



# Jayhawk Chapter MOAA Newsletter



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## March Program:

Our guest speaker will be MOAA President,  
Vice Admiral Norbert (Norb) R. Ryan, Jr., USN (Ret).

★★★★★ CHAPTER  
awarded for  
2002 / 2003 / 2005

★★★★ CHAPTER  
awarded for  
2004 / 2006 / 2007

## The President's Corner . . .

Dear Jayhawk Chapter Members and Friends:

Let me start by saying that I am truly honored to be your President for the coming year. It's been a great experience having had the opportunity to serve on the Chapter Board and as 1st Vice President under the leadership of our past three Chapter Presidents, Erv Hodges, Mike Sullivan and Bernie Kish, and I am very much looking forward to the coming year!

As usual there are lots of things going on with the Jayhawk Chapter: We continue to actively support the three ROTC units at KU, welcoming the cadets and midshipmen and the unit cadre to our meetings, supporting the General Clay Comfort Scholarships, and enrolling the newly commissioned officers as both Chapter and National members of MOAA. We are working to actively strengthen contacts with our colleagues at Fort Leavenworth – inviting students and members of the faculty at the Command and General Staff College to join our meetings as speakers and as our guests. You, our members, continue to be incredibly active in the local community and at KU. We are active participants at the state level – in addition to regular attendance by our Chapter officers at meetings of the MOAA Kansas Council of Chapters, our own Jim Cooper is currently serving as the Council President-Elect. And we have just been recognized by MOAA for our superior recruiting efforts in the association-wide “Give Me 10!” program. By enrolling more new members than our competition, the Jayhawk Chapter achieved First Place in the Category V (121 to 149 members) for 2008. We all owe special thanks to John Halladay for leading this effort.

Finally, we have a special treat in store for our March 10 meeting. Our speaker will be MOAA President, Vice Admiral Norbert (Norb) R. Ryan, Jr., USN (Ret). Admiral Ryan's leadership has been central to the success that MOAA has achieved on all levels since he took the reins in 2002. Please join us on March 10 for another evening of good fellowship to hear a great presentation!

*I wish you all the best,*

*Dave*



## Volume XIV, Issue 2

1 March 2009

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\* Reservations should be sent  
to John Halladay by  
**4 March**



## JAYHAWK CHAPTER NEWS

### PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING CHANGES:

Our March meeting date has been changed to **10 March**.  
Reservations for this meeting will be due by **4 March** and should be directed to  
**COL John Halladay, 2403 Manchester Road, Lawrence, KS 66049-1646. Phone: 843-6184.**

**DUES ARE NOW DUE.** To date only about half of you have submitted your annual 2009 dues. For those of you who have not yet already done so, please send your dues in as soon as possible. You may do so with your reservation for the March dinner. Remember, our operating expenses come out of our joint dues account, so please help support the chapter.

**COMFORT AWARD FUND:** This May the Comfort Awards will again be given to outstanding young leaders from the three ROTC programs at Kansas University. The KU Endowment Fund has not provided the income needed to meet the full \$1500.00 so approximately \$500.00 in contributions from our members is needed to complete the awards. Please forward your contributions to Jim Cooper where they will be used to complete the award for this year or placed with the principal for future years.

The Board is considering sponsoring a Veterans Day golf tournament this fall as a fund raising event to grow the Comfort Award Fund. Tentatively the date of Friday, 6 November, has been selected with play beginning at 12:00 noon. Proposals from Eagle Bend and Alvarado have been received and it appears that with 72 players and success in obtaining sponsors we should be able to raise at least \$4000.00 for the fund. Your help will be needed to ensure the success of the event. Please contact Erv Hodges at [ehodges@sunflower.com](mailto:ehodges@sunflower.com) if you are able to assist in planning and executing the tournament.

**JAYHAWK MOAA DIRECTORY - LAST CALL:** The 2009 Directory is upon us and this is our last Newsletter/meeting to get our message out to members . . . please take a look at your Directory . . . if your picture is not there (or if you would prefer an updated picture), please see John Halladay at our March meeting or send us a photo by mail (we will return the original) or by e-mail.

Thanks a lot for your help in making the 2009 Directory our best ever!!

