



Jayhawk Chapter MOAA Newsletter



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March Program:

Our speaker for the March meeting will be District Court Judge Timothy P. McCarthy, the District Court Judge in charge of the Veterans Treatment Court in Johnson County. He will cover the Veterans Treatment Court Program he oversees.

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awarded for

2002 / 2003 / 2005 / 2008 / 2009
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President's Comments . . .

2017 has already been a busy year. We had an excellent

turn out for the January meeting and tremendous presentation by Sarah Hill-Nelson on the Bowersock Dam and new power generation system. The KU Air Force ROTC cadets provided the color guard and were great guests; always a pleasure to meet them and reaffirm what great cadets all the ROTC programs have at and associated with the University of Kansas.



Jayhawk Chapter members and members of the KCC attended the 'Meet your Legislator Day,' 8 February, sponsored annually by the Kansas Department of the American Legion and the Kansas VFW at the Capital Plaza Convention Center in Topeka. The meeting is a great introduction toward setting up success for MOAA's Kansas Hill Day on March 8. Maj (ret) Sweeney has sent the MOAA Kansas Legislative Initiatives talking paper to all the Kansas State House and Senate members. Mike and I currently plan to attend and welcome anyone from the Jayhawk Chapter to attend as well. Please see either of us for the details and to be included in the email notification for additional information.

The KCC also met in Overland Park Kansas on 11 February and I am asking Mike to give a brief summary of the activity at the meeting. One outcome of significant note though, the speaker at the KCC meeting graciously agreed to be our guest speaker for our March meeting. I understand the presentation was both dynamic and informative and am looking forward to his presentation.

Moving forward we will have representatives at the award ceremonies and commissioning ceremonies for all three KU ROTC departments again this year. I encourage as many of you as can to participate. John will be sending out a schedule of the activities and we will be looking for volunteers to participate in the various ceremonies as required. The Kansas Council of Chapters will also hold another meeting in May to continue to chart our way forward as the Kansas Legislature wraps up another annual session. Keep your eye out for email concerning upcoming legislative issues and alerts, both national and local, and continue to notify your national and local lawmakers concerning your position on Veterans' and National Security concerns.

I am looking forward to a productive and enjoyable year as Chapter President. Please contact me or take the opportunity to talk to me during our meetings in reference to what you would like to see for upcoming speakers at meetings. I very much want to keep the agenda something we all participate in and received benefit from.

Thanks, "Never Stop Serving" as we all continue forward, and I look forward to seeing all of you on 21 March at the Lawrence Country Club.

George

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1 March 2017

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*** Reservations should be sent
to Jim Cooper by
16 March**



JAYHAWK CHAPTER NEWS

If you have not paid your Chapter dues (\$20), please do as soon as possible. The 2017 Chapter Directory will be distributed at our May meeting, and we would have to delete someone just because they forgot.

Please let John or Shirley Halladay know if there are any changes to your Directory listing or if you would like to use a different picture.

PERSONAL NEWS

Dean Bevan: Judy and I visited good friends at their beachfront condo in Fort Morgan, Alabama in January. Celebrated my 79th birthday at a rooftop barbecue we were invited to because I was seen wearing my "Retired Army" cap.

On Feb. 3, performed at Theatre Lawrence with gifted soprano Sarah Young in "Dueling Duos" event.

On Feb. 13th, had right knee re-replaced (previous one not working right). Home on the 15th, doing lots of physical therapy.

Coming up in March, my "Grim Reaper " will be performed in Cary, NC, and my "Water, Water" in Colorado Springs.

Ray Finch: Major (P) John Finch (US Army), son of Ray and Jean Finch, was selected for a Battalion Command billet during the last command selection board (Jan 2017). John is currently serving as a Battalion XO for the 202d MI Bn at Fort Gordon, Georgia. He will likely assume battalion command sometime in 2018.

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Army News LTC Tracey Olson, USA

Greetings Jayhawk Chapter!

After a rejuvenating winter break, the spring semester is off to a great start with returning cadets, new cadets and refreshed cadre. We started off the semester with a new cadet orientation welcoming in 10 new cadets. We also enjoyed a visit from 3rd BDE ROTC CSM Donald Waterhouse. In addition, our Top 10% Cadet, Cadet Steven Galluzzi, attended the George C. Marshall Conference hosted by Fort Leavenworth. We also conduct a Virtual Staff Ride (Battle of Wanat) in conjunction with UMKC on 16 FEB. This was a fantastic leader development tool emphasizing that the solution is not always black and white, and their decisions have consequences.

We are also in the mid-planning stage of our 23rd annual Ranger Buddy Competition (RBC). Our cadet OIC is Cadet Patrick Killeen, a distinguished military graduate (DMG). He and his RBC team have begun planning lanes and soliciting sponsorships and donations. Last year's RBC we hosted a combined 200, 2 person teams. The 2017 23rd Annual Ranger Buddy Competition will be a continued race from start to finish. Teams will have to manage their own time, resources, and abilities. The event will start with the 15K Road March. Male teams will start at 0500 and Co-ed and Female teams will start at 0900. Once a team has completed the Road March they have their rucks weighed. While rucks are being weighed they will be afforded the time to cool down with

tanks of water to submerge elbows. Medics on sight will also quickly assess any teams showing signs of heat related injuries. Athletic trainers are stationed there to quickly address any injuries and get teams back into race. Next, teams will immediately engage all 20 tasks. They will maintain a punch card that will show the completion of all tasks. Once complete with all 20 tasks they will move out to the start of the 5k Buddy run. At the Buddy Run they will show the punch card to the official. Once the punch card is verified they will be permitted to start the buddy run and teams must finish with each other. Time stops once they have completed the Buddy Run course.

Our Cadet S8, Cadet Cody Devin (DMG), is planning an outstanding fundraiser – the KU Ruck-a-thon, this event will take place mid-March. It is a 90 minute lap around the Rock Chalk sports complex varsity track and field track; the cadets will make money from their donors per lap completed or from a flat rate donation. We hope to raise approximately \$10K with this event.

