



# Jayhawk Chapter MOAA Newsletter



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## July Program:

Second District Representative Nancy Boyda will be our guest speaker.

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

**---**  
**WEBSITE AWARD - 2004**  
**NEWSLETTER AWARD - 2003/2006**

### As I see it...



Greetings. We had an excellent turnout for the May meeting. I want to thank Bernie Kish for arranging to have Jim Peters, KU's Director of Marketing for the Department of Continuing Education, speak to us on Arlington National Cemetery. Jim's command of the history, lore, and the current status related to Arlington is truly amazing. It was a fascinating presentation.

As previously announced, our July meeting will be held on July 3 and our speaker will be Congresswoman Nancy Boyda. Please note that this is a change from our normal meeting on the third Tuesday of the month. Please mark it on your calendar, plan to attend, and invite friends or neighbors to come as your guest. It will be a good opportunity for us to hear Congresswoman Boyda's insights on military issues and affairs. It will also be a good opportunity for her to hear from you.

I announced at our May meeting that Erv Hodges has volunteered to lead our drive to build the Clay Comfort Scholarship Fund to a level sufficient to insure that it is both self-sustaining and also provides meaningful annual awards for cadets and midshipmen, awards that are more robust than they are today. We are honored to have Erv's leadership in this development effort. I also announced that I would like to set some goals in this regard for our membership. That first is 100% participation by all our members and the second, a \$100 per family contribution. As of right now less than 25% of our members have contributed anything to the Fund. Some have been very generous and that is greatly appreciated. But each of us needs to do our part. If we achieve the modest goals set just for our own membership we can almost triple the Fund's endowment over where it is today. That in and of itself won't get us to where we ultimately want to be in terms of self-sustainment. But combining our membership support with Erv's broader plans we will definitely be on a path for eventual success. That's as I see it.

Have a wonderful and safe summer.

*Mike Sullivan*

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#### 1 July 2007

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RADM Mike Sullivan, USN (Ret)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President:  
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- Web Master:  
Lt Col Stanley Sneegas, USAF (Ret)

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**\* Reservations should be sent to Jim Cooper by 29 June.**



# JAYHAWK CHAPTER NEWS

## CHAPTER NEWS



This picture was taken at the Commissioning Ceremony for 2ndLT Andrew K Sneegas, U. S. Army Reserve on May 13 at Susquehanna University (SU). Chapter member LTC Stanley A. Sneegas, USAF (RET) officiated. Barbara assisted Stan in "pinning" Andrew's butter bars. Andrew graduated from SU with a BA in Political Science with a minor in Economics. He received officer preparation through the Bison Battalion of the Army ROTC program at Bucknell University. He will start BLOC II at Ft. Sill, OK in OCT 2007 and complete BOLC III at Ft. Huachuca, AZ in April 2008. His first duty station will be the 323rd Military Intelligence Battalion out of Ft. Meade, MD. Andrew has joined MOAA and the Jayhawk Chapter.

The **Jayhawk MOAA Golf Outing** was held on 25 April at Eagle Bend Golf Course.

Winners in the First Flight were: Buck Newsom, Lee Gerhard, Floyd Gehrt and John Halladay.

Winners in the Second Flight were: Erv Hodges, Jim McMurray and John Mosher.



## KU ROTC AWARD PRESENTATIONS



Now 2ndLt Matt Fortier, received the MOAA Medal at the Awards Ceremony on 10 May 2007. Presentation was made by COL John W. Halladay.

Cadet Joshua K. Conser was the recipient of the MG Comfort Scholarship. No picture was available.



Now 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Jessica Wall (USMC) from Highland, California, received the MOAA Medal from LtCol Erv Hodges at the Awards Ceremony on 02 May 2007..



MIDN 1/C (Marine Option) Heather Redenius from Burden, Kansas, was the recipient of the MG Clay Comfort Scholarship presented by LtCol Erv Hodges



Col Jim McMurray presented the MOAA Medal to Cadet Ryan Stanfill at the Awards Ceremony on 8 May 2007.



Hannah M. Waddle was the recipient of the MG Clay Comfort scholarship. Presenting was Col Jim McMurray.

**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.**

## TWO KU WOMEN TO BE COMMISSIONED AS OFFICERS AT WHITE HOUSE

Two University of Kansas students have been chosen to participate in a joint commissioning ceremony for Reserve Officers Training Corps graduates in Washington, D.C.

