



Jayhawk Chapter MOAA Newsletter



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March Program:

BGen. Paul G. Cohen, USAF (Ret.) MOAA Board of Directors, will speak on new Congressional makeup, committee chairs/membership, current MOAA legislative issues, "Stormin' the Hill" event. Q and A period will follow.

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

WEBSITE AWARD - 2004
NEWSLETTER AWARD - 2003

As I see it...



As I said at our January meeting I believe we all owe a great deal of thanks to Erv Hodges for his leadership and friendship as our President this past year. There is no question that it was a very good year for the Chapter. That was due in large part to our President. For all of us, thank you, Erv.

This column has long been known as the "President's Corner" and I hope you don't mind my calling it something different during my watch. Quite frankly I don't view myself as being in any kind of corner. Rather I feel like I'm in a place of good friends with common interests who all share a patriotic fellowship cemented with a bond of service. With that in mind, I'll use this forum to share some of my views on things and encourage you to share yours as well. As a Commanding Officer in a previous life I had the pleasure to write a monthly column for my employees and I called it "As I See it...". It worked for me then and with your indulgence I think it can again.

We have a very active and dedicated Chapter and I know we all have an interest in keeping it as such. As I see it that means we all need to be recruiters. That is not someone else's responsibility. It's mine. It's yours. It's each of ours. We should relish nothing more than the prospect of announcing and welcoming new members at each and every one of our meetings this coming year. To help in this, National MOAA in 2007 is again offering monetary recruiting incentives to chapters - \$10 for each new member and a \$100 additional bonus for any chapter that can recruit a total of ten new members in a year. This is a win-win for everyone. We can use the money to underwrite endeavors such as our Comfort Scholarship Fund while at the same time we grow. So let's set a goal. Between now and the end of this year let's sign up at least ten new members.

I'm sure we'll hear more about national recruitment from our March program speaker, retired BG Paul Cohen, USAFR, who is on MOAA's National Board of Directors. Paul has served on several of MOAA's national committees and he lives in Omaha where he is the Administrator of the Omaha Douglas Public Building Commission. Speaking of programs, our 1st Vice President, Dr. Bernie Kish, will be working hard with our Chapter Board to bring us the very best in programs and speakers this year. Like last year that may require us to be flexible in scheduling meetings. If you have any suggestions with regard to speakers, please let us know.

I look forward to this year. Please contact me if there's anything I can do for you. See you all in March.

Mike Sullivan

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1 March 2007

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*** Reservations should be sent to Jim Cooper by 17 March**



JAYHAWK CHAPTER NEWS

IT'S DUES TIME . . .

YOUR CHAPTER DUES WERE PAYABLE IN JANUARY . . .

**if your mailing label still shows "06", please send your check for \$20.00 to:
CAPT (Ret) Jim Cooper, 1115 Stone Meadows Drive, Lawrence, KS 66049-3961**

DIRECTORY PHOTOGRAPHS:

There are a number of members for whom we do not have pictures in the Directory. Since a new Directory will be published in two (2) months, please take this opportunity to look at the 2006 Directory. If your picture is not there, or if you DO NOT like the picture there, please send us a replacement (we will scan it into the computer and return the original to you) or get together with John Halladay at the March 20th meeting so he can take a new picture. If you are a new member, PLEASE send us a picture or make it a point to see John at the March meeting. We'll even come to your house, if that's what it takes!!

CHAPTER NEWS

Jerry and SanDee Nossaman spent a week at the Navy Lodge on Coronado Island, San Diego, in early February and highly recommend it. Great facility at a good rate. Right on the beach, just down from the Hotel Del Coronado. The NAS personnel were most helpful and friendly.

About one of our new members, **Albert (Deck) Decker:**

I went to high school here and went on to KU and to KU medical school in 1941-44 before leaving for the Navy at the end of WWII and back for the Korean conflict. I did internal medicine in KCMO for several years but then spent five years as an internist at the Kennedy Space Center before returning to private practice in Melbourne FL (near Patrick AFB--famed once as the Banana River Naval Air Station!!).

From **Bill Radtke:** Joyce came home from St Lukes Hospital on the 13th of February. She had Open Heart Surgery. Joyce had two heart valves repaired/replaced and an aneurism repaired.

She has made remarkable progress for all that she has been through. She continues to improve each day with home health care, and has a strong determination for a full recovery. Thanks for all of your prayers and concern.