Thank you for continued support.

MAJ TODD HARALSON
Asst. Professor of Military Science



Navy News CAPT Dave Meron, USN



Greetings from the Jayhawk Navy!

The Fall 2016 semester ended nearly as quickly as it began, and we are already five weeks into the Spring 2017 semester. Even with the start of the new semester, the midshipmen and staff are still bearing with the sudden loss of our Battalion Executive Officer, Nicholas Herren.

The Fall 2016 semester ended with an ugly sweater contest in addition to the midshipmen exchanging secret Santa gifts. The gifts ranged from t-shirts to a Top Gun movie poster, which gave the battalion something to lighten the mood before a tough week of finals.

The Battalion gained two new students for the spring semester. Staff Sergeant Lawless joins us from the Motor Transport Company based out of Camp Johnson and is a Marine Corps Enlisted Commissioning Education Program (MECEP) candidate. MIDN Donovan is a Marine Corps college programmer who is in his second semester of his Freshman year, studying Exercise Science.



Winner of the annual MIDN Ugly Sweater Competition

On January 19th, MIDN Kersey and I had the sincere privilege of attending the Annual Greater Kansas City Council Navy League Dinner. MIDN Kersey was specifically invited because he was awarded the Greater Kansas City Council Award at last April's award ceremony.



Kansas City Council Navy League Dinner

The Aviation Club was offered a unique tour of the little known TACAMO community. This professional development trip allowed KU's prospective future aviators to meet current junior Naval Aviators and to experience what life is like in a squadron. Along with a tour of an aircraft each MIDN had the added bonus of flying the aircraft in the simulator while at Tinker AFB in Oklahoma City.



Aviation Club in front of an E6-8 Mercury from VQ-4

In March, the Battalion is traveling to Colorado - Boulder for the Annual Drill Competition. This year's teams are stronger and more experienced than last year and we are looking to earn the top spots in each category.

April 26th will be our Annual Spring Awards Ceremony in the Ballroom of the Kansas Union on the Lawrence Campus, in which you are invited. We look forward to recognizing the MIDN's hard work with awards.

Thank you for your continued support of the Jayhawk Battalion.

Rock Chalk and Go Navy!

CAPT David J. Meron



Air Force News LtCol Bill Pastewait, USAF

Hello from Detachment 280, the Flying Jayhawks!

We've hit the ground running in the Spring Semester with several training events geared towards preparing sophomore cadets to attend Field Training. This includes everything from marching, physical fitness, leadership development, expeditionary Air Force concepts, and hygienic rules for training such as the proper method for making your bunk and folding your clothes. Cadets will spend two-weeks in-garrison at Maxwell AFB, Alabama and two-weeks in an Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) environment at Camp Shelby, Mississippi. Sophomore cadets are currently competing for enrollment allocations to attend Field Training.

One staff member left us this year. Captain David Rogers separated from the Air Force in January and is pursuing a career as Physician's Assistant. He was accepted and is currently enrolled at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Although a loss for us we are excited that he gets the opportunity to pursue his dream.

We had 1 staff and 1 junior cadet selected to hold field training staff positions. Major Andrew Robinson will attend AEF 1 at Camp Shelby as a Flight Training Officer. Cadet Connor Sipe, a junior from the University of Kansas, will attend AEF 3 at Camp Shelby as a Cadet Training Assistant.

The highlight of the semester so far is rated duty assignments! Two cadets were selected for rated duty assignment with Detachment 280 scoring 100% (2 out of 2 candidates) selections for the second year in a row. Cadet Connor Sipe, mentioned above, was selected for pilot and Cadet Kenneth Beck, a junior from the University of Kansas, was selected for Remotely Piloted Aircraft.

Coming Up:

We will be hosting a Dining Out on Friday, 31 March from 1800 – 2200 at the Oread Hotel on the KU campus. This formal military dinner is an opportunity for cadets to learn about military customs and courtesies. As a Dining Out, non-military members are invited to attend and experience a formal military program.

We are hosting an AFROTC Open House on Saturday, 22 April from 0900 – 1200. This is an opportunity for local area

high schools, JROTC units or current college students to check out Air Force ROTC. Parents are also encouraged to attend and lunch will be provided for the attendees. This will be our second time for the Open House and we are hoping for another large turnout in another effort to grow the numbers of incoming freshmen cadets.

Scholarship results should be out soon and we are hoping to add some additional scholarship cadets to the Flying Jayhawks!

Rock, Chalk!

Very Respectfully,

LtCol Bill Pastewait

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, 06 January 2017:

Repeal Sequestration Now

Unless current law is changed, sequestration will return next year and automatically trigger deep cuts to the Defense Department. These severe cuts will exhaust our resources and capabilities in immeasurable ways—the toll on our military and their families will likewise be incalculable.

The congressional session is just getting underway. Please engage your member of Congress—encourage them to make it their priority to repeal sequestration.

You can do this by sending the message below.

Thank you for serving in our nation's 115th Congress. As we move forward into 2017, I personally request that you make repealing sequestration one of your highest priorities.

Unless Congress acts to replace sequestration with an alternative debt reduction plan, another, even more devastating round of defense cuts will be required in FY18. These cuts to our nation's defense budget put America's defense capabilities at an unacceptable level of risk.

The Joint Chiefs have stated sequestration will devastate our defense capabilities and "hollow out the force" that already has been made to bear 100% of the nation's burden of wartime sacrifice for over fifteen years.

Avoiding the terrible effects of a sequester is fundamental to sustaining the nation's ability to defend itself. Our security at home and abroad cannot be allowed to take a back seat to political posturing.

As your constituent I urge you to do everything in your power to forge a bipartisan resolution to avoid the unconscionable prospect of putting our military and our nation in harm's way without the necessary funding for a proper defense.

