



# 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. 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.

## January Program:

Our own Bernie Kish will be our speaker. His topic will be "The Haskell Indians: Kansas' Forgotten Legacy of Athletics Excellence."

**5-STAR CHAPTER - 2006**  
**4-STAR CHAPTER - 2005**  
**5-STAR CHAPTER - 2003/2004**

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**WEBSITE AWARD - 2004**  
**NEWSLETTER AWARD - 2003**

## President's Corner

by *Erv Hodges*



### Greetings, Jayhawk Chapter:

The installation of new officers of the Jayhawk Chapter will take place at the January meeting. I wish our new president, Mike Sullivan, and his board a most successful year. Mike has done a magnificent job with our programs this year and I am sure we can look forward to an exciting 2007.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the officers and board for their effort during the 2006 year. The only regret that I have is that we have been unsuccessful in obtaining new members, especially active duty officers in the regular, guard and reserve forces. I encourage all members to recruit new members for MOAA and the chapter whenever the opportunity appears. The chapter must have new members to ensure it remains one of the strong viable chapters in the Kansas Council.

Of special notice has been the service of our secretary, John Halladay and treasurer, Jim Cooper. They have both agreed to serve again and their experience will serve the chapter well.

Needless to say the strength of our chapter is the members and the immeasurable amount of service they give to our country and our community. It is almost beyond belief the number and types of service our members contribute. Please continue the good work.

Thank you for the opportunity to be your president in 2006.

*Erv Hodges*

### Volume XII Issue 1

1 January 2007

#### Staff:

President:  
LtCol Erv Hodges, USMC (Ret)  
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**\* Reservations should be sent  
to Jim Cooper by 13 January**



# JAYHAWK CHAPTER NEWS

## NEW OFFICERS FOR 2007:

- President - ADM (Ret) Michel Sullivan
- First Vice-President - COL (Ret) Bernie Kish
- Second Vice-President - Col (Ret) John Priddle
- Treasurer - CAPT (Ret) James Cooper
- Secretary - COL (Ret) John Halladay

## Board of Directors:

- Lt (Fmr) Tom Carmody (2006-2007)
- LTC (Ret) Dave Darwin (2006-2007)
- Lt (Fmr) Lee Gerhard (2006-2007)
- LtCol (Ret) Erv Hodges (2007-2008)
- Col (Ret) James McMurray (2007-2008)

## IT'S DUES TIME . . .

**YOUR CHAPTER DUES ARE PAYABLE THIS MONTH** – please send your check for \$20.00 to:  
 CAPT (Ret) Jim Cooper, 1115 Stone Meadows Drive, Lawrence, KS 66049-3961

## NEW MEMBER COL (RET) ROY CREEK

### WAS AMONG THREE CHOSEN TO SPEAK AT GLOBAL CONFERENCE IN NEW ORLEANS

It's been more than 60 years since World War II ended, but

three Lawrence veterans who survived that war say it is more important than ever to talk about what they remember of that tumultuous and historic era.



"I really feel like I have an obligation and a sense that if I have a story and someone wants to hear it, I should tell it," said Roy Creek, who parachuted into Normandy with the 82nd Airborne Division during the D-Day invasion.

That's why Creek participated in the International Conference on World War II at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans.

Also participating in the Nov. 16-19 conference were Virginia Visser, who was an Army nurse, and Jaroslaw "Jarek" Piekalkiewicz, who fought as a teenager with the Polish resistance after the Germans took over his native country.

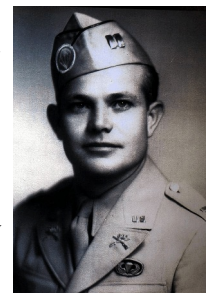
All three were invited to New Orleans by Marine Major Bill Howell, a museum volunteer who helped to organize the

conference which included more than 30 seminars and panel discussions. Dozens of other veterans also attended. Also scheduled to speak were Walter Cronkite, Madeleine Albright, George McGovern, Andy Rooney, Ken Burns and James Bradley.

Howell invited the Lawrence veterans because he remembered how well they were received when they spoke during the events surrounding the 2003 dedication of Kansas University's Dole Institute of Politics. Howell also helped organize those events.

"I know them; I know their stories," Howell said. "I know they will go well with the audience because when you hear them talk, it just captivates you. They lived it. They saw things firsthand. They just have great stories to tell."