## TAPS



CDR Donald D. Forsyth, 82, died Monday, 16 February, at Lawrence Memorial Hospital and funeral services were held Friday, 20 February, at Plymouth Congregational Church. Private family burial will take place at Memorial Park Cemetery. He was born 6 March 1926, in Manila, Philippines, the son of Lt. Cmdr. George D. Forsyth USN and Anne B. Birnie Forsyth.

He attended public schools in Long Beach, CA; Norfolk, VA; and Quincy, MA, where he graduated in June 1943. He attended Northeastern University in Boston for one year before entering the Navy V-12 College Program at Tufts College in Medford, MA. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science in engineering and was commissioned an Ensign, USNR in February 1946. He later transferred to the regular Navy and served on the light cruiser Denver and destroyers Soley, Hanson and Waldron. In February 1950, he received flight training at the Naval air station in Pensacola, FL, and received his Navy wings in Corpus Christi, TX, in May 1951. He served at the Naval air center at Patuxent River in Maryland, the Naval facility in Port Lyautey in North Africa and various aircraft carriers in the Mediterranean area from 1951 until 1954. He was a flight instructor in Pensacola from 1954 to 1957. He joined the Pacific Fleet based on Whidbey Island, WA, and served on the Aircraft Carrier Midway. He later served as flight test division officer at the Naval Missile Center, Point Mugu, CA; air operations officer at Naval Station Midway Island; and executive assistant to the deputy commander of the Bureau of Naval Weapons in Washington, DC.

In 1969 he moved to Lawrence, to serve as executive officer of the Kansas University Naval ROTC Unit until his retirement 30 June 1972. Following retirement, he entered graduate school at KU and was awarded a Master of Science in water resources engineering in 1973 and a Master of Business Administration in 1975. From 1976 until 1988, he was the real estate appraiser and retirement programs officer at Lawrence Savings Association and Columbia Savings. Following retirement from Columbia Savings, he worked as an independent real estate appraiser and new construction inspector.

He was a member of Plymouth Congregational Church, the Lawrence Kiwanis Club, for which he served as president in 1986-87, the Elks Club, the American Legion, The Jayhawk Model Masters Flying Club and Big Blue Sportsmen's Club.

CDR Forsyth married Rose Marie Livezey in Corpus Christi, TX, on 1 June 1951. She died 15 April 2008. Survivors include three sons, Michael and Patrick, both of Lawrence, and Robert, of Papillion, NE; and six grandchildren, Emily, Kelly, Alex, Daniel, David and Elizabeth.

**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 John Basso*

#### **Greetings from KU Army ROTC.**

This note finds the Army ROTC program knee deep in our spring training cycle. To give you a better idea of the training a typical cadet gets, I thought it might be interesting to outline our spring lab schedule. Our cadets began the semester with three indoor labs focused on combat lifesaver and medevac skills, on the evolution of infantry weaponry and modern crew serve weapons (taught by Dr. Shawn Faulkner of CGSC), and on rock-climbing skills. We then moved outdoors to conduct survival, evasion, resistance, and escape training, followed by basic rifle marksmanship training and M16 rifle qualification, and by land navigation in Lawrence and Fort Leavenworth. Much of the remaining labs focus on infantry squad maneuvers and on teaching adaptive leadership to our squad and platoon leaders through the use of "variables" such as conducting negotiations with a sheik, setting up a traffic control point, and responding to a downed aircraft. Additionally, we have three other training events that we will focus on this spring. In March, twenty of

our cadets will compete over two days for the German Army Proficiency Badge. On Saturday, 4 April, we will host the KU Ranger Buddy Competition, the largest buddy team competition in the nation. We expect over 100 two-cadet teams to compete, including teams from as far away as Princeton University and the University of North Dakota. Please come out and watch if you are interested; most of the events will be at Clinton Lake's Overflow Park. Finally, in mid-April we will conduct a Chinook Helicopter Air-Assault into Camp Clark, Missouri, and spend 48 hours conducting individual and squad training with K-State and Pitt State Army ROTC programs. As you can see, our cadet remain busy on their road to becoming commissioned officers.