John and Shirley Halladay returned three weeks ago from a month in the southern part of the U.S., where it was supposed to be warm enough to play golf. Our first week in The Rio Grande Valley of Texas, the temperature was a "balmy" 37 degrees. The second week it warmed all the way up to the mid-40s and rained all week. Needless to say, not good golf weather!

Effective 1 February, John became the Region Director for Army MARS (Military Affiliate Radio System) in charge of Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska. From Texas we went to the MARS Headquarters at Ft. Huachuca, Arizona, to meet the new Army MARS Chief and get lined out on the new position. While there, we went to Globe (east of Phoenix) to visit John's sister. The only warm day was our last day there; however, church and family activities superceded golf.

On our way back, Tinker AFB at Oklahoma City was our warmest day of the trip (72 degrees) and then we got home . . . brrrrrrrrr!!!

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**REMINDER:** Please check the Jayhawk Chapter Directory for any corrections to your listing and contact John or Shirley Halladay at 843-6184 or [jwhalladay@sunflower.com](mailto:jwhalladay@sunflower.com)

**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.**



## Army News

### LTC Jeff Maxcy

#### Greetings Jayhawk Chapter!

The spring semester has begun for the Jayhawk Battalion. We are intently preparing the juniors for attending Leadership Development and Assessment Course (LDAC) this summer at Fort Lewis, Washington.

On Feb 23, 2007, the Jayhawk Battalion conducted its bi-annual Dining In to promote Esprit de Corps. The event was very successfully.

Rapidly approaching us is our Spring FTX in April. This year, the Jayhawk Battalion is hosting a combined Kansas FTX that will see 220 cadets from Kansas State University, Pittsburg State University, and University of Kansas all working on their fieldcraft together at Fort Leavenworth, KS. This is the first all-Kansas FTX to be held in recent times and we are hoping for it becoming an annual event. Activities currently projected include day and night land navigation, squad situational training exercise (STX), and M-16 rifle qualification.

Another event that is significant is this year's National Scabbard and Blade Convention to be held on 23-25 March. With three of our KU cadets on the national staff, this event will be held in Kansas City, MO. Additionally, we are looking forward to our cadets participating in this year's Ranger Buddy Competition being hosted by Wentworth Military Academy in Missouri.

It looks like the semester will be quite busy for the Jayhawk Battalion. I look forward to reporting on our cadets accomplishments in the future.

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



#### Winter Greetings from the Jayhawk Navy!

The Naval ROTC Battalion at KU recently held its Winter Awards Ceremony and was very proud to acknowledge five College Program midshipmen who recently earned three year Navy or USMC scholarships – MIDN Darren Elder, MIDN Matthew Phillips, MIDN Josh Thomas, MIDN Andrew Fox and MIDN Craig Roper. Additionally, USAA recognized two of our students as being among the top NROTC Battalion members in the nation, awarding scholarship checks to MIDN Paul Garcia and SGT Buck Bradley. Our Spring Awards Ceremony, the largest of the year, is scheduled for May 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6:30PM at the Dole Institute. I cordially invite MOAA members to attend and see many other deserving midshipmen receive awards for their outstanding academic, leadership and professional performance. I also hope that many of you will be able to join us for the Joint Service Commissioning Ceremony at KU on May 21<sup>st</sup>.

On a less positive note, I recently attended a Professor of Naval Science Conference in Pensacola, Florida where we were briefed by BGen Tryon and RDML Kilkenny, Commanders of USMC and Navy Recruiting Commands, respectively. Their message was discouraging. According to their presentations, 72% of American youth aged 17 to 24 are ineligible for military service due to various disqualifying

factors, including physical and medical reasons, drug/alcohol abuse, and legal records. Of the remaining 28% that form the available recruiting pool, there has been a recent marked decline in the propensity to serve, with 14% or less of the pool now indicating any interest in doing so. Of equal concern is a troubling decline in the likelihood of so-called "influencers" (parents, grandparents, teachers, coaches, etc.) to recommend military service to young men and women. As the All-Volunteer Force continues to seek high quality recruits and, in the case of the Army and Marine Corps, to increase end strength, we face a crisis in recruiting. This is a challenge not just for the military Services, but also for the nation. I would encourage each of you to use your positions as influencers to encourage young men and women to consider service to their country in the U.S. military as an option and, for those who might be interested in becoming officers, that they consider the great opportunity provided by the Naval, Army and Air Force ROTC programs at outstanding schools like the University of Kansas.