The World War II conference initially was set for October 2005 but had to be canceled because of the damage caused by Hurricane Katrina. The museum suffered some damage from the storm and subsequent looting, Howell said. The biggest issue at the museum now is drawing more tourists, Howell said. The museum opened in 2000 as the National D-Day Museum. Congress then designated it as the nation's official World War II museum.



## OUR SALVATION ARMY BELL RINGERS

9 December 2006 - Checkers



Don & Darlene Sheriff



Tom Carmody & Jim Cooper



Jim McMurray & Buck Newsom



Ray & Jean Finch



John & Shirley Halladay



## Army News

### LTC Jeff Maxcy

#### Greetings Jayhawk Chapter!

We have completed the fall semester at KU and the Jayhawk Battalion has accomplished much.

This semester's major events have been the Fall FTX at Ft. Leavenworth; two teams competing at Ranger Challenge Competition at Camp Dodge, Iowa; Jayhawk Battalion Alumni Wall of Fame induction; Scabbard and Blade Honor Society Fall Induction and Fall Commissioning.

Since my last report, the Jayhawk Battalion's Ranger Challenge Team won a few awards at this year's competition. The team won 1<sup>st</sup> Place in Patrolling, 1<sup>st</sup> Place in Road March, and 4<sup>th</sup> Place Overall. An outstanding effort from our cadets!

In November, the Jayhawk Chapter of Scabbard and Blade Honor Society held its Annual Induction Ceremony. BG Davoren, KU Class of '76, was the guest speaker. Our dinner was held at the Spencer Research Library and eight new members were recognized for their academic and leadership accomplishments. One notable item for past alumni was this year's community service project. The battalion has made a

contribution to the historical archives of the Spencer Research Library of numerous historical documents and photos dating from 1921 to 1965. Spencer Research Library will preserve these items for us and can make them available to any who wish to research the history of KU ROTC.

Lastly, we have commissioned four new Lieutenants into the US Army. They are 2LT Amy Bronson, 2LT William Ryan, 2LT Michael Taylor, and 2LT David Overton. Additionally, 2LT Overton is commissioning as one of our eight Distinguished Military Graduates this year. They belong to an exceptional class and I hope you will join me in wishing them success in their future endeavors.

Check out our website at <http://www.armyrotc.ku.edu/> for more details on these events.

**JAYHAWKS LEAD THE WAY!**

LTC Jeff Maxcy



## Navy News

### CAPT Thomas Arnold, USN



#### Seasons Greetings from the Jayhawk Navy!

As the first semester of the 2006-07 academic year came to a close, we had the pleasure of commissioning three members of the Naval ROTC Battalion at KU. On the 16<sup>th</sup> of December, the following outstanding young men and women joined the officer corps of the U.S. Navy:

- \* Officer Candidate Meagan Vessels was commissioned an Ensign and will depart in February for Pilot training in Pensacola, Florida
- \* Officer Candidate Clinton Turner was commissioned an Ensign and will depart in April for Naval Flight Officer training in Pensacola, Florida
- \* Midshipman Matthew Mourning was commissioned an Ensign and will depart in January for duty as a Surface Warfare Officer on board USS GERMANTOWN (LSD 42) in San Diego, California

Please join me in wishing these new officers great success in their Navy careers!

This month we also had a change on the NROTC Unit staff. Sadly, we bade farewell to Ms. Barbara Hicks, who has served as the front office secretary for the past seven years.

Barb retired on December 15<sup>th</sup> after many years of dedicated service to the Navy, the University of Kansas and the Kansas State government. Barb provided exceptional service to the Unit, touching the lives of many midshipmen and staff members over the years. She will be sorely missed. Her replacement is already on board. Please join us in welcoming Ms. Amanda Reasoner to the staff. Amanda comes to us from a military family. Her father served as a Navy submariner and her brother is serving in the submarine service today. Amanda also did a tour of duty in the Army.

This coming semester will be the last for ten more of our midshipmen and officer candidates, who will be graduating and receiving their commissions in May 2007. I hope many of you will be able to join us for the Joint Service Commissioning Ceremony on May 21<sup>st</sup>.

I wish you all Happy Holidays and a safe and healthy New Year!