Avalanche of Enacted TriCare Changes Pose Challenges

The National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 114-328), signed into law Dec. 23, orders an avalanche of changes to the TRICARE health care benefit used by servicemembers, retirees, and their families. It also makes sweeping reforms to how the military direct-care system is organized and operates.

The sheer number of changes and additional studies being mandated, filling 40 sections and 150 pages of the act, is more impressive than any short list of highlights we might be able to review here.

"There's a lot of good stuff in there. There's a lot of stuff we're still puzzling over," said Dr. Karen S. Guice, acting assistant secretary of defense for health affairs. She will serve in that post only two more weeks, until the Trump administration assumes responsibility for the \$50-billion-a-year military health care system and a beneficiary population of 9.6 million.

The authorization act for fiscal 2017 "is full of ideas, concepts, and new things for us to tackle," said Guice in phone interview. She added that it contains "a remarkable series of provisions that set forth some challenges [and] provides us with new authorities that we're greatly looking forward to."

But Guice emphasized many new provisions to modernize TRICARE and improve access will only accelerate reforms that the department already has been piloting or planning to adopt, though perhaps not at the speed Congress desired. The department's guide has been recommendations of the 2014 Military Healthcare System Review, which then-Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel ordered to take a hard look at performance and outcomes at military facilities and through civilian purchased care networks, Guice said.

Beneficiaries have started to see the fruits of that effort in greater access to care and a nurse advice line. They will see more when the new generation of TRICARE purchased care contracts takes effect this year, and also with gradual rollout of MHS Genesis, the new electronic health records system. All this before many of the new defense bill initiatives kick in in 2018 and years beyond. Associations advocating for beneficiaries wonder how many changes the health system can implement before chaos rules.

Guice doesn't sound worried for the staff she's leaving behind.

"We have a lot of very experienced, motivated people who just like to tackle challenges," she said. "Also, we are looking at this across the enterprise, so it's the Army, Navy, Air Force all coming together about how we actually do this."

The Senate version of the defense bill had called for dismantling the medical headquarters of the Army, Navy, and Air Force surgeons general. The enacted law is a compromise that directs a shift of key management functions done by the services to the Defense Health Agency, leaving the surgeons general to recruit, educate, and train their military and civilian health care providers and to advise DHA on medical readiness issues.

"That's an interesting construct," said Guice. "And we're kind of figuring out how best to optimize what Congress is intending to achieve."

The Exceptional Family Member Program

The Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) will take center stage at a Pentagon meeting of the Military Family Readiness Council (MFRC) Jan. 26. The MFRC is a federal advisory committee composed of senior leaders, nongovernmental organizations, and military family members who create recommendations for the Secretary of Defense. This meeting will discuss programs and services for DoD family members with special needs such as health care and the EFMP.

Why is this important?

EFMP is a mandatory enrollment program for active duty servicemembers who have a dependent with special medical and/or educational needs. The enrollment guarantees that the dependent's special needs are considered part of the assignment process.

However, dependents who qualify as an exceptional family member need many additional supports - not just consideration in the assignment process. This is where it gets mucky. While special medical needs prompt enrollment into the EFMP, the program does not oversee or manage anything related to health care access or coverage.

Each military service runs its own EFMP, which includes unique and different enrollment processes, travel screenings, and family services.

For instance, each service has required completely different forms for enrollment, some of which have been streamlined. Family support services differ across the branches of the military as well. For example, all of the services offer respite care, but the Army disallows it if a family receives respite care via health insurance. (The other services allow it.)

To address the disparities, the FY 2010 National Defense Authorization Act created an Office of Special Needs (OSN) inside DoD to oversee all of the EFMPs, identifying gaps and addressing them in services, outreach, information, training, and education.

However, the OSN does not have legal or monetary authority to change the programs run by each of the services. Reports and studies have been conducted to identify the most glaring problems, and the OSN has worked with the services to streamline some of these process - in particular, the enrollment and travel screening processes. Some disparities remain a challenge.

Poor information sharing can result in diminished access to necessary health care programs. For example, if the Army is assigning a servicemember to a Navy installation but has minimal knowledge of the availability of specialized health care local to the Navy installation, that Army family may relocate and not have access to the right doctors. The Army and the Navy, in this example, must both be able to adequately assess the needs of the family and the robustness of the local resources to make the assignment process work.

Further, when families can't access the health care they need, where they need it, their recourse requires negotiation with TRICARE contractors, not the EFMP. The OSN and the service EFMPs do not have authority or control over health care support. Health care provided at the installation clinic or

hospital is run by the service, and outside the installation is maintained via TRICARE contracts managed by the Defense Health Agency.

Inevitably, having many parties responsible for different areas of a complex issue results in disparity of service. The fact that the MFRC is revisiting this again indicates resolution has not yet been achieved.

MOAA will be at the Jan. 26 MFRC meeting to engage with leaders about how we can progress in addressing the needs of our exceptional families. You can also submit comments or attend this public meeting.

Defense Bill Wins

MOAA's tireless advocacy efforts in 2016 paid off with some positive legislative results in the FY17 National Defense Authorization Act.

MOAA Legislative Update, 13 January 2017:

Bey of Bills to Boost Vets

Members of the 115th Congress began introducing a deluge of legislation targeting veterans, including bills aimed at extending benefits to Blue Water Navy veterans, revoking bonuses paid to VA employees, and expanding the rules of concurrent receipt of retired and VA disability pay.

Here are some of the bills recently introduced.