**Rock Chalk!**

*LTC John Basso*



## *Navy News*

### *CAPT Thomas Arnold, USN*



#### **Greetings from the Jayhawk Navy!**

This promises to be another busy semester for the KU Naval ROTC Battalion. Key events include: an Aviation Club field trip to NAS Pensacola, FL; an ROTC Drill/Fitness Challenge Meet at the University of Colorado; the annual Notre Dame NROTC Leadership Conference; a visit to KU NROTC by RDML Phil Davidson, Deputy Director for Strategy and Policy on the Joint Staff; and the Spring Awards Ceremony. Many of our midshipmen will participate in one or more of these events. MOAA members are welcome to attend the Naval ROTC Spring Awards Ceremony which is scheduled for April 29<sup>th</sup> at 3:30PM in the Mallott Room of the Kansas Union. Finally, we will close out the semester by commissioning ten new officers into the Navy and Marine Corps!

Please join me in congratulating MIDN 4/C Myles Barbula of Colorado Springs, CO who was this year's PNS Leadership Scholarship winner. MIDN Barbula earned a 3½-year NROTC scholarship based on his academic, physical readiness and leadership performance.

In closing, I want to again thank the MOAA Jayhawk Chapter membership for your support to the KU NROTC Unit. The midshipmen and my staff especially enjoyed the opportunity to join you for the November dinner and program. Thank you again for your warm hospitality and for the effort you make to recognize all the ROTC programs at KU and to honor our nation's future officers.

*CAPT Tom Arnold*



## *Air Force News*

### *LtCol Gena Stuchbery, USAF*

#### **MOAA Friends,**

This is a great opportunity for me to talk to you about recruiting. So, this article will be about how the Detachment is doing from the Unit Admissions Officer's perspective and give you information on how you can help us in our pursuit of finding solid applicants for the world's best Armed Forces.

Our cadre and cadet recruiters did a great job last semester hitting the campus and multiple recruiting events in the area. This hard work resulted in seven new starts this spring, two of whom are preparing to go to field training already. They are a little behind but we will make sure they are trained and ready to go by summer.

From a retention standpoint, the new cadet wing staff is doing an outstanding job making sure the cadets are having a fun training experience. On Saturday, 7 Feb 09, the cadets went out to KU's Adams Campus and participated in a ropes course. They had a great time getting some fresh air, hiking through the woods, working on teambuilding and problem solving.

This past leadership lab, our Marine counterparts taught our cadets land navigation and pacing and will follow up with a ground tactics lesson next week. All this training is to prepare the cadets for a field leadership exercise versus K-State's AFROTC Detachment, in which they will demonstrate what they've learned with paintball guns.

Retaining cadets is the fun part, the hard part is trying to spread the word about ROTC and get students to try the program. We have some initiatives we are attempting this semester in hopes to increase certain career fields. In March,

we have five medical personnel coming up from McConnell AFB to talk to nursing students. This event will be at KU Medical Center and nursing students from all of our cross-town schools will be invited as well. Please contact me if you know someone that would like to attend.

Another recruiting initiative we have on the horizon is a Judge Advocate General (JAG) career day. On Thursday, 2 Apr 09, we have a JAG from Whiteman AFB coming to talk about what they do in the AF at the KU law school. The University of Washburn Law School will be invited as well. Both events will help spread the word about the Air Force and let students know there are a lot of opportunities available.

Finally, many families in this area don't know about the opportunities available through military service, so I'm trying to educate as many as possible. With your help I can reach many more. I ask if you know or talk to any sharp young men and women you think would make good officers and are looking for college/scholarship opportunities, to please send them my way ([edmondsc@ku.edu](mailto:edmondsc@ku.edu) or 785-864-4676). Whatever branch of service they are looking for, I will make sure they have a solid point of contact. As always, thank you very much for your service and your continued support of our programs.

Respectfully,

***Capt Corey Edmonds***

#### **From Col. Gary LaGrange, President, Kansas Council of Chapters:**

**Help us Learn...Give us Hope** continues to provide school supplies to children through our soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan. Over 43,000 pounds have been donated with 38,000 pounds shipped. The remainder will be shipped in the near future. Our first pallet sized shipments departed for Afghanistan last week and will be used to support the Kansas National Guard in Laghman Province. Several videos of distributions in Iraq are posted on the website [www.helpuslearngiveushope.org](http://www.helpuslearngiveushope.org) and the ability to purchase

and donate supplies on line at wholesale prices has also been added at the website. The number of children in areas of support has grown to 600,000 and more units ask to be added to the distribution list every week. National Guard Armories in Kansas City, Kansas, Lawrence, Topeka, Emporia, Manhattan, Junction City, Abilene, Salina and Wichita (South) have been opened for collection sites and others will follow. We are always in need of more supplies. Please help pass the word.