CAPT Tom Arnold



## Air Force News

### LtCol Sandra Leiker, USAF

#### Happy Holidays Jayhawk MOAA!

KU's "finals week" is over (again!) – have I actually been here for 3 semesters already? If so, you would think I'd be getting better at this!

There always seems to be something new going on. Maybe that just means that each term, a new set of cadets take leadership of the cadet wing and they put their own unique "spin" on LLAB (our affectionate term for the cadet leadership laboratory) - so it always feels "new and different". Actually, this is a really neat aspect of our AFROTC curriculum. The cadets have so much energy, and their heads are constantly full of ideas on how to improve their own training (i.e., make it more exciting and relevant) - that it would be a shame not to involve them in the development of each semester's LLAB plan. Of course, if they had it ALL their way, we would never sit still (i.e., there would be NO boring powerpoint briefings!) and we would be running all over campus in our BDUs practicing Airman's Manual procedures a lot more often.

But hey, we do have SOME fun in the name of ROTC training. For instance, the cadets recently traveled all the way to the far side of Kansas City, MO, to solve "group leadership problems" on the paintball course! Essentially, this involved pummeling each other with paintballs at close range - but - thanks to the pre-pummeling phase of "developing team strategy" and to the post-pummeling phase of "assessing how well our strategies worked" - we considered it BOTH effective leadership training AND an esprit de corps mission.

As usual, the cadets have been active on campus and in the community with the typical fall events you all are already familiar with ... the Joint Service Veteran's Day tribute and 24-hour candlelight vigil at KU's memorials was especially touching this year, as the cadets and midshipmen braved rain and freezing temperatures all night long to honor those that came before them. I found myself, as usual, in awe of their willingness to volunteer to be a part of these activities - our KU cadets and midshipmen clearly already understand the meaning of "Service before Self". The Navy midshipmen and Cadre did a fantastic job setting up our annual Joint Military

Ball (Nov 4th) - the setting was formal, the food was delicious, and I got to sit next to our guest speaker, Rear Admiral James Kelly, who was quite funny and delightful. I'm sure his speech, which focused on the eagerness of our young cadets/mids to serve their country in such hectic and changing times, touched the cadets/mids as well as their guests. As is our KU tradition, the graduating seniors were all recognized individually, including hometown, career field designation, and first assignment post, as they passed under an arch of sabers held aloft by their peers. Finally, to really end our semester, our December Commissioning ceremony was held on 19 Dec. Our friends at the Dole Institute of Politics, on West Campus, welcomed us in their beautiful facility (which I recommend everyone take the time to tour if you have not!) for this special occasion. Kirby M. Zimmerman and Lane C. Riddell became 2nd lieutenants in the company of many family members and friends. 2Lt Zimmerman, a weather officer, will be heading to training at Keesler AFB for 4 months before proceeding to her first base of assignment - Hickam AFB, HI. ( I know, wow!) 2Lt Riddell, (has he mentioned he wants to be a pilot?!) will be heading to the OPS Group at Whiteman AFB, where he will get "familiarized" with flying ops for several months before heading to his pilot training slot at Vance AFB, OK. We wish both of them, and their families, the best (although I know who I will be visiting first if it is a choice between Hawaii and Oklahoma!)

Up next - (thankfully no January IG inspection like last year!) - just the New Year and a new spring term ready to start! The cadet wing staff has already been planning and planning - so I know the corps is in excellent hands! Wishing all of you the best ...thanks so much for your continued support and we'll see you in 2007!

Respectfully,

*Lt Col Sandra S. Leiker*

## From the Council President...

By CWO3 David L. Kennedy, USMC (Ret.)



In 2002, when I became the president of the Sunflower Chapter, I referenced a quote by Sir Isaac Newton when I said ... "any success that I may achieve is due to the fact that I have stood on the shoulders of giants." That same quote is applicable today as I become the president of the Kansas Council of Chapters.

I got involved with MOAA – then TROA – in 1998 when we were just standing up the Sunflower Chapter. At that time, Colonel Hollis Logan was president of the Kansas Council of Chapters. He was followed by Captain Jim Henry, Major Frank Sisson, Major General Jack Strukel, Major Harry Malnicof, and, for this past year, Colonel Bob Hadley. Gentlemen, you are my giants.

Last year, Bob Hadley asked us to ACT. For the coming year, I am encouraging us to ASK.