- * H.R.27 - Ensuring VA Employee Accountability Act. The Secretary of the VA would be required to retain any reprimand or admonishment as a permanent part of an employee's record. Currently, disciplinary actions are destroyed from employee records after three years.
- * H.R. 92 - CHAMPVA Children's Protection Act. The bill would increase the age to 26 for adult children eligible for care under the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA). This would align the program with TRICARE and civilians covered under the Affordable Care Act.
- * H.R. 103 - Chiropractic Care Available to All Veterans Act. The bill would require the VA to provide chiropractic care at no fewer than 75 medical centers by the end of this year and to all medical centers by the end of 2019.
- * H.R. 299 - Blue Water Navy Veterans Act. This would extend the presumption of Agent Orange exposure to Blue Water Vietnam Veterans.
- * H.R. 303 - Retired Pay Restoration Act. This bill expands concurrent receipt for military retirees with less than a 50-percent disability rating.
- * H.R. 333 - Disabled Veterans Tax Termination Act. This bill is MOAA's ultimate concurrent receipt goal. It expands concurrent receipt for military retirees with less than a 50-percent disability rating and includes full concurrent receipt for all Chapter 61 retirees. The Senate companion to this bill is
- * S. 66.H.R. 369 - The measure would extend funding to the Veterans Choice Act. The Choice Act allows millions of qualified veterans to seek VA-funded health care in the private sector. Under current law, funding for the program is set to expire this August.
- * S.57 - The Secretary of Veterans Affairs would be required to revoke bonuses paid to employees involved in electronic wait list manipulations.

MOAA will continue to provide updates on significant developments in veteran's law through the legislative update.

MOAA Legislative Update, 20 January 2017:

New Congress Brings In New Leadership Changes On The House Armed Services Committee

As the 115th Congress settles in, Republicans not only control both the Senate and the House, but also the White House for the first time in a decade.

The GOP maintains control in the Senate by a margin of 52-48 and in the House by a margin of 238-194. The Republican Steering Committee has approved Rep. Mac Thornberry of Texas to return as the Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. This will be his second term as Chairman, but there is a new raft of members on the committee because of retirements, primary defeats or runs for other office, including Randy Forbes of Virginia, Joe Heck of Nevada, Jeff Miller of Florida, John Kline of Minnesota, John Fleming of Louisiana, Chris Gibson of New York and Rich Nugent of Florida.

Democrats departed include Rep. Loretta Sanchez of California, the No. 2 ranking Democrat behind ranking member Adam Smith of Washington; Rep. Tammy Duckworth of Illinois, who won her senate bid; Rep. Mark Takai of Hawaii, who died earlier this year; and retiring Rep. Gwen Graham of Florida. In total, the full committee is welcoming 16 new members - eight from each party.

A key change in HASC subcommittee leadership that affects MOAA's mission focus is the new leadership of the Personnel Subcommittee. Rep. Mike Coffman of Colorado's 6th congressional district replaces Joe Heck. Coffman is a military veteran who served in the Army and the Marine Corps in both an active and reserve capacity and now is in his 6th term. Susan Davis of California will remain as the Ranking Member.

Ending Hospice Rule for Military Children Requires Engagement from Military Families

Last fall, we wrote about our commitment to making sure that military children needing end-of-life care (hospice), do not have to forego curative care in order to return home to receive hospice care.

Currently, TRICARE policies align with Medicare; built for adults over 65. Medicare recipients must give up curative treatments to receive hospice care.

This is not appropriate for pediatric patients for a variety of reasons, and the military service of a parent provides more compelling reasons for enhanced access to the palliative benefits of hospice care, which provide a holistic approach to a family facing such loss.

MOAA and the Tricare for Kids Coalition are engaged with those in the civilian medical community frequently caring for military children in these situations, as well as the Defense Health Agency (DHA) that oversees TRICARE policy.

This week, MOAA received news that DHA is taking action to identify solutions for these families. The first step, however, is to identify families who could choose hospice care but have not because of the legal requirement to give up curative care or who have given up curative care to receive hospice care at home.

For additional information and to see how you can assist DHA, please write to moaaspouse@moaa.org.

Laws take time to change, and DHA requires engagement with military families to better shape support offerings and what procedural, policy, or legislative steps are best suited to remedy this unacceptable circumstance.

We know this is not an easy topic, and we know it is not just about policy and laws. This is a deeply personal decision. Ultimately, with the right information, DHA can begin facilitating a change that will bring this rule to an end.

MOAA Legislative Update, 27 January 2017:

Senate Armed Services Committee Makes Changes in Leadership

The Senate Armed Services Committee (SAC) is organizing itself to move forward with a busy agenda of defense policy issues and confirmations in the 115th

Congress. As the new administration led by President Donald Trump takes over, the committee has made some significant changes in its leadership.

The top leadership will remain the same, with one-time presidential candidate and Navy veteran, Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) remaining at the helm as chairman. Sen. Jack Reed (D-R.I.), an Army veteran, will remain in place as the committee's ranking member. Five of the seven subcommittees have changed.

Sen. Mike Rounds (R-S.D.) will take over leadership of the SASC's new subcommittee on Cybersecurity. The new panel will oversee and legislate policies and programs relating to DOD's cyber forces and capabilities.

Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), who was originally supposed to take over as the chairman of the Cybersecurity panel, chose instead to give up his seat as chairman of the Personnel Subcommittee and pass the gavel to Sen. Thom Tillis (R-N.C.) in order to focus on his responsibilities as the Chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs. Graham also chairs the Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism and would have required a waiver in the Senate in order to chair three different committee sub panels.

Sen. Deb Fischer (R-Neb.) will turn over her chair of the Emerging Threats and Capabilities Panel to Sen. Joni Ernst (R-Iowa) and will chair the Strategic Forces Subcommittee. Ernst is the first female veteran to serve in the Senate.

Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) will take over the Readiness and Support Subcommittee which focuses on military weapons modernization and development. He takes over leadership of the subcommittee from former Sen. Kelly Ayotte of New Hampshire, who lost her reelection bid last year.

The Airland Subcommittee will continue to be led by Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.), an Army and Iraq War veteran and Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) will continue to chair the Seapower Subcommittee.

MOAA looks forward to working with the committee and its leadership on issues of importance to servicemembers and veterans and their families.