Michelle Davis, an Army ROTC cadet, and Michele Dierks, a Navy ROTC midshipman, will become military officers on Thursday, May 17. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates will issue the oath of office, and President Bush will host and attend the ceremony.

Fifty-five students, one from each state, U.S. territory and the District of Columbia, were selected for the special commissioning. Davis, a native of Lester, Iowa, will represent Iowa. Dierks, from Colorado Springs, Colo., will represent Kansas.

The commissioning takes place just a few days before both women will participate in another ritual — walking down the hill at KU's commencement.

Davis will graduate May 20 with a master's degree in business administration. She said she "jumped for joy" when she heard she was chosen for the commissioning at the White House.

"This is the biggest honor you can have," she said.

Davis has been in the Army for nine years. She joined after graduating from Wayne State College in Nebraska with a degree in criminal justice. She wasn't sure what she wanted to do with her life — then she met an Army recruiter.

"My plan was not to stay in the military," Davis said. "But two years into it, I was hooked. I love my job."

Davis loved traveling around the world with the Army, but she also wanted to go back to school to earn a master's degree. She was accepted into the Army's Green to Gold program, which allows soldiers to earn degrees while remaining on active duty, but she needed to find a school that would work around her tight schedule.

Davis said she contacted several universities in the Midwest for help. She had only two months to get her military clearances and application materials together, a process that normally takes half a year. Davis said KU's School of Business was the only one that agreed to make special arrangements.

That was two years ago. Now, Davis has completed her master's and will be commissioned as a distinguished military

graduate, an honor given to the top 20 percent of graduating cadets.

"We are quite proud of Ms. Davis and all her accomplishments," said Maj. John Clark of KU's Army ROTC program. "Her achievements as a cadet and scholar represent the highest standards that KU strives to achieve."

Davis' next station will be in Fort Hood, Texas, where she will combine her business degree and military training as a finance officer. Only 25 graduating cadets nationwide are selected for the Finance Corps each year. She is the daughter of Robert Baatz of Lester, Iowa, and Rhonda Anderson of Hospers, Iowa. She is a graduate of West Lyon High School in Inwood, Iowa, and is married to Brian Davis, who works for the U.S. Department of State.

Dierks is completing a bachelor's degree in exercise science. Like Davis, Dierks was stunned when she heard the news she was chosen for the special commissioning.

She said her commanding officer called her into his office and told her she would not be commissioned May 21 at KU.

"It scared me to death," Dierks said.

But then he quickly told her the reason she was being excluded from KU's ceremony: she would be commissioned in Washington instead.

"I can't even explain how I felt," she said. "My jaw dropped."

Dierks is the daughter of Stephen and Barbara Dierks. At Rampart High School in Colorado Springs, she was a lacrosse player and an honors student. She received a four-year ROTC scholarship to attend KU, where this year she is battalion commanding officer for her unit. She also taught exercise classes at KU and worked at Lawrence Memorial Hospital, leading an exercise program for senior citizens.

"I am proud that one of our midshipmen, Michele Dierks, the current KU Navy battalion commanding officer, was selected to be commissioned by the president at the White House," said Capt. Thomas E. Arnold of KU's Naval ROTC.

Dierks' next station is Pensacola, Fla., where she will attend flight school.



### *Army News* *LTC John Basso*

#### **Rock Chalk!**

For those of you who didn't get a chance to see it, the Joint Commissioning Ceremony was, like Kansas' Spring rain, revitalizing. The excitement of the new lieutenants and their family and friends was only matched by the pride of our cadre

in helping produce such fine lieutenants. Several hundred ROTC supporters including Chancellor Hemenway and thirty-one newly commissioned officers from all four services heard KU alum BG Butch Tate deliver sound advice on

succeeding as a junior officer by taking care of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines. I'm happy to report that our Army now has eleven truly first-class junior officers from the Jayhawk Battalion, each of whom will excel first as they go through their Basic Officer Leadership courses and then as they take charge of Soldiers in their new units. Congratulations to the following 2LTs:

Phillip Amerine, Armor  
 Michael Beaman, Engineer  
 John Cook, Infantry  
 Michelle Davis, Finance  
 Ryan Dittmer, Engineer  
 Taylor Gillespie, Armor  
 Raymond Hanson, Medical Service Corps  
 Judee Herring, Army Nurse  
 Christopher McCann, Military Police  
 Kimberly Pulis, Army Nurse  
 Noah Rees, Engineer

