



# Jayhawk Chapter MOAA Newsletter



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## January Program:

Our guest speaker will be former Kansas Governor Mike Hayden.  
His topic will be "The Changing Face of Kansas."

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

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

### The President's Corner . . .

Dear Jayhawk MOAA Friends and Colleagues

On behalf of our Chapter Officers and Board of Directors, I wish each of you a Wonderful New Year – filled with good health and life's blessings.

This past year – 2008 – has been another memorable one for the Jayhawk Chapter.

- Enjoyable camaraderie and fellowship at our meetings.
- Outstanding guest speakers.
- Noteworthy support of exemplary ROTC students with the General Clay Comfort Scholarships.
- Significant additions to our membership rolls.
- Continued support of Memorial Day and Veterans Day events and activities.
- Telling involvement in the Lawrence and KU communities by chapter members.

The list goes on and on and on.

I highlight these because they are your accomplishments and I am saying Thank You for the honor and privilege of serving as your President. A special Thank You to our splendid Board of Directors for their commitment to the chapter. We say "Well Done" to Erv Hodges, Jim McMurray and John Priddle – three "franchise players" who will be missed in our close knit group. And – warmly welcome our three new Board Members, John Basso, Dwight Jackson and Jim Stokes. Finally, Thank You, Thank You, Thank You – Shirley Halladay – for your tireless professionalism in putting together our Chapter Newsletter.

We will have another great meeting on January 20<sup>th</sup>. It will be Army ROTC Night – with the cadets providing the Color Guard and several of LTC John Basso's cadre joining us.

Our guest speaker is Mike Hayden – former Governor of Kansas and current Secretary of the Kansas Department of Parks and Wildlife. His presentation is on "The Changing Face of Kansas."

Thank you again for your continued commitment and support. Please join us on Inauguration Night – Tuesday January 20<sup>th</sup> – for another evening of fun and comradeship – as we hand over the reins of the Jayhawk Chapter to my good friend – Dave Darwin.

Very Respectfully,

*Bernie*



### Volume XIV, Issue 1

1 January 2009

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Newsletter Editors:

COL John & Shirley Halladay

Web Master:

Lt Col Stanley Sneegeas, USAF (Ret)

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**\* Reservations should be sent  
to Jim Cooper by  
15 January**



# JAYHAWK CHAPTER NEWS

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE.** Please send in your annual dues, so we can keep our chapter on firm financial footing. Just send them in as usual to Jim Cooper - you can use the form at the end of the newsletter. We appreciate your support!

**COMFORT SCHOLARSHIP FUND:** In your year-end giving, please remember the Comfort Scholarship Fund.

**SALVATION ARMY BELL RINGERS - Checkers Grocery, 06 December 2008:**



Buck Newsom &  
Jim Cooper



Jim McMurray  
Bernie Kish (left early)



Erv Hodges &  
Mike Lee



Ray, Jean &  
Tommy Finch



John & Shirley  
Halladay

**From COL Gary LaGrange, President, Kansas Council of Chapters:**

"Help us Learn...Give us Hope" continues to grow. More than 38,000 pounds of school supplies have been donated and 28,500 pounds has been shipped to soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan. The 2BCT from Fort Riley deployed during October and 5000 pounds of supplies accompanied them. An additional 4,500 has been sent to them via the postal system. 2BCT distribution to schools is beginning this month in Baghdad and Mudimayah.



Governor Sebelius, Major General Tod Bunting and Brigadier General Wiggins participated in packing back packs at the Manhattan Armory on the 14th of November. Governor Sebelius announced a State wide effort to collect school supplies through "Help us Learn...Give us Hope" for all deployed Kansas National Guard and active units. To facilitate the increase in scope, National Guard Armories will be used as collection points across the State.



*School children in Taji*

To learn more visit [www.helpuslearngiveushope.org](http://www.helpuslearngiveushope.org) or call Gary LaGrange at 785-537-7493. There is a pressing need for persons in areas around the State to serve as collection coordinators.

**From Jim Cooper:**

**"Veterans in the Classroom" Project Takes Off.** The Chapter's Veterans in the Classroom project was a success on this last Veterans' Day. Bernie Kish, Buck Newsom, Jim Cooper, and Charles Heller all visited Prairie Park Elementary School in southeast Lawrence to share the significance of the day, one-on-one with various classes of eager young elementary school children. The kids kept the eager questions coming, reflecting their interest in the subject and the necessity to keep this program going strong. John Mosher traveled to Ridgeview Elementary School in Olathe, where his son, J.D., is interning. John represented the Air Force as part of a multi-service program that was sponsored by the American Legion and other groups.