MOAA Legislative Update, 03 February 2017: DoD's New Retirement System - A Blended Reality

Last July we asked for your views concerning top personnel priorities such as the pay raise, housing allowance, force levels, TRICARE fees, and commissary initiatives. Over 5,000 members responded, and the single greatest concern among our retirees was further proposed cuts to force levels.

This helped inform our lobbying efforts and, as you know by now, the 2017 Defense Bill turned back projected cuts and actually increased our force strength. Your engagement made a difference but the challenges are not over.

The military's new retirement system could pose an enduring, negative impact on the size and shape of our force. The new retirement:

- * Provides 40% of high-three years average basic pay at 20 years rather than the current system's 50%.
- * Provides for a continuation bonus at the 12-year point between 2.5 to 13 times a member's regular monthly basic pay. DoD is still working on implementation guidance which will inform force-shaping strategies used by Service Chiefs and Secretaries.
- * Leverages DoD's Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) to augment retirement planning with a DoD Contribution of 1% of base pay, up front, after 60 days.
- * Further leverages TSP by matching up to 4% of a member's contribution after two years of service—the maximum DoD contribution is 5% if the member deposits at least 5% of their base pay.

- * Puts a lot of responsibility on the servicemember to plan and save in order to maximize DoD's matching contribution and compounding growth. Those who don't add their own savings to their TSP account will end up with a significantly reduced portfolio.
- * For separating members with a minimum of 24 months of service, their TSP retirement savings becomes portable - they can take it with them to a new employer or transfer to another retirement saving plan.

By law, those entering the service on or after January 1, 2018 will automatically be under the new system. Those who entered or signed their contract to enter service before January 1, 2006 are grandfathered into the pre-2018 retirement system and cannot opt in to the new one.

The 12-year window for those who will have the option to enroll or remain with their current retirement system ranges from (on or after) January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2017. That decision period starts January 1, 2018 and goes through the calendar year.

Force strength is often seen as numbers but the commanders in the field will tell you force strength is realized through trained, effective and capable forces, and experienced people and leaders up the ranks.

The new retirement system has the potential of impacting retention by incentivizing shorter durations of service and "if-then-else" decisions at each assignment or deployment resulting in unprogrammed losses of key personnel. Highly trained, and employable, officers and enlisted with as much as 10 to 15 years of service could decide to leave the military unless they are offered the maximum continuation bonus, and even that may not be enough.

With that view of the landscape in mind, and if only one out of five currently serve until 20 years, there is a good chance even fewer will stay for the 20-year retirement under the new system.

Will service ethos alone be enough to keep the rosters full of the right people with the right skill levels and experience? If not, what will it cost to keep people beyond their initial obligation to reach the 12-year continuation bonus? Will the balance of continuation bonuses be closer to 13 times the monthly pay vice the 2.5 lesser amount? How much will contracted support cost to replace those servicemembers who don't stay?

Many people—mostly those who expect to leave before completing a career—will benefit from the Blended Retirement System, and the DoD may benefit from it initially.

However, we should bear in mind Congress changed the military retirement system once before in 1986 (to cut benefits for post-1986 entrants) and had to repeal it by 2000 because it was hurting retention.

Someone has to pay attention to the negative trends such as skill set shortages, unprogrammed losses and overall lower retention rates. MOAA will answer this call.

If we miss those indicators we risk hollowing out the force and we cannot let that happen again.

Pentagon IDs Jobs in 16 Categories that are Exempt from the Federal Hiring Freeze

DoD officials announced Feb. 2 that hiring will resume in more than a dozen areas crucial to the nation's security, following the president's sweeping government-wide hiring freeze that was announced in January.

Hiring for some positions tied to cybersecurity, medical fields, child care, and shipyard maintenance will resume immediately, [according to a memo](#) signed by Deputy Defense Secretary Robert Work. The clarification follows President Donald Trump's [Jan. 23 memorandum](#) in which he ordered a freeze on the hiring of federal civilian employees.

The Pentagon memo follows similar guidance issued by VA officials in late January. The VA's memo identified a list of more than 75 occupations - including nurses, doctors, and pharmacists - exempt from Trump's hiring freeze. That full list [can be found here](#).

A statement accompanying Work's memo emphasizes civilian positions may be exempt from the freeze only if they are determined to be critical to national security or public safety responsibilities.

"While remaining consistent with the president's objectives, the department will ensure that applicants for DoD positions are treated fairly and consistently as the policy is implemented," the press release states.

Despite the exemptions, Work states in the guidance that DoD officials should assess its most critical missions and requirements, in order to gain "full value from every taxpayer dollar we spend on defense."

"I expect you all to apply your best efforts to implement this hiring freeze," he added. "Our work will inform a government-wide effort to optimize the size of the federal civilian workforce and will best position the department to implement that plan for the long term."

Additional exemptions can be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, the guidance states. But these are the 16 functions deemed by Secretary of Defense James Mattis to be "necessary to meet national security or public safety responsibilities":

- * Positions directly supporting the execution of contingency missions and operations, scheduled military operations and deployments, and security cooperation exercises or training.
- * Positions required for cybersecurity and cyberspace operations or planning.
- * Positions required for space operations or planning.
- * Positions required for execution of the cyber and intelligence lifecycle operations, planning, or support thereof.
- * To the extent necessary to maintain capability to ensure a medically ready force, positions directly providing inpatient care in DoD medical treatment facilities and providing acute and emergency outpatient care in DoD medical and dental facilities. Additionally, positions involving communicable disease prevention and similar public health activities.
- * First-responder firefighter and law-enforcement positions.
- * Positions necessary to carry out or enforce treaties and other international obligations.
- * Positions providing operational support to the president of the United States, defense secretary, or chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
- * Positions providing child care to the children of military personnel.

Loophole Leaves Reservists Without Education Benefits

When reservists deploy in service to the nation, they expect to receive the same benefits as their active duty counterparts. DoD, however, can activate reservists using a variety of statutory authorities, and not all of them come with the benefits servicemembers might be expecting.