***The person who says it cannot be done should not interrupt the person who is doing it.***

*Unknown*

## MOAA LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

This is a summary of the many items MOAA produces each week on legislative activities. Those who have e-mail receive the full Legislative Updates each week.

### MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for January 9, 2009:

#### More Nondisabled Vets to Get VA Care

The VA is gearing up to expand opportunities for certain "Priority 8" (nondisabled, middle-income) veterans to enroll in VA health care. Since January 2003 Priority 8 vets have been barred from enrolling because their income exceeded the VA's means test threshold.

A new regulation is in the works to modify that. It's expected to take effect in June 2009 and will be applied retroactively to all enrollment applications received on or after January 1, 2009.

MOAA members and other veterans with questions on this issue can contact VA's Health Benefits Service Center at 1-877-222 VETS (8387) or visit the VA health eligibility website.

<http://echo4.bluehornet.com/ct/3985365:4663104326:m:3:230981068:7CCEB23F424F9FFECF35AE25AF58CC02>

### MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for January 16, 2009:

#### DoD Appeals Widows' Benefits Decision

Several of those survivors who were eligible for Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuities sued the government in 2007, claiming that the specific language of the new law required continuation of their SBP in addition to the DIC restoration, without the normal dollar-for-dollar offset.

On June 12, 2008, the US Court of Claims issued a summary judgment agreeing with the widows and directing the Defense Department to restore their SBP annuities.

On December 15, the Pentagon filed paperwork to appeal the decision to the US Court of Appeals. DoD doesn't have to restore the SBP annuities until the appeal is heard and a final judgment is rendered.

MOAA again commends the tenacity of these survivors in bringing the suit. We found the Claims Court's reasoning encouraging, but the appeals process is precarious. These brave survivors aren't out of the woods yet.

#### Post-9/11 GI Bill Transferability

MOAA has learned that some people nearing retirement from active service who are eligible for the new Post-9/11 GI Bill will be able to transfer their benefits to a spouse or dependent children.

Congress gave the Defense Department broad authority to set the rules for transferring the benefits as a tool to induce retention or reenlistment in the Armed Forces including the National Guard and Reserves. The Post-9/11 GI Bill program begins on Aug. 1, 2009.

The transfer program will work as follows, assuming an individual has qualifying Post-9/11 service in the Armed Forces -- active duty or service in the Selected Reserve.

To be eligible to transfer to a spouse or child, a member must:

- \* Have served at least 6 years in the Armed Forces on the date of election and agree to serve four additional years from that date; or
- \* Have at least 10 years of service in the Armed Forces on the date of election and be precluded from

committing to four additional years by law or Service/DoD policy. For example, servicemembers subject to high-year tenure rules and who have 10 years' service at the time of election would be eligible

- \* Members who are currently retirement eligible or who will become retirement eligible during the period Aug. 1, 2009 through Aug. 1, 2012 can also qualify. "Retirement eligible" means completion of 20 years of active federal service or completion of 20 years' reserve service

Here's how the program will work for various cohorts of retirement eligibles:

- \* For those eligible to retire on or before Aug. 1, 2009, no additional service is required
- \* For those eligible for retirement after Aug. 1, 2009 and before July 1, 2010, one year additional service is required
- \* For those eligible for retirement after Aug. 1, 2010 and before July 1, 2011, two years' additional service is required
- \* For those eligible for retirement after Aug. 1, 2011 and before July 1, 2012, three years' additional service is required

#### Bills of Interest

The 111th Congress has gotten off to a fast start this year, introducing several hundred bills in little more than a week.

A number of them of potentially significant interest to MOAA members are listed below. Click on the bill number to send your legislators a message urging their cosponsorship.

H.R. 208 - Rep. Joe Wilson (R-SC): Would make active duty service by reservists creditable for early retirement, retroactive to September 11, 2001. Last year, Congress authorized Guard and Reserve members with service after Jan. 28, 2008 to retire 3 months early for each 90 days on active duty after that date. MOAA believes all active service since 9/11/01 should receive such credit.