**A** – Activities  
**S** – Services  
**K** – Kansas

I look at 'activities' as those things that you do within your chapter for your chapter membership. I then see 'services' as something that you would do for others who are outside of your chapter; i.e., JROTC / ROTC cadets, veterans, and the community itself.

As reflected in the results of the 2005 Chapter Excellence Awards program, Kansas is doing very well – four of six chapters received national recognition; the Wichita Chapter at the 4-Star level, and the Jayhawk, Santa Fe Trail, and Sunflower Chapters at the 5-Star level. Every quarter, I hear of the good things that our Kansas Chapters are doing – and I'm impressed with the variety and scope of the activities we accomplish. My request is that we not only continue these activities, but also look to see where we can make improvements. I know that there are only 12 months in the year, and so some chapters conduct 12 monthly meetings, some chapters take the hot summer months off and have only nine meetings, and some chapters only meet every other month for six meetings. This obviously limits not only what you can do, but also how much you can do. My request to you is to at least consider what else can be done to expand the variety and scope of your chapter activities.

In the same vein, what else can your chapter do to expand or enhance the services you provide outside of your chapter? I recently found a document on the MOAA website entitled "[Make an Impact in Your Community](#)", and I sent that document to all Council Board members. This document listed ten innovative community service projects, some of which our Chapters are already doing, but there are other projects listed that could be initiated. Conducting any of these projects also increases your Chapter's visibility in your local community. I know that the Santa Fe Trail Chapter provides volunteers to assist with the Ft. Leavenworth Days events, and the Sunflower Chapter provides volunteers for the Heart

of America Veterans Stand Down. Several chapters have scholarship programs in place to assist JROTC / ROTC cadets... and these are all good. But I'll also ask... what else can you do?

Lastly, in everything we do, let us bring positive recognition to the state of Kansas. Kansas is a good place for military veterans to retire. We have good weather, good living conditions, and thanks in large part to the efforts of the late Major General Clay Comfort of the Jayhawk Chapter, Kansas veterans do not pay state taxes on their military retirement pay. Are there other issues we could champion to enhance the image of Kansas?

Also, as a carry-over activity, we should continue our efforts to get a Kansas member on the MOAA Board of Directors. I do not know what strings to pull, or in whose ear to whisper, but let's continue the effort. In the end, it'll be worth it.

I mentioned above that I got involved with MOAA. When I look back over the past few years, I come to realize that I've been a little more than "involved." I'm reminded of an old joke about a pig and a hen arguing about which one brought the most value to breakfast. The hen bragged that she provided the eggs for breakfast, and what would breakfast be without eggs?

The pig conceded that yes, eggs were an important part of breakfast. But, he continued, you, the hen, just lay the eggs and then walk away. However, he, the pig, was literally sacrificed for breakfast. So, the hen was only involved in breakfast in a minor fashion, while the pig was committed to breakfast. I'd like to think that I've been "committed" to MOAA over these past few years, also, and that I will continue to be in the future.

My promise to you is to work hard to maintain the legacy that has been entrusted to me. I look forward to working with every one of you during the coming year to make that a reality. Thank you.

*Dave*

## MOAA LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

### MOAA Legislative Update for November 3, 2006:

Many members have inquired whether MOAA endorses their legislators or gives them "grades" as some other organizations do.

As a tax-exempt organization, MOAA can't support or oppose the election of any legislator or political party. We endorse issues, and only report legislators' support of those issues as reflected by their votes or their voluntarily signing on as cosponsors of MOAA-supported bills.

If you'd like to view your legislators' actions in these areas, visit MOAA's Web site, then enter your ZIP code and click "Go". You'll see how they voted on the FY2007 Defense Authorization Act -- the major piece of military legislation for the year. For most legislators, this was an easy "Yes" vote in wartime.

You can obtain more specific information on a legislator's effort to cosponsor MOAA-supported bills by clicking on the "bills" link under the legislator's photo. (NOTE: some committee and subcommittee leaders have a policy against cosponsoring bills that fall within their committee's area of responsibility.)

### MOAA Legislative Update for November 9, 2006:

#### Leadership changes are part of the democratic process.

They offer important opportunities for fresh sets of eyes to examine the problems and consider alternative options. But the national defense policy-setting process is bigger than any one person, and we expect the new secretary will be focused foremost on the present and future conduct of the war.