For example, an Army reservist mobilized to support a security mission in North Africa might be shocked to learn that time spent in North Africa failed to count towards their GI Bill eligibility.

VA Will Not be Privatized "Under My Watch," says Nominee Shulkin

The president's pick to run the VA has plans to majorly reform the department if he's confirmed for the job, but that won't include a move toward privatized care.

Dr. David Shulkin said during his nomination hearing Wednesday, Feb. 1, that he and President Donald Trump agree that the U.S. has "to do a lot better for our veterans."

"There will be far greater accountability, dramatically improved access, responsiveness, and expanded care options," Shulkin told members of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee.

"If confirmed, I intend to build a system that puts veterans first and allows them to get the best possible health care wherever it may be - in VA or with community care."

While Trump has [hinted at plans to privatize](#) the massive department that serves millions of veterans each year, Shulkin said that won't happen "under my watch." He also said he made no promises to Trump about how he'd lead the VA.

"What I told him is that I'm a strong advocate for the VA, that the services available in VA are not available in the private sector," he said. "My view of where VA needs to go is an integrated system of care - taking the best of VA and the best of the community, and that's what I would work toward."

Rebuilding trust

Shulkin, currently the VA's under secretary for health, could become the [first non-veteran to lead the department](#). The former physician has served as a top administrator in some of the country's largest hospitals. He's the only nominee to serve in Trump's Cabinet who had served under President Barack Obama, and his nomination appears to have bipartisan support.

Improving the system

Shulkin pledged to improve two key administrative procedures that have long left veterans frustrated: the process for appeals and scheduling appointments.

"The appeals process is broken," he said. "The system was designed in 1933, and every now and then you need to update it, and we're way past that. ...We will not fix this problem without legislation to fix it."

As for scheduling veterans' medical appointments, Shulkin said VA employees don't have the right tools to do their jobs well because they've been forced to use an outdated system. The VA is moving forward with a new commercial scheduling program, he said. So far, 10 sites have tested the new technology, and department officials plan to make a decision on full implementation over the next week. "We need a new scheduling system, we've known that for years," Shulkin said. "We're finally going to do it."

When it comes to making some of these improvements, Shulkin said he'll continue to listen to veterans service organizations, which he called a "treasured resource to me as a voice for veterans."

MOAA Legislative Update, 10 February 2017:

CBO Provides Controversial Options for Deficit Reduction

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) in December 2016 published its options (analysis) for reducing the federal deficit, in a report it provides at the start of each new Congress. Under the options provided for mandatory spending, the CBO provided as one of the options the elimination of concurrent receipt of retirement pay and disability compensation for disabled veterans. This was presented as an option, not a recommendation - one of a number of options provided to congressional decision makers in the report. There is no move in Congress to implement the

CBO option by changing federal law to eliminate concurrent receipt.

"Concurrent receipt" means to receive both the full amount of the service-earned military retired pay and the full amount of the VA disability compensation. Up until FY 2001, however, any retired servicemember who received VA disability compensation had an amount equal to that VA compensation deducted from their military retired pay - called an "offset."

A coalition of associations, led by MOAA, worked in earnest to eliminate that offset and restore full retired pay and full VA disability compensation. Total elimination was too costly to garner the necessary support in Congress, so the coalition initiated a very limited, "first step" legislative provision authorizing a modest allowance (\$100-\$300 monthly), which Congress passed. This mitigated the effects of the offset - but only partially, and only for retirees who received a VA disability rating of 70 percent or more within four years of leaving service.

In subsequent years, this authority was gradually expanded, as grassroots efforts persuaded Congress in 2004 to totally eliminate the offset for combat-related disabilities. Additionally, for non-combat disabilities, Congress approved a 10-year phase-out period of the offset for retirees with over 20 years of service with a disability rating of 50 percent or higher.

These were significant accomplishments, but there is more to do. MOAA is leading the charge to phase out the entire offset for all retired servicemembers, including those who were medically retired prior to reaching 20 years of service due to severe, service-connected disabilities.

Current update: working with a coalition of associations, MOAA engaged congressional leaders, who already have introduced three bills this year supporting the effort to eliminate the offset. The House bills are H.R. 333, introduced by Rep. Sanford Bishop Jr. (D-Ga.), and H.R. 303, introduced by Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-Fla.). The Senate bill, S. 66, was introduced by Sen. Dean Heller (R-Nev.). There are other bills being worked as well, and MOAA will continue to help shape any effort to eliminate the offset while seeking broad support from Congress.

Military Base Closures on the Table

Top military leaders painted a gloomy picture to lawmakers during an annual state-of-the-military briefing. Continued budget cuts and the looming specter of sequestration have led some of the services to support base closures as a way to save money.

Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force Gen. Stephen Wilson told lawmakers, "In today's budget environment, it makes sense to invest wisely, so BRAC would help us make smart investments to prepare for the future."

"We could take the money we're spending on the excess infrastructure and put that back into solving some of our fiscal problems," said Wilson.

If President Donald Trump forges ahead with campaign promises to significantly increase defense and infrastructure spending while cutting taxes, "there's a strong argument that we're going to have significant deficit repercussions," said the top Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee, Jack Reed (R.I.).

SASC Chair Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) said last month members of Congress must talk about another round of base realignments and closures.

McCain's comments signal a departure from the status quo on Capitol Hill, where lawmakers have long memories about unforeseen challenges and the missed promises of financial wins; the last round of base closures in 2005 initially cost more than it saved.

But now, said Army Vice of Staff Gen. John Allyn, "We save year over year, annually, \$1 billion from the BRAC that took place."

If a BRAC were to be approved, which states are most likely to be affected? According to the Defense Manpower Data Center, half of all active duty personnel are concentrated at installations in five states: California, Virginia, Texas, North Carolina, and Georgia. But all installations would likely be reviewed during the initial phases of a BRAC.