Our Summer training is underway and progressing well. By the end of the summer we will have sent twenty-four juniors to the Leadership Development and Assessment Course at Fort

Lewis. Two of our terrific cadre, Major Wade Abel, who recently returned from Iraq, and Sergeant First Class Joseph Masarik will be helping develop our cadets at Fort Lewis. Additionally, we will be sending four cadet candidates to the Leadership Training Course at Fort Knox. Lastly, we will send five cadets to serve as 2LTs in units around the Army as part of the Cadet Troop Leading Training, as well as four cadets to Airborne School and two cadets to Air Assault School. While the pace of training over the Summer will be hectic, I'm certain we will return from our Summer training a stronger battalion than we went in. That fact will be vital, as we will begin the 2007-2008 school year with fifteen freshman cadets on Army ROTC scholarships, the most we've had in anyone's memory. More about this remarkable group of young people and on plans for the Fall Semester in the next newsletter. Until then...

**JAYHAWKS LEAD THE WAY!**

***LTC John Basso***



***Navy News***  
***CAPT Thomas Arnold, USN***



**Greetings from the Jayhawk Navy!**

Let me begin by thanking the MOAA membership for your continued support of the Naval ROTC Unit at the University of Kansas. In particular, we are very proud of those Unit members who received MOAA awards this year during our annual Spring Awards Ceremony on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May: MIDN Heather Redenius, who received the Major General Clay Comfort Award, and now 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Jessica Wall, who received the MOAA Award.

Thanks also to those of you who took the time to attend the Joint Service Commissioning Ceremony on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Our nine new Navy Ensigns and one new USMC 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant greatly appreciated the support you showed them by your attendance.

This summer will be a busy time for members of the Jayhawk Battalion. Our new Ensigns and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant will be departing over the course of the summer to begin training in their new communities. Most will be heading to Pensacola to begin flight school; others to Charleston for Nuclear Power training and our Marine to The Basic School (TBS) in Quantico. The Officer Candidates and Marine Enlisted Commissioning Program candidates who did not graduate in May will be continuing summer study here at KU. Those midshipmen who were not commissioned this year will be heading off to far-flung places to participate in summer

training cruises or, in the case of our future Marines, to attend either Mountain Warfare training in California or Officer Candidate School (OCS) in Virginia. A number of our midshipmen are joining ships in some very exotic locales to start their cruises – this includes Japan, Finland, Argentina and Greece. I wish I could join them!

In closing I want to welcome back one of our NROTC staff members who has been absent from us for the past year serving in Iraq. Navy Lieutenant Laura Glenn left us in April 2006 for a one year tour of duty with the Marines. She returned in May and is pleased to be back with the Unit. She'll be here with us through the end of the summer and then will leave the Navy in September. We are very proud of Laura for her service in Iraq and are very glad to have her back safely. She was very pleased to return in time to see many of her former students graduate and get their commissions. Laura's relief, LT Juri Groenland, is already on board. Juri is a LAMPS III helo pilot who comes to us from a tour in Jacksonville, Florida. Please join me in welcoming him to the staff!

Have a great summer!

***CAPT Tom Arnold***





## *Air Force News*

### *LtCol Sandra Leiker, USAF*

#### **Hello, MOAA.**

It's summer and I already miss our graduates. Our new 2Lts have been trickling into the main office to pick up copies of their final paperwork and say "goodbye for now" on their way to new assignments – career field specific training for most, but a few (mainly the engineers and acquisitions folks) go immediately to their first duty station where they will receive OJT. I know many of you came to the wonderful joint commissioning ceremony, but I'd like to take a minute to list our recent commissionees and their career field assignments here anyway. 2Lt Shana Beach - Intelligence; 2Lt Nichole Canton - Manpower/Personnel; 2Lt Miguel Carrera - Pilot; 2Lt Justin Davis - Pilot; 2Lt Daniel Einert - Space/Missiles; 2Lt Matthew Lawrence - Developmental Engineer; 2Lt Stephen Linhardt - Pilot; 2Lt Seth Lorimer - Civil Engineer; 2Lt Corey Mzhickteno - Pilot; 2Lt Joshua Topliff - Air Battle Manager; 2Lt Matthew Weilbacher - Intelligence. Our final commissionee is Ana Pyzhov; however, as a nursing school graduate, she must pass her NCLEX (Nurse Clinical Licensing Exam) before she commissions – she is scheduled to accomplish both later this summer. We're excited for them all, and very proud, but it sure is quiet around the good ol' MSB (KU's "affectionate" name for our Military Science Building).