**Thanks for your support!**

*CAPT Tom Arnold*



## Air Force News

### LtCol Sandra Leiker, USAF

**Good tidings to you MOAA, but I must have you know . . .** that this is it! Enough is enough! I've always been fond of the Midwest, but if this keeps up, I am SERIOUSLY turning in my "Commander's" hat and looking for a job handing out pool towels at a resort in Sedona. I will give this COLD and ICE about one more day . . .

Aaaah, well, at least the old radiator in my office in KU's Military Science Bldg knows how to churn out the BTUs . . . and once it gets going there is no "turning it off" – REALLY(!) – just ask some of my cadets who have recently been put "in the hot seat" for no greater offense than scheduling an appointment with me on an afternoon I left the radiator cooking! And I'm not supposed to make 'em sweat unless they are in "real" trouble. ;-)-

It's okay, though, as the groundhog predicted an early Spring, right? And we have plenty going on at Det 280 to keep our minds off the cold. As I type this, our cadet drill team is competing at the Annual Mardi Gras Drill Competition hosted by Tulane University (it's good to see this event back on its feet post-Katrina). We sent nine of our finest who have been practicing and perfecting their routine for months – I'm afraid to call down there to see how they did – I don't want to jinx them. The Navy midshipmen have a really super Mardi Gras Drill Comp. trophy in their display case, by the way, and I notice it every time I walk down the hall (yes, it is bedecked with beads) – so it'd be nice to bring home another reminder of KU ROTC excellence! Well, in fact we have, at that! During the first weekend of February, our cadet basketball team competed in the annual Notre Dame BB Tournament and brought back a Division Championship trophy! Way to go, team! Capt Edmonds (who drove them up to South Bend and froze his ears off!) got to play in a smaller, faculty 3-on-3 tourney while there – his team, sadly, did not do quite as well. Well, there was no time for practice or strategy – he just got "thrown in" with a couple of other cadre members – so it was to be expected. Besides, as a former professional indoor football player (did I ever mention that?) he's not really the "competitive" type anyway, and doesn't mind losing. Ha ha ha! Ha! Ha! – oh, he's such a great sport – and seriously fit(!) – we can't help but tease him a little!

We have a few more exciting trips coming up . . . this week (Feb 21-25) the US Air Force Academy is hosting its 14th Annual National Character and Leadership Symposium. They bring in numerous motivational/inspirational leaders, including pro sports coaches and Fortune 500 CEOs, to speak to the cadets and to college students from all over the country. Each year, several of our cadets are invited to attend (free!) – they get to sleep on cots in the dorms with the Academy cadets, so it's really a great experience. Of course, they have to get there, somehow, so I am driving the van out! It is possible none of us yet realize what we have gotten ourselves into – nine hours on the road in a van with me driving? If they even try to tune the radio to hip-hop I'm breaking out the showtune CDs (or leaving somebody by the side of the road?!)

Finally, we are just about done with the planning stages for a tri-university bus trip to Salt Lake City, UT, for 30 cadets to attend the Arnold Air Society (AAS) National Convention (AAS is our cadet honor/service "fraternity") – wait for it . . . this is a combined KU, KSU, MU cadet trip! This might "heat up" the Midwest if all else fails, huh? I'm not sure the likes of it have EVER been seen! We'll definitely let you know how that one turns out – if you don't read about it in the papers first!

Well, I think that's all I've got before I take off for the southwest, never to be heard from again . . . oh wait! One last "finally", really, I can't leave you without congratulating two of our cadets by name, Cadet Brittany Ramos (AS200) and Cadet Jacob Breth (AS100), who were both just awarded Commander's Leadership Scholarships for their superior performance in ROTC so far. Both have received top grades in their degree programs, and have shown incredible attitude and initiative in the ROTC program . . . well done! Aaah, I love this job!

Okay, maybe I'll give the weather just a FEW more days, just a few mind you . . .

Thanks MOAA and take care of yourselves . . .

