA strongly feels that while access, capacity, and management issues must be attacked aggressively, a longer-term view is needed to ensure the VA delivers quality health care services in a timely and caring manner to veterans in the coming years.

The Choice Act establishes a two-part framework to study the VA health system from top to bottom. The VA has awarded a contract for the independent assessment of the

system to Mitre Corporation, a non-profit company that operates a number of federally funded research and development centers.

The assessment will consider current and projected veteran demographics, capabilities, resources, access standards, workflow, clinical staffing, facilities and medical construction, caseload dynamics, information technologies, scheduling, business and purchasing systems and related activities.

The study will be completed within 60 days. The findings and recommendations will be submitted to VA Secretary Bob McDonald, reported to the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees, and posted online for public comment.

At that point, a Commission on VA Care will be empaneled to take up the independent assessment and make its own evaluation of veterans' access to VA care and develop recommendations on how best to organize the Veterans Health Administration, locate health care resources, and deliver health care to veterans over the next two decades.

MOAA will continue to monitor this important work that is vital to the health and well-being of millions of veterans.

Autism Therapy Changes on Hold

In a case of déjà vu all over again, changes to Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) policy have been made at the last minute. The new Comprehensive Autism Care Demonstration will combine all TRICARE covered ABA services for beneficiaries with autism into one benefit.

While MOAA considers a consolidation of services into one program a good thing for military families, the policy included a controversial payment structure that would significantly reduce provider reimbursements. The reduction in reimbursement rates to providers would have a dramatic effect on military families.

But the story doesn't end there:

In an effort to get this right, senior Defense officials hosted a roundtable discussion last week with key stakeholders addressing the Comprehensive Autism Care Demonstration. Joining MOAA at the table were military parents, military and disability advocates, and representatives from professional associations.

Leaders at the table acknowledged their failure to properly communicate policy changes with beneficiaries and providers, pledging more transparency going forward.

Officials stressed that reimbursement changes have been put on hold until April 20th, 2015. Over the next six months, the RAND Corporation will research prevailing market rates for ABA services and the number of impacted TRICARE beneficiaries.

Steps in the right direction:

We are pleased that the Department of Defense (DoD) stopped reimbursement changes, in light of pending additional data. It appears that senior officials are sincere in their desire to increase transparency and improve communication with beneficiaries and providers.

We agree with senior defense officials: "We must get this right." Military families deserve better.



JAYHAWK CHAPTER MOAA

A membership meeting will be held **Tuesday, 18 November 2014**, at the Lawrence Country Club.

Dinner cost is **\$24.00/meal**.

The Program: Our guest speaker will be Paul Shaver, who will share some interesting views of the North and South Poles.

Social Hour: 1800 hours Dinner: 1845 hours

The Menu: Chicken, vegetable, rolls, salad, tea or coffee and dessert

Send your reservation and check payable to Jayhawk Chapter MOAA to arrive no later than **Wednesday, 12 November 2014**, to:
CAPT (Ret) Jim Cooper - 1115 Stone Meadows Drive, Lawrence, KS 66049-3961

Dinner reservations are confirmed on Monday before the dinner. Cancellations, if necessary, should be made prior to Monday noon; otherwise, the Lawrence Country Club will charge us for those meals.

If you have any questions, you may contact Jim Cooper at 842-7037 or John Halladay at 843-6184.

cut here

Yes, please make _____ reservations for me and my guests. (Spouse and other guests are welcome.)

The cost is **\$24.00 per meal**. I am enclosing a check for \$_____ for meal(s).

Clayton L. Comfort Award program contribution \$_____
(Separate check made out to "KU Endowment")

Chapter Dues (\$20.00) are due 01 January 2015 \$_____
(If you would like to include them now)

TOTAL: \$_____

Name _____

Telephone _____

**IF YOU NEED A RIDE TO MEETINGS, PLEASE LET US KNOW HERE _____
AND GIVE US YOUR TELEPHONE NUMBER _____**

**TEAR OFF AND RETURN THIS FORM WITH A CHECK PAYABLE TO:
JAYHAWK CHAPTER MOAA
CAPT (Ret) Jim Cooper, 1115 Stone Meadows Drive, Lawrence, KS 66049-3961**

MOAA WEBSITE: www.moaa.org

KANSAS COUNCIL WEBSITE: www.kansasmooa.org

JAYHAWK CHAPTER WEBSITE: www.jayhawkmoaa.org

**Thank you for receiving
the newsletter via e-mail !!
It saves the Chapter for both
printing and postage.**

2014 Meeting Schedule:

Tuesday 18 November 2014

Tentative 2015 Meeting Schedule:

Tuesday 20 January 2015

Tuesday 17 March 2015

Tuesday 19 May 2015

Tuesday 21 July 2015

Tuesday 15 September 2015

Tuesday 17 November 2015



One Association, One Voice. Yours.

Newsletter Editor

Jayhawk Chapter, MOAA

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IN GOD WE TRUST