MOAA works on behalf of a strong national defense with whomever is in the position of Secretary of Defense, and, if confirmed, we look forward to working with Mr. Gates.

#### 2008 Military Pay Raise Projection: 3.0%

The newly released ECI data indicates the 2008 (yes, 2008) pay raise for active duty, National Guard, and Reserve members will be 3.0% - unless the Administration or Congress decide to propose a different raise.

#### **MOAA's Legislative Update for November 17, 2006:**

##### COLA Watch

This week, the Bureau of Labor Statistics announced the October 2006 monthly Consumer Price Index (CPI), which is the metric used to calculate the annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for military retired pay, VA disability compensation, survivor annuities, and Social Security.

The Consumer Price Index indicates a downward start to a first quarter of the fiscal year by dropping 0.7 percent below the year's COLA base. The bulk of the downward fluctuation has been due to a 7.3% drop in energy prices.

#### **MOAA's Legislative Update for November 22, 2006:**

##### This Month, SBP; Next Month, Concurrent Receipt

The November 16, 2006 Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission (VDBC) hearing considered one of MOAA's top priorities - repeal of the law that reduces military SBP annuities by the amount of survivor benefits payable from the VA.

Under current law, the surviving spouse of a retired member who dies of a service-connected cause is entitled to Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) from the VA. In the case of a military retiree enrolled in SBP, the surviving spouse's monthly SBP annuity is reduced by the amount of DIC - a little more than \$1,000 a month.

This offset also affects many survivors of members killed on active duty - including all active duty deaths since Sept. 11, 2001. Most active duty deaths occur among relatively junior servicemembers, whose survivors are eligible for only modest SBP payments. That means most survivors of members killed on active duty lose most or all of their SBP benefit.

Commission members didn't come to a consensus on the issue, so VDBC Chairman Terry Scott (LTG, USA-ret) tabled it, asking the commission staff to provide additional information. MOAA will provide the commissioners copies of our latest brochure on this topic (Undue Sacrifice) [http://moaaonline.org/ct/6dz\\_irK1dz7k/](http://moaaonline.org/ct/6dz_irK1dz7k/).

Finally, the Commission reported that three previously discussed issues are now undergoing legal and technical review: 1) line of duty; 2) character of discharge; and 3) concurrent receipt. The Commission stated these issue papers are expected to be released in December and stakeholders, including MOAA and other military associations, will be allowed to provide comments in January.

##### DoD/VA Casualty Assistance Update

On November 17, DoD and the VA hosted military and association representatives (including MOAA's Auxiliary Advisory Committee representative Jennifer McCollum and Deputy Director for Government Relations CDR Rene

Campos, USN (Ret) for an update on casualty assistance and survivor outreach efforts.

The VA highlighted its issuance of a new pamphlet, "Benefits and Services for Survivors of Servicemembers Who Die on Active Duty".

On the military side, DoD has been working to upgrade procedures for transporting servicemember remains, including providing an Honor Guard detail upon arrival at the destination.

Additionally, DoD has been working to standardize all service casualty assistance programs, developing checklists and a survivor survey that will eventually provide performance standards and evaluations. Current service programs vary in support and service levels provided to surviving family members. For instance, only the Air Force provides a full-time person to assist with benefits. The Marines give each family a print-out of government survivor benefits as a planning tool for making financial decisions, while Army spouses must specifically request the print-out.

DoD is finalizing a survivor notebook to help survivors organize the large amount of information they receive over time. The notebook (which will be updated semi-annually) will be in use by all services beginning January 1.

DoD and the VA also will provide long term-support services and counseling for surviving family members via Military OneSource and Vet Center programs.

##### Happy Thanksgiving

As we take time to count our collective blessings, let's make sure to give thanks for the dedication of thousands of servicemembers who won't be with their families on this holiday because they are guarding our country's interests around the globe.

#### **MOAA's Legislative Update for December 1, 2006:**

##### Education Conference Cites Military Family Needs

On November 27-29, Deputy Director for Government Relations CDR Rene Campos, USN (Ret) represented MOAA at the Education for Military-Connected Communities Conference in Atlanta, GA. Base commanders, local leaders, family support representatives, parents, and others representing 18 installations affected by upcoming unit moves attended to strategize ways to help schools at gaining and losing installations meet the needs associated with mass relocations of military children.