*Lt Col Sandra S. Leiker*

## MOAA LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

### MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for January 5, 2007:

#### 110th Congress: The First Day Outlook

As the new House and Senate convened this week, Sen. Harry Reid (D-NV) became Senate Majority Leader and Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) was elected as the first female Speaker of the House. We're heartened that both of these leaders have been

outspoken advocates for many of MOAA's and The Military Coalition's top legislative issues -- full concurrent receipt, Survivor Benefit Plan improvements, full funding for VA health care, and more.

Some may think the needed improvements are "done deals" with these supporters in charge of Congress. Unfortunately, real life isn't that simple.

First of all, we've had many supporters on the Republican side as well, and all those things didn't get done when the Republicans were in charge of the Hill, though we did make some progress.

Second, while Administration opposition won't influence the new congressional leaders as much as it did on their Republican predecessors, the President may now be more likely to veto legislation initiated by a Democrat-controlled Congress.

Most important, the new congressional leaders also pledged to be "more fiscally responsible" than their predecessors, which means they intend to set relative priorities and ensure any new programs are paid for. That's where the rubber hits the road, because it means any new programs will have to be funded either through additional taxes, through cuts in other programs, or through cuts in pork projects. Each of those choices has plenty of built-in, bi-partisan political opposition.

So while we believe the new congressional leadership is sincere in its support for many of the issues we care most about, this is no pie-in-the-sky Congress. Major improvements cost money, and we'll have to continue to prove the merits of our case.

So as we work with our House and Senate sponsors to reintroduce bills on our key issues in the new Congress, we'll need to temper our optimism with realistic priorities, and remember that when we've won substantial progress in the past, it almost always has come in budget-limited increments.

#### Mail-Order Pharmacy Wants Your Feedback

This week, MOAA's CDR John Class, USN (Ret) and COL Ana Smythe, USMC (Ret) received an encouraging update from Express Scripts, Inc. (ESI), the contractor for the TRICARE mail-order pharmacy (TMOP) program.

According to ESI, 96% of mail-order prescriptions were shipped in less than 2 days and 100% in less than 4 days. Even more important, the most recent government survey showed that customer satisfaction is rising along with TMOP's prescription volume.

In November, ESI processed a record 753,000 prescriptions, including almost 3,000 from deployed servicemembers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Unfortunately, only a few Army bases have signed up for this service. MOAA is hopeful this option will extend to other bases and Services in the near future.

Recently, TMOP added a survey tool to its website, allowing beneficiaries to provide direct feedback, and response to that feedback has improved beneficiary satisfaction. MOAA has made some additional suggestions, and ESI is addressing them.

ESI leaders say they're determined to find and fix any areas that need improvement, and urge TMOP users to help by highlighting any service problems they've experienced. They can't do that without customers' help. If you're a mail-order pharmacy user and registered with their website, we hope you'll use the survey tool at

[http://moaonline.org/ct/71z\\_irK17RmG/](http://moaonline.org/ct/71z_irK17RmG/) to provide feedback - positive or negative - about your TMOP experience.

#### **MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for January 12, 2007:**

##### DoD Announces Call-up Changes/End Strength Increase

Departing from a policy in effect since shortly after Sept. 11, 2001, DoD now will call up Army Guard and Reserve units involuntarily for no more than 12 months at a time.

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates announced the change at a Congressional hearing. Under the new rules:

- \* Reserve component ground forces will be managed on a "unit basis instead of an individual basis"
- \* Units will be involuntarily mobilized for a maximum of one year "at any one time"
- \* For planning purposes, the call-up cycle will remain one year mobilized followed by five years demobilized
- \* New cash incentives are being developed to compensate active and reserve component individuals who must mobilize or deploy early or extend beyond the established rotation policy goal

##### Veterans Issues

S. 22 - Sen. Jim Webb (D-VA): Would establish WWII style GI Bill paying the full cost of college tuition plus a \$1,000/month stipend for personal expenses for members who serve after September 11, 2001.

H.R. 92 - Rep. Ginny Brown-Waite (R-FL): Would establish a 30-day access standard for veterans seeking health care from the VA and would allow referral to civilian care in cases where the standard is not met. It also would require the VA to annually report its performance in meeting those access standards.

S. 225 - Sen. Larry Craig (R-ID): Would expand retroactive payments of traumatic injury insurance to servicemembers injured outside a combat area between Oct. 10, 2001 and Dec. 1, 2005. Currently, members injured during that time period are only eligible if their injury occurred in a combat zone, and members injured after Dec. 1, 2005 are covered regardless of where their injury occurred.