If you are interested in participating in this program in the future, please contact Jim Cooper and let him know. We'll keep a current list of those interested so we can respond when the school districts contact us for veterans.

**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.**

## Governor Mike Hayden to Address Jayhawk Chapter

Former Kansas Governor Mike Hayden, who is currently serving the State as our Secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Parks, is the guest speaker for our January meeting. Governor Hayden will make a presentation on "The Changing Face of Kansas."

Mike Hayden was raised in the rural town of Atwood in Northwestern Kansas. It has here that he developed a passion for the out-of-doors. He graduated from Kansas State University with a Bachelor's degree in Wildlife Conservation and received a Master's degree in Biology from Fort Hays State University. He served as Kansas' 41<sup>st</sup> Governor from 1987-1991.

Governor Hayden is a military veteran, having served in Vietnam as an Infantry Company Commander from 1969-1970. He and his wife Patti reside here in Lawrence.



## Army News LTC John Basso

### Happy Holidays Jayhawk Chapter,

We recently completed our Fall Semester awards ceremony and in so doing had an opportunity to catch our breath and look more closely at all that our cadets accomplished.

Along with a strong performance academically, our cadets excelled in Physical Fitness, raising our Army Physical Fitness Test average to its highest point in recent memory. Much of the progress reflects directly on the strength of the non-commissioned officers now training cadets at KU – MSG John Peacock, SFC (promotable) Jason Woodbury, and SFC (retired) Joe Masarik are a formidable team and the cadets and I owe them great thanks for all that they are putting into our program.

Our military skills have also improved. Among other notable accomplishments, our Ranger Challenge team had the top performer in rifle marksmanship, Cadet Corbett, and in disassembly and assembly of the M-16 rifle, Cadet Patterson.

These are but a few of the collective and individual accomplishments of the cadets this semester.

While the semester is ending, the military careers of three of our cadets are just starting. Commissioning in December 2008 are:

Casey Atkins, Aviation

Steven Elliot, Military Intelligence

and

Brett Weir, Army Nurse Corps.

Congratulations to these fine young officers.

While they leave our program, many more are joining. We look to begin the Spring Semester with 110 cadets as we continue to grow the next generation of leaders for our nation. Thanks again to MOAA for your support.

### Jayhawks Lead the Way!

*LTC John Basso*



## Navy News CAPT Thomas Arnold, USN



### Happy Holidays from the Jayhawk Navy!

The KU Naval ROTC Battalion has enjoyed another outstanding semester. On December 20<sup>th</sup> we commissioned one new officer:

- ENS Jonathan Weishaar, a Naval Aviator, who will depart for pilot training in Pensacola, Florida in April

Please join me in wishing him the best of luck as he begins his career as an officer in the U.S. Navy! Ensign Weishaar is the first of 11 new officers we will be commissioning in the KU Class of 2009. The remainder will commission in May and August of next year.



As the Fall 2008 semester winds down, I am impressed with all we have accomplished this year. From providing support to Junior ROTC Units at local high schools to numerous color guard events to community service involvement to a variety of unit training activities and ceremonies, the Jayhawk Battalion has accomplished a great deal. Our students are particularly proud of having organized a Veteran's Day 5K run in support of a veteran's charity and of having won the KU ROTC Captain's Cup sports tournament.

One of the highlights of this semester's activities was attending the November MOAA dinner with all of you. The midshipmen thoroughly enjoyed the evening and the opportunity to meet and talk with MOAA members. Having the chance to interact with those who have served before them reinforces their strong motivation to serve our nation as officers in the Navy or Marine Corps. Thank you again for

hosting us and for all the generous support the Jayhawk Chapter of MOAA provides to KU ROTC throughout the year!

The new year will bring some changes to the Naval ROTC Unit. Both our Executive Officer, CDR Sean Fox, and I will be departing next summer at the end of our three year tours. We are both planning to retire and hope to remain here in the Lawrence area. GYSGT Eric Sheppard will also depart in the early summer. What will remain constant is the staff's dedication to training, mentoring and leading our future officers.

In closing, I want wish you all a happy and safe holiday season, and once again extend my heartfelt thanks for your strong support to the KU Naval ROTC Battalion!!

*CAPT Tom Arnold*

## *Air Force News*

### *LtCol Gena Stuchbery, USAF*



#### **Merry Christmas, MOAA!**

First off, it's great to have an opportunity to reach out to you and let you know what has been happening at Det 280. We are honored and thankful for your interest and support of our group of young future Air Force leaders. It has been a busy fall semester and the cadets and cadre all came through no worse for wear.