In a recent report to Congress, the military services projected that roughly 66,000 students will be affected by restructuring of U.S. forces overseas and base realignment and closures (BRAC) over the next four years. That's a big deal for the Defense Department, since military parents say their children's education is a top quality of life issue.

Unlike previous BRAC rounds that focused more on base closures, this round involves significant force realignments and installation expansion. The Pentagon sees this as an opportunity to address military children's needs for quality education in military and civilian communities.

Participants attended breakout sessions to identify installation-specific successes and challenges. Recurring issues included:

- \* Adequacy/accuracy of information on relocation timing and numbers of personnel and families affected

- \* Construction demands and limitations (labor force, material, timing)
- \* Availability and condition of housing and school facilities
- \* Competition for funding
- \* Supply of quality teachers and counselors
- \* Adequacy of housing and housing allowances
- \* Reciprocity and consistency in state teacher certification, graduation and in-state tuition requirements

MOAA is partnering with the Defense Department to assist with its transition efforts. MOAA and The Military Coalition will continue to emphasize that support services and infrastructure must be sustained for families at losing installations and must be in place at gaining installations before the scheduled influx of families.

#### **MOAA's Legislative Update for December 8, 2006:**

##### MOAA, Coalition Meet with TRICARE Leader

On Wednesday, leaders from MOAA and other military associations met with Major General Elder Granger, USA, TRICARE's Deputy Director and Program Executive Officer. General Granger expressed his intent to establish a quarterly meeting with association representatives to ensure direct feedback for leadership, as well as an opportunity to inform associations of TRICARE's efforts to support beneficiaries.

Updates from the discussion included:

- \* Planned expansion of the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program to overseas locations, starting in 2008.
- \* Implementation of updated coverage for TRICARE For Life beneficiaries whose doctors have opted out of Medicare. (In general, TFL will pay the second-payer amount, as if the doctor accepted Medicare. In certain cases in rural or remote areas where access to medical care is limited, TFL will act as first payer.)
- \* An expression of appreciation to the associations for helping to publicize the advantages of the TRICARE mail-order pharmacy.
- \* Plans and progress for special disease management programs to assist beneficiaries with asthma or congestive heart failure.
- \* Plans for a special task force to examine needs for patients with autism.
- \* Ongoing outreach efforts to encourage more providers to accept new TRICARE Standard patients.

##### GI Bill Partnership Gears Up

The Partnership for Veterans Education - a consortium of military and veterans' service organizations and the higher education organizations - is pushing the 110th Congress to create a "total force" Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB).

Active duty MGIB benefits have increased 65% since the late 90s, but reserve benefits have not kept pace. And unlike active duty members, Guard/Reserve personnel can't use their MGIB after leaving service - even though frequent mobilizations prevent many from using their earned benefits while serving.

MOAA President VADM Norb Ryan, Jr., USN (Ret) testified for the Partnership in late September. He told Congress a total force approach is needed to help recruiting, and should match benefits to service performed plus allow all veterans equal access to earned benefits. The Partnership proposal would:

- \* Combine active duty and reserve programs under the same law, to ensure they are adjusted in tandem
- \* Scale benefits to the length and type of duty performed
- \* Restore Reserve benefits to about half the active duty level (since first enacted the Reserve benefit has dropped to only 29% of the active duty level)
- \* Authorize Guard and Reserve members the same 10 years of post-service eligibility available to active duty separatees

Additional information on the "total force MGIB" is available on the MOAA website at

[http://moaaonline.org/ct/Mdz\\_irK1Xmmx/](http://moaaonline.org/ct/Mdz_irK1Xmmx/)

#### **MOAA's Legislative Update for December 15, 2006:**

##### Army Wants More Troops

Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker laid his cards on the table during his December 14 testimony before the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves.

He said what MOAA and The Military Coalition have been saying since before 9/11 - that the Army isn't big enough to execute the vast missions being imposed on it. In all the years we've been pushing Congress to increase the size of our forces, the official Administration position has been that the Army doesn't need to get any bigger. But Congress shared our view - plussing up Army manpower 30,000 above the Administration's budget proposal for the last two years.

Now, faced with continuing deployments of troops, who already have been in combat more than they've been home for years on end, Army leaders are speaking out.