#### **MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for January 19, 2007:**

##### "Military Retirees Health Care Protection Act" Introduced

Taking up the cudgel where they left off last year, TRICARE champions Rep. Chet Edwards (D-TX) and Walter Jones (R-NC) today reintroduced their "Military Retirees Health Care Protection Act" (H.R. 579).

The new bill is virtually identical to the one (H.R. 4949) they introduced last year, which gathered 164 cosponsors and helped prevent imposition of Pentagon-proposed TRICARE fee increases of up to \$1,000 a year for retired members, family members and survivors under age 65.

#### **MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for January 26, 2007:**

##### Severely Injured Center Shutdown?

MOAA has received information from various sources about upcoming cuts in support for the severely injured. The issue became more heated this week when an Army Times article headlined "Sources say case workers for wounded laid off"

grabbed the attention of the military community and some on Capitol Hill.

MOAA's further discussions with Army and DoD officials indicate that the stories of layoffs are true, but there's considerably more to the story beyond the headline.

#### Disabled Retiree "Back Tax" Bill Renewed

Sen. Lincoln received bipartisan support on her bill, with 11 senators joining as original cosponsors.

House champion Rep. Sam Farr (D-CA) is expected to re-introduce a similar measure soon, according to his staff. The Farr bill would authorize a 15-year look-back exception to IRS rules for amended returns from disabled military retirees.

#### **MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for February 2, 2007:**

##### Funding Bill Leaves Big Gaps

Faced with a Feb. 15 federal shutdown absent additional legislation to fund the government for the remainder of the fiscal year, the House approved its version of the FY2007 continuing resolution (H.J. Res. 20) this week. Now it's the Senate's turn.

The resolution included some very good news for the VA - plussing up that agency's funding by \$3.6 billion, which should be enough to meet projected needs for VA health care and other programs. But it fell short of providing what's needed in other important areas.

Military health care: Provides an additional \$1.2 billion over 2006 funding levels - but that's still almost a billion dollars short of the \$2.1 billion the Pentagon says it needs to continue current programs.

##### New Concurrent Receipt Bill, And More

This week, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) introduced legislation (S. 439) to expand eligibility for concurrent retirement and disability payments (CRDP). His measure is the companion bill to Rep. Gus Bilirakis' H.R. 303 in the House. Both bills would authorize immediate concurrent receipt for all retirees with at least 20 years of service who have disability ratings from the VA.

Sen. Reid's bill was among many introduced in the last couple of weeks that affect the military community:

##### Retiree

\* H.R. 784 - Rep. Jim Saxton (R-NJ): Would accelerate the effective date of 30-year, paid-up SBP coverage from October 1, 2008 to October 1, 2007.

##### Guard and Reserve

\* H.R. 690 - Rep. Jim Saxton (R-NJ): Would lower the age requirement for reserve retired pay eligibility from 60 to 55.

##### Health Care

\* S. 450 and H.R. 748: Would repeal Medicare payment caps for outpatient physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech language pathology services. Current "medical necessity" exceptions to the cap are set to expire at the end of 2007.

Please visit our Web site and send your legislators a MOAA suggested letter. [http://moaaonline.org/ct/i7z\\_irK1oXm0/](http://moaaonline.org/ct/i7z_irK1oXm0/)

##### Backtracking on Troop Protection

MOAA is disappointed, to say the least, that Reps. Kendrick Meek (D-FL) and Mike Ross (D-AR) are trying to persuade other House members to backtrack on legislative fixes won last year by MOAA and others to protect the troops against unscrupulous payday lenders.

#### **MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for February 9, 2007:**

##### Budget Assumes Big Fee Hikes, Cuts \$1.8 Billion from TRICARE

The defense budget the Administration submitted to Congress on February 5 significantly upped the ante in the Pentagon's campaign to raise TRICARE fees. It assumes even bigger fee hikes for FY2008 than last year's budget submission assumed for FY2007. Last year's budget proposed tripling TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Standard fees for retired officers and their family members and survivors over a two-year period, and more than doubling them for most enlisted retirees. It also would have increased retail pharmacy fees for all TRICARE beneficiaries of all ages by almost 70%. (See a summary of last year's proposal at

[http://moaaonline.org/ct/dpz\\_irK1pzuZ/](http://moaaonline.org/ct/dpz_irK1pzuZ/)).