Well, the fall semester is officially over and the cadets are done with finals – hooray! We topped off the term with our Joint Veteran's Day weekend, Career Day, End of Semester Awards Ceremony, Cadet Wing Change of Command, and our Joint Military Ball. The new cadre members feel like grizzled vets and the cadets have earned a well-deserved holiday break.

On 7 November, the cadets from all three ROTC programs kicked off the Veteran's Day weekend activities with a retreat ceremony in front of Strong Hall. We then moved inside to Budig Hall for a POW/MIA presentation followed by our guest speaker, Dr. Adrian Lewis, MAJ (ret), US Army. Afterward, the cadets began a 24-hour vigil at three of the campus war memorials: the Korean, Vietnam and World War II (Campanile). Two members stood watch continuously overnight and throughout the next day. Over 100 members representing all four services took part in the vigil. The next day, the cadets continued the Veteran's Day weekend activities with the first annual Lawrence Veteran's Day 5K Run which was hosted by the KU ROTC units. There were over 50 runners and all proceeds went to Veterans Upward Bound. The weekend activities were capped off on Sunday, 9 November where ROTC students took part in the salute to veterans and their families at the Dole Institute of

Politics. The 17-piece Moonlight Serenade Orchestra outfitted in World War II-era uniforms performed a USO-type program of big-band-era selections from Duke Ellington, Tommy Dorsey, Benny Goodman, Harry James and Glenn Miller. What a great tribute!

On 18 November, the Flying Jayhawk Wing hosted Career Day at The Kansas Union. We had fourteen Air Force officers from eight different specialties to include Security Forces, Space and Missiles, Services, Intelligence, Special Operations, Airfield Operations, Developmental Engineering and Aircraft Maintenance. While it was geared toward our cadets, we opened it to the campus population and used it as a recruiting tool. The event was a great success for both cadets and officers, and special thanks goes out to Major Wes Cobb from Fort Leavenworth for helping us get the officers representing the different specialties.

Next we had our Fall 2008 Awards and Change of Command Ceremonies. On 2 December, the Detachment Commander handed out nearly sixty awards ranging from Physical Fitness to Warrior Spirit to Achievement, Commendation, and Meritorious Service awards. All looked sharp and proud as they did the "shake, snap, and salute" with the Commander. There were numerous "Kodak" moments! The day was topped off with our Cadet Wing Change of Command, where Cadet/Col Brittany Ramos handed over the "stick" to Cadet/Col Alex Carrera.

Our final event of the semester was the Joint Service Military Ball held at the Lawrence Holidome on 11 Dec. All four services did themselves proud by putting on their best formal attire for an evening of fellowship and celebration.

The graduating seniors from all ROTC programs were recognized and given gifts of new 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant/Ensign (O-1) rank. The food was great, too!

Well, another semester is in the books at KU. It has been a great term for the Air Force ROTC Detachment. Thanks again for all your support and interest in the lives of the young people that make up our future Air Force. We are

truly blessed to have you with us. We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

**God bless,**

*Maj Gary Marsteller*  
Commandant of Cadets

## 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 November 14, 2008:

#### Important Dates for the 111th Congress.

Jan. 3: The 111th Congress officially begins (but since that date falls on a weekend, new members will be sworn in on Monday, Jan. 6).

Jan. 20: Inauguration Day.

Feb. 2: The president is required by law to submit annual budget proposals to Congress by the first Monday in February. As a matter of practice, a new president normally submits a placeholder plan on that date, and then provides Congress a full budget submission sometime in March.

### MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for November 21, 2008:

#### TRICARE Premium Cuts Coming for Reserves

The Defense Department has announced significant premium reductions for Guard and Reserve personnel participating in the TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) program, beginning Jan. 1, 2009.

For a single member the monthly premiums will drop to \$47.51/mo. (vs. the current \$81). For family coverage, the premium will drop to \$180.17/mo. (vs. the current \$253).

MOAA and The Military Coalition have asserted for years that the Defense Department was overcharging beneficiaries for their TRS coverage by inappropriately basing premiums on federal civilian health insurance costs.

Earlier this year, the Government Accountability Office confirmed that TRS participants were being overcharged significantly, based on the costs of actually delivering TRS care. (By law, TRS premiums are supposed to cover 28% of the cost.) The Defense Department acknowledged the truth of the GAO assessment, but declined to exercise its authority to reduce the premiums.