<http://capwiz.com/moaa/issues/bills/?bill=12448661>

H.R. 270 - Rep. Robert Latta (R-OH): Would authorize Guard and reserve retirees who are not yet age 60 to purchase TRICARE Standard coverage. Currently, drilling Guard and reserve members can purchase TRICARE Reserve Select but they lose health coverage when they stop drilling until they reach age 60 and qualify for retirement.

<http://capwiz.com/moaa/issues/bills/?bill=12448611>

H.R. 303 - Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL): Would authorize full, immediate concurrent receipt for all retirees with at least 20 years of service who have service-connected disabilities.

<http://capwiz.com/moaa/issues/bills/?bill=12446076>

H.R. 333 - Rep. Jim Marshall (D-GA): Would authorize full, immediate concurrent receipt for all retirees with service-connected disabilities, including those medically retired with less than 20 years of service.

<http://capwiz.com/moaa/issues/bills/?bill=12448516>

S. 157 - Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-ME): Would waive the requirement for retirees age 70 1/2 to take a minimum distribution from IRA/401(k) for tax years 2008 through 2010. Current law authorizes this only for tax year 2009.

<http://echo4.bluehornet.com/ct/4019522:4707019917:m:3:230981068:ED3775CF17D2515084DA95601D15B64B>

#### MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for January 23, 2009:

##### Disability Review Board On-Line

The Physical Disability Board of Review (PDBR) is now accepting applications from veterans who were medically separated since Sept. 11, 2001 who wish to have their records reviewed for a possible increase in their disability rating and qualification for medical retirement.

The board can consider applications from veterans who were/are medically separated between September 11, 2001, and December 31, 2009 with a disability rating of 20% or less and not found eligible for retirement.

The application form DD-294 is available on-line.

<http://echo4.bluehornet.com/ct/4053960:4747904295:m:3:230981068:B8A6A7D60567457654BB3E616C7C942A>

By law, the PDBR will reassess whether an applicant's rating should be raised, possibly to 30% or higher, which would make the person eligible for lifetime military retired pay and TRICARE coverage for themselves and their dependent family members.

#### MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for January 30, 2009:

##### More Bill of Interest

In spite of a busy week working on economic stimulus packages, legislators found time to introduce several additional bills to assist the military community.

H.R. 775 (Rep. Ortiz, D-TX) would repeal the requirement to deduct VA survivor benefits from military Survivor Benefit Plan annuities.

<http://echo4.bluehornet.com/ct/4086926:4793610105:m:3:230981068:15D7DFB4AC3C5CF1D6D734F1940AA678>

H.R. 613 (Rep. Jones, R-NC) would allow a survivor to keep the entire retired pay for the month in which a servicemember dies. Current practice requires the government to recoup the money and pro-rate it based on the date of death.

<http://echo4.bluehornet.com/ct/4086927:4793610105:m:3:230981068:15D7DFB4AC3C5CF1D6D734F1940AA678>

H.R. 235 (Rep. Berman, D-CA) would repeal the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision, which reduce Social Security annuities for many federal civilian retirees and survivors, as well as thousands of teachers and other state employees.

<http://echo4.bluehornet.com/ct/4086928:4793610105:m:3:230981068:15D7DFB4AC3C5CF1D6D734F1940AA678>

H.R. 593 (Rep. Smith, D-WA) would better protect against deduction of VA disability compensation from military disability severance pay in instances of combat- or operations-related disabilities. A narrow interpretation of the recent law change on this topic covers only injuries occurring in a combat zone - excluding those incurred in combat training or other operations-related accidents.

<http://echo4.bluehornet.com/ct/4086929:4793610105:m:3:230981068:15D7DFB4AC3C5CF1D6D734F1940AA678>

#### MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for February 6, 2009:

Air Force Wants Retired Aviators Back Pilots, navigators, and air battle managers who retired as a lieutenant colonel or below and who are below the age of 60 are eligible to apply for the Air Force's Voluntary Retired Rated Recall Program. If selected, officers can expect to serve for 24 to 48 months.

Find out more information.

<http://echo4.bluehornet.com/ct/4125306:4841066283:m:3:230981068:0CFFD07E88CB4EFA6A14054B612D6B9D>

##### TRICARE Fee Bill Needs Support

Reps. Chet Edwards (D-TX) and Walter Jones (R-NC) this week jointly reintroduced their Military Retirees' Health Care Protection Act (H.R. 816) which would bar the Defense Department from unilaterally increasing military TRICARE enrollment fees, co-payments, and other fees. **Now they need your help in asking your legislators to join them in cosponsoring it.**

Under their legislation, only Congress would have that authority.