MOAA Legislative Update, 17 February 2017: MOAA Outlines the Future of Military Health Care

As the leading advocate for military personnel, retirees, and veterans and their families, MOAA joined the Association of Military Surgeons of the United States this week to share our vision of what the future of health care should look and feel like for beneficiaries.

Understanding the future evolution of military health care is an important undertaking, and MOAA offered the perspective of the Military Health System's most critical stakeholders: beneficiaries.

"Beneficiaries in the future will be increasingly consumer-centric, using health technology more," said MOAA President and CEO Lt. Gen. Dana Atkins, USAF (Ret), "and they will be interested in new technologies to support health care in the home or in their workplace, for example, telemedicine and remote-patient monitoring."

The future health care system will be, and must be, built on the present. The recent passing of the FY 2017 defense act provides our military with a comprehensive and modernized health benefit plan, which supports both medical readiness and beneficiary care. The changes scheduled to be implemented represent a large-scale systemic transformation.

Atkins noted that, in many respects, these changes were much-needed, and many have been long sought by both MOAA and its partners in The Military Coalition.

From the perspective of the beneficiary, MOAA sees a future system where health care providers collaborate to create a coherent beneficiary experience. Providers will have the flexibility and incentives to innovate and will be rewarded for quality outcomes that reduce costs in the long run. In this system, beneficiaries are actively engaged in their health care decisions and they can easily use their technology for access when, where, and how they want it.

New VA Secretary Hits the Ground Running

This week Dr. David Shulkin was sworn in as the ninth secretary of Department of Veterans Affairs after receiving unanimous approval from the Senate.

MOAA was pleased to see Shulkin installed and ready to get on with the major business at hand, including continued implementation of many of the initiatives he pursued as the former undersecretary of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA).

"It's comforting to see that even in a highly politicized environment like we're currently in, the Senate can put aside partisan differences to focus on veterans and their needs," said Cmdr. René Campos, USN (Ret), director of veterans and wounded warrior care for MOAA's Government Relations Department.

The new secretary has a tough road ahead of him, though, balancing the often competing priorities of Congress, the White House, his own agency, and the American public as well as the veterans he is committed to serving.

His first major action must be to work with lawmakers to extend the Choice Act, legislation allowing qualified veterans to receive care in the private sector. Under current law, the program is set to expire this August.

Extending the Veterans Choice Program (VCP) would also allow the VA time to put in place a new program to meet

the rising demand for veterans' health care brought about since the VCP was established in 2014.

The Choice Act was Congress' answer to the reports of secret wait lists in the Phoenix VA Health Care system in Arizona. With only 90 days to implement what was initially a temporary program, the VHA had to establish a massive contracting effort to expand delivery of health care to veterans through an integrated network of civilian providers until the VA could address the demand within its own system.

Though initially plagued with problems, over time the VA and Congress implemented laws and adjusted policies to make it easier for veterans to access care through the VCP.

Today, more than 1 million veterans have been able to access care thanks to the Choice Act.

While Congress determines the next steps for the VCP, the VA also has taken lessons from implementing the program to create a new community care program.

MOAA and other veterans service organizations (VSOs) have worked closely with the VA over the years to ensure the veteran's perspective is considered during the VA's transformation.

On Friday, VSOs received another quarterly update from the VA's community care team, this time on how the VA will deliver pharmacy benefits, manage appointments, and pay civilian providers under a new community care contract.

MOAA will provide more details on the new program once the contract has been announced.

Secretary Shulkin also will appear before the House Veterans' Affairs Committee on March 8 to give an update on the Choice Act and to share with Congress what he is doing to improve access and quality of health care to veterans.

COLA Watch

The January CPI is 236.854, 0.8 percent above the FY 2016 COLA baseline.

The CPI for February 2017 is scheduled to be released on March 15, 2017.

Note: Military retiree COLA is calculated based on the CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W), not the overall CPI. Monthly changes in the index may differ from national figures reported elsewhere.

MOAA Family and Spouse Advocate Recognized for Excellence

Alexandria, Va. - The director of Military Family Policy/Spouse Programs for the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), Brooke Goldberg, was recognized for her excellence in advocacy with the 2016 HillVets 100 award released Monday.

HillVets' annual award highlights the most influential and impactful veterans, service members and supporters across a broad spectrum of 20 categories.

"We are proud of Brooke for her selfless contributions to Family Policy/Spouse Programs leading to her recognition by HillVets100," said MOAA president and CEO retired Air Force Lt. Gen. Dana Atkins. "I've gained great respect for her compassion and competency to assist the family members of both our currently serving and retired/former service members." Atkins continued, "We are honored to have her on our team."

One of 11 lobbyists on staff at MOAA, Goldberg serves as a subject-matter representative to the federal government and to other military and veteran service associations on issues pertaining to military spouses and families, quality-of-life programs, and commissaries and exchanges.

The MOAA Government Relations team continues to proactively shape a broad spectrum of policy issues and legislation. On behalf of the military community, the team advocates extensively on issues affecting currently serving

personnel, National Guard and Reserve members, military retirees and veterans and their families and survivors. MOAA provides advocacy expertise in the areas of health care, pay and compensation, retiree issues, family and spouse issues, as well as veterans' issues.

MOAA Legislative Update, 24 February 2017:

Budget Challenges Front And Center For New Administration:

With the new administration now in place at one end of Pennsylvania Avenue and a new Congress in place at the other end, the top questions on most lawmaker's minds are what will the Trump administration's 2018 budget proposal look like, and what is the way ahead?

These questions comes in a political environment that has one party firmly in control of two of the three branches of government-and, given the pending Supreme Court nomination of Judge Neil Gorsuch, the potential for a political stand-off as to the status of the third.

The Trump administration this week announced plans to release a proposed budget outline sometime in mid-March for 2018; there is still no approved budget for FY 2017.

Several key pieces of legislation and critical dates directly affecting future budget and spending decisions, creating uncertainty. The government is currently operating under a continuing resolution, passed in December 2016, that will expire April 28th. The decision on the debt limit will have to be debated and voted on by Congress around the same time period, and the threat of the return in 2018 of the mandatory budget cuts under sequestration looms large.