So our attention is turned to other endeavors. Capt Edmonds is already working with next year's cadet wing staff to schedule/plan the initial events of the fall training schedule. In May, Capt Hatchel received very short notice that he has been selected for a year-long deployment to Iraq – he was selected for having both mobility and instructor experience. He leaves in late June for deployment-specific training and thus has already turned over his programs to the rest of us (divided among those of us remaining) and is doing his final mobility training and outprocessing at Whiteman AFB over the next few weeks. He will return to us next summer, but just in time to PCS, so we will be conducting affairs a little shorthanded this school year. His primary focus area - that is, recruiting – will likely suffer – so please keep YOUR eyes/ears open and send any good officer prospects our way! Also please keep him and his family in your thoughts/prayers.

The NCOs and I are keeping busy managing the summer field training and cultural immersion programs. Twelve of our juniors-to-be will be treated to all-expense paid vacations (yeah, right!) at one or the other of the AFROTC Field Training (FT)

Encampments. These are held at Ellsworth AFB in Rapid City, SD, and Maxwell AFB in Montgomery, AL – so, don't worry, all the cadets will be "vacationing" in cool/comfortable climates. FT is truly the most rigorous training that ROTC does (similar to basic training, but with much more emphasis on leadership). Upon arrival the cadets are thrown into groups (flights) of about 25 members - they eat, sleep, study, exercise, and work with this group from 4:45 am to 9:45 pm (about 17 hours a day!) Under intense pressure to perform (i.e., demonstrate the officership, leadership, and followership skills they have been building over the past two years) they bond very quickly with their flightmates in order to succeed, so it becomes a truly incredible teambuilding experience. You'll recall that last year Capt Hatchel and I both manned FT camps at Ellsworth; SSgt Cronley is there now, taking her turn, supporting the Ellsworth 1 camp admin staff. At least we were able to tell her what to expect from our experiences. It can be as grueling on the staff as it is for the cadets!

I mentioned summer cultural immersion programs – I'll wrap up by telling you about one of the neatest programs AFROTC has going. The AF is trying to make real headway in broadening the cultural awareness of our officers – so why not have it start while they are still cadets? Both ROTC and the AF Academy have been expanding their offerings of summer overseas travel opportunities; as a result, we have five cadets visiting Japan, India, Turkey, South Africa and Germany this summer for three-week programs that emphasize language, as well as study of the area's history, political, religious and cultural aspects. Finally, we have one staff member (me!) chaperoning the trip to Morocco – so wish me luck with 16 cadets from other universities - I'm certain this will be a fantastic experience for all of us who get to experience it.

Well, I'm off to brush up on my French (and maybe learn a little Arabic) ... wish me "Bon Voyage!" Thanks for all you do MOAA! (Merci pour tout que vous faites ... or something like that.)

Respectfully,

*Lt Col Sandra S. Leiker*

### **FROM THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT**

#### **Storming the Hill – 2007**

On Monday, April 16, my wife, Tonya, and I boarded an airplane for our trip to Washington, DC and "Storming the Hill."

Our agenda for the week went like this:

**Monday** afternoon and evening: Early registration and an informal "ice-breaker" social period where we met several MOAA staffers and Board Directors, plus other Council presidents.

**Tuesday:** preparation briefings for "Storming the Hill"; also the MOAA Awards ceremony in the Russell House Office Building. MOAA established a permanent scholarship in honor of Sen. John Warner (R-VA) and the scholarship was presented to the recipient. Actor Gary Sinise was also presented with an award in recognition of his efforts to

entertain the troops – he has made 22 trips to Iraq with his band “The Lieutenant Dan Band” – with the USO.

Wednesday: “Storming the Hill.” After a group photo in front of the capitol, I proceeded to individual meetings with the Kansas delegation.

Thursday: Seminar and Crosstalk to review the previous day’s activities.



Individual meetings with the Kansas delegation. I only met with one principal – Congresswoman Nancy Boyda of the 2nd District – and she gave me 45 minutes of her undivided attention. She supports the issues listed below, but asked for additional information about the Tricare

Mail Order Pharmacy (TMOP); MOAA was going to provide this information to her.