Gen. Schoomaker told the Commission that the temporary 30,000 manpower increase needs to be made permanent, and that the Army needs to continue to grow by an additional 7,000 a year. He also told the Commission that the Army needs some rule changes to be able to call up more Guard and Reserve units to augment active duty formations.

"The Army is incapable of generating and sustaining the required forces to wage the global war on terror...without active, Guard and reserve [components] surging together," he stated bluntly.

Only 90,000 out of 522,000 Army National Guard and Reserve members are still available to be called up under Defense Department rules that limit call-ups to two cumulative years of active duty. Gen. Schoomaker wants to change the rule to allow call-ups for two continuous years.

Guard and Reserve leaders have indicated a willingness to look at some rule adjustments, but worry that broad use of two-year call-ups could break the Guard and Reserve forces.

They note that such extended assignments away from families and civilian employers would further heighten already significant risks for recruiting and retention.

Unfortunately, there aren't going to be any easy answers to this extraordinarily difficult situation.

##### 109th Congress Got Busy on Final Day

Last week, Congress scrambled to pass a slew of important items during its final hours in session. Unfortunately, those didn't include the 11 overdue appropriations bills for FY2007, which began on Oct. 1.

MOAA hoped Congress would pass the Military Construction/VA spending measure, which funds the VA

medical system. To keep the VA and other government agencies running into the new year, Congress passed a continuing resolution funding government agencies at House-passed, Senate-passed or 2006 funding levels, whichever is the lowest.

That continuing resolution will expire on February 15, which means next year's Congress will have to act before then to keep the government running. Rumors around Capitol Hill are that the new Congress will simply extend the continuing resolution for the rest of FY2007 so leaders can focus on crafting appropriations for FY2008.

This doesn't affect the Defense Department, since the FY2007 Defense Appropriations Act was one of the two appropriations bills the Congress actually finished. Although that can't be said about VA appropriations, the continuing resolution will let the VA reallocate up to \$684 million to fund VA health care needs for the next couple of months. While this provides some interim relief, MOAA is concerned about the VA's ability to provide quality medical care at 2007 prices with a 2006 budget.

Along with the continuing resolution, Congress also approved legislation to:

- \* Avoid the January 2007 5.1% cut in Medicare and TRI-CARE payments to doctors by freezing 2007 rates at 2006 levels
- \* Avoid imposing a \$1,740 annual cap on Medicare payments for outpatient speech and physical therapy that had been scheduled to take effect in January
- \* Ban protests at military funerals at any funeral site
- \* Authorize the Federal Communications Commission to work with the Pentagon to reduce phone rates for deployed troops
- \* Delay any action on a 2007 congressional pay raise at least until February 16

#### Omnibus Veterans' Bill Passes

MOAA is pleased that the outgoing Chairmen of the Senate and House Veterans Affairs Committees, Senator Larry Craig (R-ID) and Rep. Steve Buyer (R-IN), won passage of a wide-ranging veterans' benefits bill during the waning hours of the 109th Congress.

The Veterans' Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act (S. 3421) includes \$65 million to increase the number of clinicians treating post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and improve DoD/VA collaboration on PTSD care. This has been a priority for MOAA and The Military Coalition.

The legislation also:

- \* Authorizes \$600 million to repair/replace Gulf Coast VA facilities damaged by Hurricane Katrina and fund 22 other major construction projects
- \* Provides \$2 million for blind rehabilitation specialists and increases the number of specialty facilities for their treatment
- \* Allows families to begin receiving VA education benefits before the service member's discharge for a total and permanent disability
- \* Permits attorneys to represent veterans' claims after an initial rejection of a claim
- \* Requires the VA to notify veterans of any theft/misuse of personal information, and to provide credit monitoring

services and identity theft insurance in the event of a data theft/compromise

- \* Authorizes six Parkinson's Diseases research, education and clinical centers and two Multiple Sclerosis centers
- \* Strengthens support for homeless veterans

S.3421 now goes to the President for action and he is expected to sign it.

#### **MOAA's Legislative Update for December 22, 2006:**

##### Medicare Sticker Shock

Medicare Part B premiums will be means-tested in 2007, thanks to a delayed-action provision of the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 (MMA). Starting next month, higher-income seniors will pay a higher share of their Medicare premium cost. Singles with adjusted gross incomes (AGI) of at least \$80,000, and married couples with an AGI of at least \$160,000 are affected. AGI generally includes all wages, pensions, Social Security benefits, capital gains, and interest income before deductions are taken. Income levels are determined by a review of the past several years of tax returns filed with the Internal Revenue Service. Those affected already should have received written notification from the Social Security Administration stating the amount of their new premiums. If you receive Social Security benefits, new rates are sent each year with the December cost-of-living adjustment notice.