MOAA thinks it's wrong to play this kind of budget "chicken" with the defense health program - especially in time of war.

We believe strongly that Congress should establish clear guidelines in law about the unique role of military retirement benefits, including health care, as the primary offset for the extraordinary demands and sacrifices inherent in a military career. We must recognize that military members and families who serve two or three decades under those conditions are making a substantial, in-kind pre-payment for those benefits. The cash deductibles, enrollment fees and copays that they pay in retirement are only a small portion of their very large personal contributions toward their benefits.

To help make this case, we ask every MOAA member to do three things:

- a. Please sign, stamp and mail the four tear-out letters in your February issue of Military Officer magazine (two at page 32 addressed to the House and Senate Armed Services Committee Chairmen and two at page 52 addressed to the Committees' senior Republican). Similar tear-out letters last year helped turn the tide in Congress when Committee leaders stacked them on a witness table at a TRICARE hearing. We need even more participation this year, now that Congress is facing a far greater budget challenge.

- b. Use MOAA's Web site

([http://moaaonline.org/ct/d1z\\_irK1pzuJ/](http://moaaonline.org/ct/d1z_irK1pzuJ/)) to urge your U.S. representative to cosponsor Rep. Chet Edwards' (D-TX) and Rep. Walter Jones' (R-NC) Military Retirees Health Care Protection Act (H.R. 579). To see the language of this bill, visit ([http://moaaonline.org/ct/ddz\\_irK1pzuD/](http://moaaonline.org/ct/ddz_irK1pzuD/))

- c. Pass this message to all of your TRICARE-eligible friends and urge them to send the message in paragraph b above.

### House Speaker Pledges Support

On Feb. 7, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD), and 38 other members of the Democratic House majority, including virtually all committee chairmen, met with leaders from MOAA and other veterans organizations to pledge their continued support for military and veterans' "people programs." The Speaker introduced her leadership team, pledged her continued support to end the "disabled veterans tax and the military widows tax" and resist proposals for significant fee increases for VA and defense health programs.

Armed Services Committee Chairman Ike Skelton (D-MO) said military readiness and the "stretching and straining" put on the nation's military members and families were his top priorities. He pointed out that 40% of the Army's equipment was in Iraq and the National Guard had just 35% of its needed equipment.

Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Bob Filner (D-CA) said his priorities include VA health care and improving educational benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill. He urged the groups to work together to reach consensus on other veterans' needs.

During the session, Pelosi invited association leaders to offer their perspectives. MOAA President VADM Norb Ryan (USN-Ret) said MOAA places top priority on meeting the manpower needs of active duty, Guard and Reserve forces; preventing disproportional cost-shifting to TRICARE beneficiaries, and taking further action to end unfair reductions in compensation for disabled retirees and military widows. Other organizations echoed those concerns and reemphasized needs for assured VA health funding, GI Bill upgrades, transition assistance programs, family support, and PTSD prevention and treatment, among other issues.

VA and Military Construction Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Chet Edwards (D-TX), who has introduced a bill (H.R. 579) to restrict the Secretary of Defense's authority to impose TRICARE fee increases, was particularly vehement on that subject. "I'm outraged," he said, "that the Administration plan would make sure Paris Hilton keeps all her tax cuts, but would tax military retirees to pony up an extra \$1.8 billion in TRICARE fees."

Rep. Jim Marshall (D-GA) told the groups that as a veteran himself he would do all that he could with their help to push for passage of his "disabled veterans tax fairness act" (H.R. 333): full concurrent receipt including medical retirees forced to leave the service with less than 20 years' service.

MOAA is gratified at this unprecedented show of House leadership concern for our issues. In decades of working military issues on the Hill under the control of either Republicans or Democrats, we've never had this kind of invitation to meet with the Speaker and Committee chairmen. Speaker Pelosi said she planned to continue regular meetings, and pledged her intent that Congress "will not leave any veteran behind."

### Budget Proposes Manpower, Pay, VA Fee Increases

The \$2.9 trillion budget proposal the President sent to Congress this week includes \$481 billion for defense and \$87 billion for the VA.