Edwards and Jones have championed this legislation for several years, and have been joined by hundreds of their colleagues who signed on as cosponsors of their bill. Their effort, along with the resistance of top Armed Services Committee leaders, is a big reason why Congress has rejected repeated Pentagon proposals to double or triple TRICARE fees for retirees under age 65 and increase pharmacy co-pays for all beneficiaries who purchase medications through TRICARE's retail or mail-order pharmacy systems.

"This legislation is about offering protection for the men and women who are willing to protect our nation from its enemies, and keeping promises to those who have promised to put themselves in harm's way when called upon," Rep. Jones agreed. "The families of our armed forces deserve consistent health care benefits."

MOAA and The Military Coalition strongly endorse H.R. 816 and are most grateful these two champions for their leadership.

**Please urge your U.S. representative to sign on as a cosponsor of this important legislation.**

<http://echo4.bluehornet.com/ct/4125303:4841066283:m:3:230981068:0CFFD07E88CB4EFA6A14054B612D6B9D>

##### Gen. Shinseki: From "Soldier's Soldier" to "Veteran's Veteran"

The House Veterans Affairs Committee expressed eagerness to work with new VA Secretary Eric Shinseki at a hearing this week where the secretary testified on how he plans to transform the VA. Chairman Bob Filner (D-CA) applauded Shinseki's reputation as a man of principle and honesty in his Army career, from which he retired as Army Chief of Staff.

"Your visible presence in the VA is absolutely necessary because there has been a lot of confidence lost (by employees, veterans and the country) - you are now the 'Veterans' Veteran' -- be honest with us," said Filner.

Shinseki talked about the President's vision of a 21st Century VA and his plans for "a resetting of VA vectors." He said he intends to focus the VA on being veteran-centric, results-driven, and forward-looking.

The secretary acknowledged ongoing challenges in creating a "seamless transition between military and VA health care and benefits." Solving those problems comes down to leadership involvement, he said, insisting that technology alone can't get the job done. He said changing VA's culture will require innovation and initiative to be relevant and responsive to veterans.

Shinseki said he and Defense Secretary Gates will personally lead the next two meetings of the DoD/VA senior oversight committee, a joint executive body normally headed by their deputies, to send a clear message down the chain that they intend to be engaged on these important issues.

Shinseki said he supports automatic enrollment of wounded warriors in the VA. "Having that as a requirement alone will force the two agencies to work together and take care of the handoff issues between their departments," he said.

When asked if he would support advance (two-year) VA health care appropriations to ensure continuity of funding between fiscal years, the new secretary said he supports "timely funding" and would work with the committee to do his part to prevent delays in the budget process.

MOAA and other military and veterans associations have supported the advance funding concept because of Congress' routine failure to approve VA funding bills until well into each new fiscal year, which forces interim VA budget cutbacks and stalls needed new programs.

"I promise to be a forceful advocate for veterans, and I promise to be forthright and direct to you [Congress] - taking care of veterans is what the VA is all about," Shinseki said in his closing remarks.

## **MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for February 13, 2009:**

### **How Will The Stimulus Package Affect You?**

#### **The final stimulus pack**

**Special Payment:** Social Security annuitants, disabled veterans, and certain others would be eligible for a one-time \$250 payment. Anyone who is eligible for this payment and also eligible for the federal income tax rebate mentioned above would have the \$250 deducted from the latter in determining the end-of-year tax liability.

**Military Homeowner Assistance Program (HAP):** HAP benefits (normally payable only at BRAC locations) are extended to certain military homeowners who bought homes before July 1, 2006 and who sell the homes before Sept. 30, 2012. To qualify the person must have received PCS orders or must have incurred a service-caused condition during a deployment in that period that caused disability retirement. For a member who died during a deployment, the surviving spouse is eligible. The HAP authorizes the government to reimburse the homeowner for a loss on the sale up to 95% of the original value, or to purchase the home for up to 90% of the original value. Market values are determined by the Defense Department.