I met with staffers for the remainder of the Kansas delegation.

ALL members of the Kansas delegation stated their past support for MOAA-supported issues, and stated their continued support in this session.

As a quick recap, the three issues are:

- **Health Care Cost-Shifting to Military Beneficiaries**
  - Recommendation:
    - Reject DoD-proposed fee hikes for FY08 and support bills establishing fee limits

- Cosponsor and pass Reps. Edwards’ (D-TX) and Jones’ (R-NC) H.R. 579.
- *There are approximately 20,000 military retirees in Kansas, with 11,600 (58%) of them under age 65 who would be affected by these Tricare enrollment increases.*

- **Ending the SBP-DIC Offset and the “Greatest Generation” Tax**

- Recommendation: Cosponsor H.R. 784 and Rep. Brown’s planned bill.
- *There are approximately 511 Annuitants with Full and Partial SBP/DIC Offsets in Kansas.*
- *There are approximately 1,509 SBP participants in Kansas who would benefit if the Paid-Up Year moved from the end of FY08 to end FY07, saving them approximately \$2.21 million.*

- **Closing the Military Pay Gap**

- Recommendation: Support a military pay raise of at least 3.5% for FY2008, to continue making progress toward restoring full military pay comparability.

Thursday’s activities also included presentation of the **2006 Communication Awards**. Kansas recipients were:

- Sunflower Chapter: Winner for written newsletter in Category 3 (75 – 199 members)
- Jayhawk Chapter: 2nd Runner-Up for electronic newsletter in Category 3

Storming the Hill 2008 will be held 30 March – 4 April.

## **MOAA LEGISLATIVE UPDATES**

### **MOAA’s LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for April 27, 2007:**

#### VA Task Force on Wounded Concludes

Meanwhile, another high-powered task force appointed to review treatment of wounded warriors issued a final report to the President on April 19.

Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary James Nicholson chaired the President’s Task Force on Returning Global War on Terror Heroes, which was composed of the Secretaries of Defense, Labor, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Education, and several other sub-cabinet-level officials. President Bush had given the task force 45 days to come up with recommendations to ensure fair treatment for wounded warriors.

- \* *These heroes...should not have to fight bureaucratic red tape for benefits earned by their courageous service,” said Nicholson in his public announcement of the task force’s 25 recommendations. Specific actions were suggested to improve cooperation between government agencies in delivering service to war-wounded members, including:*
- \* *Developing a joint DoD/VA process for disability benefit determinations to ensure consistency across all services and the VA.*
- \* *Developing a combined case management system to ensure seamless transition from military to VA health care.*
- \* *Screening all returning veterans seen in VA facilities for indications of Traumatic Brain Injury.*
- \* *Simplifying the VA enrollment process.*
- \* *Expanding VA access to military health records.*
- \* *Development of a joint DoD/VA inpatient electronic health record.*

President Bush has endorsed the recommendations and has ordered Secretary Nicholson to work with other Cabinet members to implement the recommendations and provide a progress report.

On April 23, MOAA VA health care and transition services expert, Col. Ana Smythe, USMC (Ret) held an online discussion with members about their concerns. For a complete recap of this and all our chats please visit our Web site.

[http://moaaonline.org/ct/jpz\\_irK1rXE0/](http://moaaonline.org/ct/jpz_irK1rXE0/)

### **MOAA’s LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for May 4, 2007:**

Over the last four months the government relations department has been trying a new way to reach our members, monthly live chats online. While statistics show that more and more people are viewing and joining the chat every month, first hand feedback is priceless. As we move forward with these chats it is important to know what our members need and want. So please email your suggestions and comments to [legischat@moaa.org](mailto:legischat@moaa.org).

If you haven’t had time to view the chats please check them out:

- January Chat - Guard/Reserve issues
- February Chat - TRICARE, Medicare, and TFL
- March Chat - Compensation in the 110th Congress
- April Chat - Transition services

[http://moaaonline.org/ct/e1z\\_irK15zhr/](http://moaaonline.org/ct/e1z_irK15zhr/)

#### Big Things In Small Packages

High costs and tight congressional budget rules make many of our top goals difficult for the Armed Services Committees to address. When they take even a tiny first step toward addressing a large problem, it’s important to recognize that as a breakthrough, not an insult. The hard reality is that many of MOAA’s top goals carry relatively high price tags. Concurrent receipt and SBP fixes, in particular, entail so-called “entitlement spending” that invokes harsh congressional budget rules requiring offsetting entitlement spending cuts or revenue (tax) increases to pay for them. For the Armed Services Committees, fixing retired pay or SBP inequities is a tall

order. They aren't interested in cutting retired pay to pay for SBP fixes or vice versa, and those are about the only entitlement programs they control. Meanwhile, they also have to find billions of dollars to fix TRICARE shortfalls, fund tens of thousands more troops, and replenish weapons for wartime needs.