### Pharmacy Copay Increases Proposed

The Task Force on the Future of Military Health Care met Tuesday and was provided a number of informational briefings. RADM Tom McGinnis (USPHS), chief pharmacist for the TRICARE Management Activity, warned that the non-formulary, or third-tier, copayments - which are set at \$22 - are having minimal impact on beneficiaries in both the mail order (TMOP) and retail pharmacy venues. Despite efforts to shift beneficiaries away from those high cost drugs, both pharmacy venues have seen increased use in those drugs.

As reported before, the retail system is the most costly for both the beneficiary and the government. In order to move patients away from the use of non-formulary (\$22) drugs he made several proposals to the task force which include:

- \* Making non-formulary drugs available only through TMOP
- \* Barring beneficiaries from obtaining maintenance drugs from the retail system
- \* Raising copayments in the retail network for a 30-day supply to from \$3 and \$9 to \$5 and \$15 for generics and brand name drugs, respectively
- \* Revising copayments in TMOP for a 90-day supply from \$3 and \$9 to \$0 and \$15 for generics and brand name drugs, respectively. Third tier drug copayments would change from a flat \$22 to 20% or 25% of the total cost of the drug.

MOAA doesn't support proposals that would force use of the mail-order system or impose these large copay increases.

### **MOAA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for February 16, 2007:**

#### Senate Champs Fight TRICARE Fee Hikes

On Feb. 15, MOAA President VADM Norb Ryan, Jr. (USN-Ret) joined Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Sen. Chuck Hagel (R-NE) at a press conference to announce the senators' introduction of their "Military Health Care Protection Act" (S. 604).

S. 604 would:

- \* Establish in law the unique role of military health benefits in offsetting the extraordinary demands inherent in a military career.
- \* Establish that, in addition to their cash cost-shares, military people pre-pay large up-front premiums for their lifetime health coverage through decades of service and sacrifice.
- \* Bar the TRICARE Prime enrollment fee and TRICARE pharmacy copays from being increased in any year by a percentage that exceeds the percentage increase in military retired pay.
- \* Bar TRICARE Reserve Select premiums from being increased by a percentage that exceeds the most recent basic pay increase.

Bar any enrollment fee for TRICARE Standard or any increase in the TRICARE Standard inpatient copay.

Last year, a similar initiative by Lautenberg and Hagel was crucial in defeating large TRICARE fee hikes.

Please take a moment and send your senators a MOAA-suggested message urging them to cosponsor S. 604.

### MOAA Supports Reserve GI Bill fixes

Senator Blanche Lincoln (D-AR) and Representatives Vic Snyder (D-AR), Stephanie Herseth (D-SD), John Boozman (R-AR), and Loretta Sanchez (D-CA) held a joint press conference on Feb. 15 to highlight their proposed legislation to modernize educational benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB). Lincoln and original cosponsor Susan Collins (R-ME), who was not able to attend, have introduced it as S. 644 in the Senate. Snyder, Herseth, Boozman and Sanchez are sponsoring the companion H.R. 1102 in the House.

### Hill Leaders Bash TRICARE Budget Cut

At a House Armed Services Military Personnel Subcommittee hearing on Feb. 13, Chairman Vic Snyder (D-AR) admonished Dr. William Winkenwerder, the Pentagon's chief health official, concerning the nearly \$1.9 billion in funding cuts to the Defense Health Program.

DoD has previously indicated the savings would come from forcing retirees under age 65 to pay substantially higher TRICARE fees and requiring all TRICARE beneficiaries to pay higher retail pharmacy copayments. Last year's budget request projected that most of the savings came from the assumption that the higher fees would deter retirees from using their earned TRICARE benefits.

MOAA thinks the subcommittee leaders' objections are on target. It's just plain wrong to consciously underfund defense health programs in this way.

### **MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for February 23, 2007:**

#### Surgeons General Blast Health Budgeting

Top service medical officers expressed their frustrations with the DoD health budgeting process at a February 20 hearing before the Task Force on the Future of Military Health Care.

Both the Navy and Army reiterated their support for a unified medical command. The Air Force Surgeon General said the joint command concept wouldn't work with the Air Force's current command and control structure. MOAA believes it would be reasonable to investigate the idea further for additional possible saving options that could be used to help offset increasing military health costs.