**Education Tax Credit:** Taxpayers with college education expenses would receive a tax credit of up to \$2,500 for the cost of tuition, books, and related expenses during 2009 and 2010. The credit would be 100% of the first \$2,000 and 25% of the next \$2,000. The credit would phase out for taxpayers with adjusted gross incomes above \$80,000 (single) or \$160,000 (married).

#### **Bill Seeks to Ease Troop/Family Stress**

MOAA President VADM Norb Ryan (USN-Ret) joined leaders of several other military and veterans associations at a Feb. 12 press conference announcing introduction of bipartisan legislation, H.R. 1052, calling for more reasonable "dwell time" for military units between combat deployments.

**Sponsored by Rep. Ellen Tauscher (D-CA) and more than a dozen other House members including Rep. Walter Jones (R-NC), the bill would set a minimum standard that active duty units should be home for at least the same duration as the previous deployment before being**

**deployed again. For Guard/Reserve units the standard would be three times the length of the previous deployment.**

**The bill establishes goals to increase the dwell time to three times deployment length for active duty units and five years for the Guard/Reserve. The bill would authorize waivers to dwell time requirements for volunteers, special operations forces, and in times of emergency.**

**"We recognize that mission comes first, and that current missions and force levels keep us from being able to meet these dwell time requirements for now" said Tauscher, "and that's why we included the waiver provisions." But she insisted that the nation can't keep extracting the current level of sacrifice from military members and families.**

**Rep. Carol Shea-Porter (D-NH) observed that requiring multiple, short-turn combat tours means compounding the exposure of military men and women to combat trauma and stress conditions that could affect them for the rest of their lives. She noted that, for the first time in January, the number of military suicides exceeded the number of combat deaths.**

**VADM Ryan expressed MOAA's support for the legislation, saying, "This bill lays down a marker that we can't backtrack from planned force increases. If we have to give waivers for even these very modest dwell times, that's a clear warning signal that our forces are far too small for the missions we're expecting of them. We simply must 'stay the course' on the current plan to grow the force. The alternative is consciously forcing our troops and families to keep bearing an ever-greater share of the nation's wartime sacrifice, and that's a recipe for an eventual retention and readiness meltdown."**

#### **Two-year VA Funding Gains Support**

On February 12, Sen. Daniel Akaka (D-HI) and Rep. Bob Filner (D-CA), chairmen of the Senate and House Veterans Affairs committees, were joined by several other lawmakers from both parties along with representatives of The Military Coalition (TMC) and other veterans groups at a press conference to announce their new bills to establish a two-year VA funding plan.

In 18 of the last 20 years, Congress delayed action on VA appropriations beyond October 1, disrupting health services, stymieing construction and modernization projects, and slowing major research efforts at the start of the new fiscal year. Requiring funding to be budgeted a year in advance will provide the VA with better planning tools and more predictable funding.

**"We are proud to stand with...veterans of all generations, including The Military Coalition, and we look forward to making this legislation a reality," he said.**

**He went on to recognize MOAA's Col. Bob Norton (USA-Ret) for his role in making this legislation an important Coalition priority. The two-year funding mechanism is TMC's and MOAA's top VA goal for 2009.**

**At press time, only the House bill number, H.R. 1016, was available. As soon as both bill numbers are available, MOAA will put them on our web site so you can urge your lawmakers to support this important legislation.**

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**MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for February 20, 2009:**Pentagon Issues Report on TRICARE Fees

The December 2007 report of the Task Force on the Future of Military Health Care got a lot of attention by urging large increases in fees for military retirees under 65 and an enrollment fee for TRICARE For Life, among many other proposals.

For the last year, those recommendations have been under review by a special committee appointed by the Secretary of Defense. Now that committee has issued its "recommendations on the recommendations."

The good news is that the Pentagon panel didn't propose fee hikes as severe as those urged by the Task Force, and it didn't support the proposal for a TFL enrollment fee.

The bad news is that it still recommended significant fee hikes for retirees under 65, and proposed means-testing those fees based on total family income. Here are some selected specifics:

**Fees for under-65 retirees:** The DoD committee agreed with the Task Force that TRICARE fees should be raised and periodically adjusted to reflect some percentage of military health costs, but declined to propose specific fee levels. They recommended tying TRICARE Prime enrollment fees to some percentage of the Medicare Part B premium (\$96.40 per month this year for the base rate), with a family rate at double the single rate. TRICARE Standard deductibles would be raised by an amount sufficient to provide the same relative level of beneficiary cost-sharing. The committee proposed to have the Defense Department secure congressional authority to raise fees and then figure out how much to raise them. They envisioned phasing in the fee increases over a period of years, citing the Task Force's four-year plan.