The Bipartisan Budget Acts of 2013 and 2015 mitigated the automatic spending caps for FY 2015 and FY 2016-however, the original sequestration cuts established by the Budget Control Act of 2011 will continue through 2021, continuing to place defense and national security spending at risk unless something changes.

Given this political and fiscal environment, going forward, Congress is faced with a few options concerning the Budget Control Act of 2011:

- * Congress can vote to repeal sequestration, lifting budget caps and returning to regular order in terms of budget and fiscal considerations;
- * members can come up with another budget deal and find a way to raise the caps; or
- * they can leave the caps in place.

Any option outlined includes the need to fund the government beyond April.

Final Report On Arlington National Cemetery

An uncomfortable truth about Arlington National Cemetery is that space is going to run out, whether protocol changes or not. Congress has new impetus to take action on this longtime debate after the release of a recent report.

The Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery (ACANC) produced its final report, including options available to extend the life of the cemetery "well into the future." This long-anticipated report, requested by Congress a year ago, marks the completion of the committee's analysis of the capacity situation, and sets the stage for policymakers to act.

The report includes analysis of the impact of almost 20 variations of land expansions, eligibility changes, burial procedures and more. These options were provided in prior interim reports but now come with substantive analysis of the likelihood of implementation, necessity of legislative action, and general timelines.

Options include, but are not limited to:

- * adopting the VA requirement for 24 month active duty service minimum;
- * restricting eligibility to retirement from the armed services at certain lengths of service;

- * changing eligibility only to those killed in action, active duty deaths, and recipients of qualifying awards;
- * expanding the grounds beyond current physical boundaries; and
- * establishing a new DoD national cemetery.

MOAA believes it is crucially important for decision makers to consider the interests and desires of the potential affected populations if and when policies change. Veterans who may be eligible for burial at ANC should have a voice in the process, and Congress has indicated a strong desire to prioritize their inputs.

We surveyed our members, and found participants overwhelmingly rejected the idea of restricting retirees, with the majority preferring expansion options as the initial course of action. In fact, most participants favored closing ANC to future burials before excluding retirees.

Top 10 Unmet Needs for Wounded Warriors

After a year of extensive roundtable discussions in 2016, a group of community leaders and experts identified 10 of the most prevailing issues facing wounded, ill, and injured troops (WII) over the next five years.

The roundtable discussions provided a forum to help MOAA and interested stakeholders work toward a common goal of improving the overall health and well-being of wounded warriors and their families.

- * Create a dedicated online forum for nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to provide updates and improvements to manage and maintain a robust, real-time National Resource Directory.
- * Collaboration between the VA and DoD regarding caregiver support, including seamless transition between VA and DOD programs designed to support family caregivers.
- * Expand long term care and support service capability within the DoD and VA health systems.
- * Establish a short- and long-term integrated federal and civilian health network of care coordination.

How Sequestration Affects Military Families

Sequestration is intended to save the federal government and the American people from increasing national debt. It slashes spending, indiscriminately. If it weren't for some temporary budgetary maneuvering a few years back, cuts could have been much worse than they are currently. Regardless, we are still facing the expiration of those budget maneuvers and the revival of sequestration cuts across the board. We don't know exactly how bad it might get, but we can tell you, this is the elephant sitting in the living rooms of military families who need childcare.

Last week in a Senate hearing, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel Dailey noted the need for child care to keep military spouses employed, and the high demand for it. Currently, child care is the "No. 1 resourced function within [Morale, Welfare and Recreation], United States Army by size and scope. And it's critical to our success and it's something we have to continue to invest in for the future," said Dailey.

The good news, in some cases, is that when families cannot access child care on the installation, they may have access to a child care subsidy for use at a private facility that meets the DoD's rigorous accreditation standards. However, those facilities may not be readily available.

Research shows how significantly families view childcare to their military family readiness.

Even with the precautions taken, such as the hiring freeze exemption for military child care providers, military support functions are highly intertwined, and some resources are finite.



JAYHAWK CHAPTER MOAA



A membership meeting will be held **Tuesday, 21 March 2017**,
at Lawrence Country Club.

Dinner cost is \$24.00/meal.

The Program: Our speaker will be District Court Judge Timothy P. McCarthy,
the District Court Judge in charge of the Veterans Treatment Court in Johnson County.
He will cover the Veterans Treatment Court Program he oversees.

Social Hour: 1800 hours **Dinner:** 1845 hours

The Menu: Rustic rolls with olive oil and Parmesan; Chef's choice on salad
Grilled chicken with olive tapenade and tomato chutney; ale whipped potatoes;
seasonal vegetables; Chef's choice on dessert

Send your reservation and check payable to Jayhawk Chapter MOAA
to arrive no later than **Wednesday, 15 March**, to:
CAPT Jim Cooper, 1115 Stone Meadows Drive, Lawrence, KS 66049

*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).

Chapter Dues (\$20.00), due 01 January 2017 \$_____

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

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 Jim Cooper, 1115 Stone Meadows Drive, Lawrence, KS 66049

MOAA WEBSITE: www.moaa.org
KANSAS COUNCIL WEBSITE: www.kansasmooa.net
JAYHAWK CHAPTER WEBSITE:
www.jayhawkmoaa.org

*If you can receive this by
e-mail, please let us know.
Printing and postage costs
the Chapter close to \$3 for
each copy we have to mail.*

Tentative 2017 Meeting Schedule:

Tuesday	21 March		
Tuesday	16 May	Tuesday	19 September
Tuesday	18 July	Tuesday	21 November

Kansas Council of Chapters Dates/Locations:

29 April	hosted by Wichita Chapter (w/NGAKS Conference)
12 August	hosted by Jayhawk Chapter in Lawrence
4 November	hosted by Flint Hills Chapter in Manhattan



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