VADM Arthur took issue with the current strategy of increasing fees and copays for the TRICARE program. He offered a presentation entitled "Can Not Break Promises", and said he was uncomfortable with assuming savings from pushing retirees out of TRICARE, which does nothing to address actual health care cost increases. LTG Kiley commented that fee/copay increases do not have to be so quick and should only be small increases.

#### Wake Up Call for Wounded Warrior Care

In a DoD press briefing on Feb. 21, Army Vice Chief of Staff General Richard Cody responded to a question about this apparent leadership breakdown by saying, "I'll take responsibility. I'm the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army. I'll take responsibility for this and I'll make sure it's fixed."

That was a refreshing change from a situation whose occurrence would seem an impossibility if military leaders up and down the chain had been living up to their professional responsibilities to keep tabs on the welfare of the troops assigned to their care.

### Why Discriminate Against Our Troops?

What will it take to get the Defense Department to allow currently serving military members the same tax-favored health and dependent care options already enjoyed by all federal civilians and most other Americans?

"The Federal government extended them to all federal civilians years ago. MOAA offers them to our employees, just as virtually all corporate employers do," he said. "Defense leaders are just sending the wrong message when they discriminate this way against the military families who are making such extreme sacrifices for the rest of the country."

"These programs are worth plenty to military families," says Ryan. "For every \$1,000 they spend on child care and medical, dental, or optometry expenses, they could save \$250 to \$400."

Two years ago, MOAA persuaded the Senate Armed Services Committee to issue a report expressing support for these initiatives and demanding a Pentagon report on what it would take to implement them.

"That report was due last March, but we're still waiting for it," said Ryan. "We're hopeful that, with a new Secretary of Defense, things might change."

### Commission Hears Case Against "Military Widows Tax"

Survivor benefits were under the Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission's spotlight during this week's two-day hearing in Washington, D.C.

Commissioners debated the Survivor Benefit Program (SBP)/Dependency Indemnity Compensation (DIC) offset with a panel of Military Coalition representatives.

The panel, across-the-board, called for the elimination of the SBP/DIC offset - one of MOAA's and the Coalition's top legislative goals. The Commission members were grateful for the panel's written and oral statements and were particularly moved when several representatives from the Gold Star Wives of America provided personal, compelling accounts of the impact of losing a spouse and the subsequent financial hardships many have endured.

- \* Claim-Filing Time Limit - endorse the current rule that allows unlimited time to file an original VA disability claim
- \* Line of Duty - endorse the current definition that considers any disability incurred while on active duty, other than due to misconduct, as in the line of duty (e.g., members are considered on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
- \* Lump Sum Payments - recommend against offering a lump sum payment option in lieu of monthly disability compensation





# JAYHAWK CHAPTER MOAA



A membership meeting will be held **Tuesday, 20 March 2007**, at the Lawrence Country Club.  
Dinner cost is **\$20.00** per meal.

**The Program:** BGen. Paul G. Cohen, USAF (ret.) MOAA Board of Directors, will speak on new Congressional makeup, committee chairs/membership, current MOAA legislative issues, "Stormin' the Hill" event. Q and A period will follow.

**Social Hour:** 1800 hours

**Dinner:** 1900 hours

**The Menu:** *Filet mignon, 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 **17 March 2007**, to:  
CAPT (Ret) Jim Cooper - 1115 Stone Meadows Drive, Lawrence, KS 66049-3961

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

If you have any questions, you may contact Jim 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 \$20.00 per meal. I am enclosing a check for \$\_\_\_\_\_ for meal(s).

**Annual Jayhawk MOAA Chapter dues (\$20.00)** \$\_\_\_\_\_  
(You are Past Due if you have an "06" on your mailing label)

MG Clay Comfort Scholarship program contribution \$\_\_\_\_\_  
(Checks 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 (Ret) Jim Cooper, 1115 Stone Meadows Drive, Lawrence, KS 66049-3961**

MOAA WEBSITE: [www.moaa.org](http://www.moaa.org)

KANSAS COUNCIL WEBSITE: [www.kansasmoaa.org](http://www.kansasmoaa.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 20 March MOAA meeting  
Tuesday 15 May MOAA meeting  
Tuesday 17 July MOAA meeting

Tuesday 18 September MOAA meeting  
Tuesday 20 November MOAA meeting



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Jayhawk Chapter, MOAA  
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***FIRST CLASS MAIL***

*Wishing you a  
Blessed Easter  
your  
Editorial Staff*