That's why, in past years, the House Military Personnel Subcommittee hasn't been able to make any progress at all for disabled retirees with less than 20 years of service or for SBP widows penalized by the VA offset. This year, they vowed to find a way to demonstrate their concern and intent to make at least some progress on both of these issues - even at the risk of taking heat for doing so little.

It would have been much easier for the Subcommittee to do nothing on these issues. For several years, they've seen SBP and concurrent receipt initiatives passed in the Senate (where it's much easier to get floor amendments approved), only to get blamed when the initiatives were dropped during final negotiations with the House.

#### **MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for May 11, 2007:**

##### MOAA Needs Your Help!

Having trouble finding a doctor that accepts TRICARE or Medicare? MOAA is conducting an online survey aimed at pinpointing localities where there's a shortage of participating providers. Please take a few minutes to answer this survey and help us better understand your health care access problems. [http://moaaonline.org/ct/U1z\\_irK1bXE7/](http://moaaonline.org/ct/U1z_irK1bXE7/)

#### **MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for May 18, 2007:**

##### House Passes Defense Bill

The House of Representatives spent two days and approved more than 40 amendments before finally passing the FY2008 Defense Authorization Bill on Thursday by a 397-27 vote.

##### Administration Opposes House-Passed Benefit Protections

On Wednesday, May 16, the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) fired off a letter to Congress expressing its displeasure with a number of pay and benefit improvements the House included in its version of the FY2008 Defense Authorization Act. Here's what OMB had to say on the following topics:

**Military Pay Raise:** The Administration "strongly opposes" the provisions that would provide active duty, Guard and Reserve personnel an extra one-half of one percent pay raise each year from 2008 through 2012. The OMB letter calls this small extra pay raise "unnecessary."

**TRICARE Fee Hikes:** OMB says, "The Administration is disappointed that the Committee language would not allow DoD to adjust TRICARE health fees and payments for retired military beneficiaries under age 65."

**Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance:** "The Administration opposes" the House proposal to establish a special \$40/month payment to survivors of members whose deaths were caused by military service and who now lose up to \$1,067 per month due to deduction of VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) from their military SBP annuities. "It appears to be the first step toward eliminating the offset between SBP and DIC," said the letter. We certainly hope so.

**Combat-Related Special Compensation:** The Administration "strongly opposes" the House proposal to extend CRSC eligibility to members who are forced into medical retirement with 15 to 19 years of service and who suffer combat-caused injuries rated as 60% or more disabling. MOAA has a hard time understanding any position that would refuse to "vest" such long-serving combat-wounded members in their service-earned retired pay - especially since the government already extended such vesting to thousands who were

allowed to retire with 15-19 years' service during the force drawdown of the 1990s.

Unfortunately, such letters aren't anything new. OMB has consistently opposed most of the significant personnel and compensation enhancements Congress has passed in recent years. Fortunately, Congress has displayed far more sensitivity - and common sense - than OMB has.

##### Bill Would Test Zero Copays for Mail-Order Drugs

Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL) wants the Pentagon to find ways to cut its pharmacy costs without penalizing beneficiaries.

The Defense Department has complained repeatedly that most retirees obtain their medications through retail outlets, which is far more expensive to the government than TRICARE's mail-order pharmacy system. To date, the Pentagon's only proposal to change that behavior has been to propose raising retail pharmacy copays by nearly 70% to try to drive more beneficiaries to use the mail-order system.

MOAA has opposed using that kind of "stick" before at least trying the "carrot" of eliminating copays for the mail-order system. We've long felt that beneficiaries would respond to that kind of positive incentive, especially if the Pentagon were willing to spend 41 cents to send each beneficiary a letter showing how much they would have saved in the past year by using the mail-order system and educating them on how to use it.