In the past, Part B premiums have been set at 25% of the government's cost of providing coverage, with the government paying the other 75 percent. Starting in 2007 that 75% subsidy will be cut to 65 percent or less for wealthier seniors, with further reductions being phased in over the next three years. By 2009, wealthier seniors will pay anywhere from 35% to 80% of the cost of Medicare Part B coverage, depending on their income:

- \* 35% for individuals with incomes of \$80,000 or more (\$160,000 or more for a married couple);
- \* 50% for those with incomes of \$100,000 (\$200,000 for a couple);
- \* 65% for those with incomes of \$150,000 (\$300,000 for a couple); and
- \* 80% for those with incomes above of \$200,000 (\$400,000 for a couple).

These annual income thresholds will be increased for inflation each year. Please visit our Web site ([http://moaaonline.org/ct/qdz\\_irK1vmju/](http://moaaonline.org/ct/qdz_irK1vmju/)) for a chart which shows the monthly rates for Part B premiums in 2007.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** If your income has recently changed due to death or divorce, sale of a house, loss or reduction of wages, or something similar, you can appeal your increased part B premium. Visit the Social Security website ([http://moaaonline.org/ct/q7z\\_irK1vmjj/](http://moaaonline.org/ct/q7z_irK1vmjj/)) for information on how to file an appeal.

MOAA did not support the Part B means-testing provision when it was enacted several years ago. However, since only about 4 percent of the Medicare-eligible population is affected by the relatively high income threshold, and since much larger seniors' organizations like AARP didn't oppose it, we were unable to argue from a position of strength.





# JAYHAWK CHAPTER MOAA



A membership meeting will be held **Tuesday, 16 January 2007**, at the Lawrence Country Club. Dinner cost is **\$20.00** per meal.

**The Program:** Our own Bernie Kish will speak on “The Haskell Indians: Kansas' Forgotten Legacy of Athletics Excellence.”

**Social Hour:** 1800 hours

**Dinner:** 1900 hours

**The Menu:** *Chicken, baked potato, vegetable, rolls, salad, tea or coffee and ice cream*

Send your reservation and check payable to **Jayhawk Chapter MOAA** to arrive no later than **13 January 2007**, to:  
CAPT (Ret) Jim Cooper - 1115 Stone Meadows Drive, Lawrence, KS 66049-3961

If you have any questions, you may contact Jim at 842-7037 or Erv Hodges at 841-2889.

*cut here*

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

The cost is \$20.00 per meal. I am enclosing a check for \$\_\_\_\_\_ for meal(s).

**Annual Jayhawk MOAA Chapter dues (\$20.00)** \$\_\_\_\_\_

MG Clay Comfort Scholarship program contribution \$\_\_\_\_\_  
(Checks made out to “KU Endowment”)

TOTAL: \$\_\_\_\_\_

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

**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.**

**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](http://www.moaa.org)  
JAYHAWK CHAPTER WEBSITE: [www.jayhawkmoaa.org](http://www.jayhawkmoaa.org)

Thanks very much to those of you who continue to respond to our requests for members to receive the newsletter by e-mail – we're up to nearly one-third of those who have e-mail. If you want to be added to the e-mail list, please let us know at [jwhalladay@sunflower.com](mailto:jwhalladay@sunflower.com).

**2007 Jayhawk MOAA Calendar:**

Tuesday	16 January	MOAA meeting	Tuesday	17 July	MOAA meeting
Tuesday	20 March	MOAA meeting	Tuesday	18 September	MOAA meeting
Tuesday	15 May	MOAA meeting	Tuesday	20 November	MOAA meeting

***IF YOU NEED A RIDE TO MEETINGS,  
PLEASE LET US KNOW  
ON YOUR RESERVATION FORM***



*Newsletter Editor  
Jayhawk Chapter, MOAA  
2403 Manchester Road  
Lawrence, KS 66049-1646*

***FIRST CLASS MAIL***

***Happy New Year  
from your  
Editorial Staff***