**Tiering/Means-Testing:** The committee recommended setting different tiers of fees based on retirees' family adjusted gross income.

**Pharmacy Copays:** The committee proposed eliminating copays for generic and brand-name formulary medications purchased through the mail-order pharmacy system. For retail pharmacy purchases, copays would be \$4 for generics (vs. the current \$3), \$20 for brand names (vs. \$9), and \$30 for non-formulary medications (vs. \$22).

MOAA is pleased at the proposal that we've previously endorsed to eliminate mail-order copays for most medications as an incentive to use that venue, which offers significant savings for members and the government alike.

But most of the other recommendations still violate what MOAA believes should be fair principles for military health care fees. We do not accept that, unlike almost all other employer health programs, military retirees' TRICARE benefits should be subject to means-testing. We also reject the idea that military beneficiaries should have to pay any set share of DoD costs, when those costs are driven up by unique military readiness requirements, documented inefficiencies, and ineffective accounting systems that have been deemed un-auditable by the Government Accountability Office and DoD's own Inspector General.

DoD Panel Cites Family/Wounded Warrior Needs

This week, members of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) briefed Defense

leaders on their 2008 findings and recommendations which included:

- \* Expanding childcare availability consistent with installation operational tempos
- \* Improving educational opportunities for military children
- \* Continuing and expanding mentorship programs to help women succeed in the military

Among other things, the committee report urged full funding of federal aid to schools with significant populations of military children and encourages more partnerships with local school districts, including possibly allocating land for school districts on bases.

Each service provided updates on their wounded warrior programs, emphasizing support for families. The agenda also included a RAND Corp. briefing, Understanding the Deployment Experiences of Guard and Reserve Families, as well as information on healthcare behaviors and Guard support for wounded warriors and their families.

DACOWITS plans to expand their focus on families of wounded warriors next year, as well as examining the roles of deployed women.

DACOWITS was created in 1951 to provide recommendations relative to recruiting, retaining and training qualified professional women in the Armed Forces. In 2002, the committee's mission was expanded to include advice on family issues.

More Bills of Interest

H.R. 1052 (Rep. Ellen Tauscher, D-CA) would mandate minimum periods of rest and recuperation for units and members of the regular and reserve components of the Armed Forces between deployments for Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom.

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S. 46 (Sen. John Ensign, R-NV) would repeal the Medicare outpatient rehabilitation therapy cap. Medicare payments for physical, speech, or occupational therapy were capped at unrealistically low amounts in 1997. Every year, Congress has delayed implementing the lower caps. Most recently, Congress has authorized an exception (until January 2010) to allow therapy payments to exceed the annual cap if such services are determined to be medically necessary.

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H.R. 484 (Rep. Michael Rogers, R-AL) would direct DoD to develop a plan to provide chiropractic health care services and benefits as a permanent part of the TRICARE program.

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H.R. 1016 & S. 423 (Rep. Bob Filner, D-CA, and Sen. Daniel Akaka, D-HI) would authorize advance appropriations for VA health programs by providing two-fiscal year budget authority to ensure more timely and adequate funding.

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*We are still looking for members who can/will receive the Newsletter via e-mail.*

*Please let us know at [jwhalladay@sunflower.com](mailto:jwhalladay@sunflower.com)*

## 2009 Jayhawk MOAA Calendar:

Tuesday 10 March MOAA meeting  
**(Note change of date)**

MOAA President, VADM Norbert (Norb) Ryan, Jr., USN (Ret)  
will be our speaker

Tuesday 19 May MOAA meeting

Tuesday 21 July MOAA meeting

Tuesday 15 September MOAA meeting

Tuesday 17 November MOAA meeting



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***One Powerful Voice.®***

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### **PLEASE NOTE**

***Meeting Date: 10 March 2009***

#### **Reservation Change**

***Send reservations by 4 March to:***

***COL John Halladay***  
***2403 Manchester Road***  
***Lawrence, KS 66049-1646***