Now, Bilirakis has introduced a bill (H.R. 2319 - [http://moaaonline.org/ct/11z\\_irK1Wzyq/](http://moaaonline.org/ct/11z_irK1Wzyq/)) that would require the Pentagon to test that positive-incentive approach. It calls for a two-year pilot program, starting by March 2008, under which at least 2,000 beneficiaries who currently use only retail pharmacies would be offered free access to the mail-order system to refill prescriptions for their maintenance medications. Participants would be shown how much that would have saved them over the previous year, and would be provided information on how to enroll in the mail-order program to have the medications delivered to their door at no cost.

#### **MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for May 25, 2007:**

##### Key Panel Backs Disability Fix

The Senate Armed Services Committee emerged from two days of deliberations to announce approval of its version of the FY2008 Defense Authorization Bill, including recommendations to:

- \* Increase Army manpower levels by 13,000 and Marine Corps strength by 9,000 (same as approved by the House)
- \* Authorize a 3.5% military pay raise for 2008 (same as approved by the House and an increase over the 3% raise proposed in the defense budget submission)
- \* Reject Administration-proposed TRICARE fee and pharmacy copay increases
- \* Eliminate the disability offset to retired pay for all members whose combat-related wounds or illnesses forced them into medical (Chapter 61) retirement before attaining 20 years of service
- \* Reduce the Reserve retirement age by 3 months for each 90 days mobilized to active duty (Note: this would be prospective only; that is, credit would be given only for active duty mobilization time served after the change is enacted; it would not retroactively cover all service since 9/11)
- \* Require drug companies to give the Defense Department the same discount for drugs sold through retail outlets that DoD already receives for drugs dispensed through military pharmacies or the TRICARE mail-order pharmacy
- \* Require the Pentagon to continue surveying TRICARE participation among civilian medical providers (with special emphasis on the adequacy of mental health providers) and also require surveys of beneficiaries to determine their degree of access to participating providers.



- \* Authorize \$50 million in "impact aid" to help fund civilian education systems that serve children of military families
- \* Modify death gratuity provisions to allow servicemembers to designate in writing any person as the beneficiary, and modify SBP to allow designation of guardians or caretakers of dependent children to receive SBP

Committee leaders announced they will be preparing separate legislation aimed specifically at addressing problems encountered by wounded warriors and their families.

The full Senate is expected to consider the Committee-approved legislation in June. After that, we expect several months of deliberations between House and Senate leaders to resolve the differences between the House- and Senate-passed bills.

But MOAA is pleased and grateful to the committee for most of the newly announced provisions, especially the increased troop levels, increased pay raise, expansion of concurrent receipt to all combat-wounded retirees, and rejection of proposed steep TRICARE fee increases.

#### MOAA Praises Budget "People Programs"

On May 17, MOAA Government Relations Director Col Steve Strobbridge (USAF-Ret) was chosen to represent military and veterans associations at a "packed house" press conference held by Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV), House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), Senate Budget Committee Chairman Kent Conrad (D-ND) and House Budget Committee Chairman John Spratt (D-SC) to announce that the Senate and House both passed the final FY2008 Budget Resolution that afternoon.

Strobbridge, who also co-chairs the 35-association Military Coalition, was the only speaker other than the four senior congressional leaders, who asked him to comment on the budget resolution's emphasis on taking care of veterans.

Strobbridge applauded the resolution's allocation of an additional \$3.6 billion for VA health care and wounded warriors and their families, plus hundreds of millions more to restore Administration-proposed funding cuts for military health care, and allocations of extra funding for military manpower increases to ease stresses on troops and families.

He also took the opportunity to express MOAA's and the Coalition's appreciation for the reserve fund in the budget resolution that would allow some progress on fixing concurrent receipt and SBP inequities.

#### Health Care Task Force Talks Turkey

The DoD Task Force on the Future of Military Health Care provided a preliminary discussion of its interim report at a Defense Health Board meeting on Wednesday, May 23. The interim report, required by the Fiscal Year 2007 Defense Authorization Bill, is due to the Secretary of Defense and Congress by the end of May.

The task force is composed of 14 members appointed by the Secretary of Defense, of which half come from inside and half come from outside the Department. It is co-chaired by prominent health care economist Dr. Gail Wilensky and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John D. W. Corley. The co-chairs indicated their recommendations would include:

- \* Reviewing TRICARE contracts to ensure they contain the flexibility required to allow for inclusion of best business practices.
- \* "Altering pharmacy incentives" (including beneficiary copays) to encourage use of the lower-cost mail-order system
- \* "Rebalancing" beneficiary fees "at or below" the share of DoD costs they represented when TRICARE was implemented in 1996 (the co-chairs indicated beneficiaries under 65 paid 11% of DoD costs in 1996 vs 4% today; DoD leaders previously cited those figures as 27% and 14%, respectively).

- \* Phasing in beneficiary fee increases over 3 to 5 years.
- \* Establishing a formula for regular fee increases in the future.
- \* Increasing the catastrophic expense cap (currently \$1,000 for active duty families and \$3,000 for retiree/survivor families).
- \* Establishing a tiered fee structure, with members in higher grades paying larger fees.
- \* Requiring independent audits to ensure TRICARE pays only after any other insurance available to beneficiaries has paid.

#### **MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for June 1, 2007:**

On June 21, MOAA will sponsor its first-ever Spouse Symposium at the Virginia Beach Convention Center in Virginia Beach, Va. Panel discussions will include *Building Leadership in Military Spouses and Understanding Today's Generation of Military Spouses*, with emphasis on the role of advocacy in effecting policy change. Keynote speaker will be Doro Bush Koch, daughter of former President George H.W. Bush, author of *My Father, My President*. Register today!

[http://moaaonline.org/ct/7pz\\_irK1yzhE/](http://moaaonline.org/ct/7pz_irK1yzhE/)

#### Where do your Legislators Stand?

The Senate is expected to address the FY2008 Defense Authorization Bill before the end of June, and the MOAA staff will be working with a number of legislators to seek additional amendments during that process. After that, House and Senate leaders will be negotiating resolutions to differences between the House and Senate bills.

MOAA will be working hard to influence that process. But winning those battles will be a lot easier if we can point to long lists of senators and representatives who have shown their support by signing on as cosponsors of the specific legislative proposals on the table.

Do you know where your legislators stand on MOAA's key issues? We've created a page on MOAA's Web site for each individual legislator to summarize that information for you in one spot rather than making you sort through cosponsor lists for multiple bills.

Just follow these four steps:

- \* Visit MOAA's elected officials page
- \* Enter your zip code in the yellow box and click "GO" (don't click on the map)
- \* Click on the "bills" link beneath the photos of your legislators to see their cosponsorship status on MOAA's key bills
- \* On the issues that are important to you, click the "send message" link to send a MOAA-suggested message on that topic

[http://moaaonline.org/ct/7dz\\_irK1yzhi/](http://moaaonline.org/ct/7dz_irK1yzhi/)

#### MOAA's Position on Defense Bill Issues

We know what the House of Representatives has proposed in the FY2008 Defense Authorization Bill (H.R. 1585) and we know much of what the Senate Armed Services Committee has proposed for its version of the bill (S. 567).

Each year, MOAA builds an extensive comparison of House vs. Senate provisions on each topic to help assess what MOAA's position should be on those issues. That process is still underway, since we have yet to see the full text of the Senate bill and there will be many more amendments when the full Senate considers the defense bill later this month.

But we've prepared an initial matrix comparing House, Senate and MOAA positions on the key issues in the bill that we know about so far.

You can review that summary on MOAA's Web site. [http://moaaonline.org/ct/77z\\_irK1yzhm/](http://moaaonline.org/ct/77z_irK1yzhm/)





# JAYHAWK CHAPTER MOAA



A membership meeting will be held **Tuesday, 3 July 2007**, at the Lawrence Country Club. Dinner cost is **\$20.00** per meal.

**The Program:** Representative Nancy Boyda will be our guest speaker.

**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 **29 June 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*

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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).

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.kansasmooa.org](http://www.kansasmooa.org)

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

*Thanks very much to those of you who responded to our recent request for more members to receive the newsletter by e-mail – we're up to one-third of those who have e-mail.*

[jwhalladay@sunflower.com](mailto:jwhalladay@sunflower.com).

## 2007-08 Jayhawk MOAA Calendar:

**Tuesday 3 July** MOAA meeting  
Representative Nancy Boyda will speak.

Tuesday 18 September MOAA meeting

Tuesday 20 November MOAA meeting

### 2008:

Tuesday 15 January MOAA meeting

Tuesday 18 March MOAA meeting



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

***Remember  
to display the flag  
on  
July 4th***