MOAA and others then successfully petitioned Congress to mandate a premium reduction, which was included in the FY2009 Defense Authorization Act signed into law in October. MOAA regrets that the law didn't also require retroactive refunds for past overcharges, but a prospective change still provides much-needed relief.

#### Medical Leave Rule Excludes Active Duty

The government has issued new policy guidelines on when civilian employers are obliged to allow employees to take leave to attend to a severely wounded family member or to matters related to a military deployment.

The good news is that employee caregivers must be allowed to take up to 26 weeks of unpaid leave to assist an active duty, Guard or Reserve family member who is rendered medically unfit to perform duties due to an injury or illness in the line of duty.

The bad news, incredibly, is that family members of active duty personnel are excluded from the other half of the rule that allows up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave from a civilian employer to handle family needs in conjunction with a servicemember's deployment. That part of the rule covers only family members of Guard/Reserve personnel and retirees who are called back to service.

MOAA's staff had worked with the Department of Labor on parts of the rules, and most of our suggestions were included to allow leave for childcare needs, family support/assistance meetings, financial and legal meetings, school-related meetings, and counseling, R&R time during a deployment, and seven days prior to a short-notice deployment.

But it was a shock to learn that Labor Department lawyers rendered an opinion that the specific language of the law wouldn't allow inclusion of active duty family members for the deployment portion. MOAA is already meeting with lawmakers to get that corrected when Congress reconvenes.

The new rules follow standard FMLA qualifiers so the coverage is only required when firms have 50 or more employees, and the employee must have been with the firm for at least a year to qualify for the unpaid leave.

### MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for December 5, 2008:

#### Gates Issues Guidance on Reserve Commission Issues

Early in his tenure, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates issued initial guidance to his department for "Utilization of the Total Force." Reservists were told to expect to be activated once every five years under the operational reserve policy. In reality, post-9/11 reserve units have

averaged 3.8 years between call-ups -- approaching active duty deployment tempos.

Despite this dramatic change in reserve force employment, the recent Report of the Commission of the National Guard and Reserves (link below) found that current policies and procedures still rely largely on outmoded Cold War rules.

Congress already acted on an early Commission recommendation to make the Chief of the National Guard Bureau a full general who serves as principal advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on National Guard matters.

Now Secretary Gates has directed the military establishment to take action on a broad array of other Commission recommendations. One major issue is how the services should budget for the cost of the "operational role of the reserve components," including equipment requirements. Congress and reserve component leaders have long objected to getting hand-me-down equipment, given their active duty requirements for modern equipment.

Secretary Gates directed the services and the Commander, Special Operations Command to propose "appropriate funding for the readiness requirements" of the Reserve forces in their operational roles.

Secretary Gates further directed action on a number of other issues that track with MOAA recommendations to the commission. Some will require law changes, but others can be done by policy:

- \* Consolidate/reduce the number of reserve component duty statuses (currently 29)

- \* Require dental screenings and care for reservists scheduled for deployment within 75 days after call-up
- \* Authorize a waiver of TRICARE dental copays for enrolled reservists during an national emergency
- \* By 2012, eliminate the 30 days' active duty threshold for reservists to receive full basic allowance for housing (BAH)
- \* Assess the option of providing a health insurance stipend to continue commercial family coverage when the sponsor is activated
- \* Examine upgrades to educational benefits for reservists who initially join the Guard or Reserve

Gates declined to take action on a Commission recommendation to dramatically alter the active duty retirement system to make it more like a civilian plan. The Commission had endorsed delaying payment of full active duty retired pay until age 57 and using the savings for career "gate pays" at certain points of service (essentially retention bonuses that could be turned on and off depending on needs at the time) and to vest some retirement benefits for members with more than 10 years of service. MOAA has expressed concern that such a proposal would undermine long-term retention and readiness (especially in wartime) by reducing future retired pay visibility and by taking money from people who serve for a career in order to pay new benefits to those who choose to leave.

MOAA is pleased to see the Department taking action on many initiatives that are needed to address operational reserve realities.

But both DoD and Congress must do more to ensure that reserve warriors, their families, and civilian employers have adequate incentives and compensation to shoulder the enormous challenges of a permanent operational reserve policy.

For example, MOAA strongly supports reducing the reserve retirement age by three months for each cumulative 90 days' active duty service since 9/11/01. Under current law, only service after January 28, 2008 receives such credit, denying hundreds of thousands who served multiple combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We believe the nation can't sustain an operational reserve policy that fails to recognize the service and sacrifice of those who have given so much in the long war on terror. This issue will be a top goal for MOAA and The Military Coalition in 2009.

<http://echo4.bluehornet.com/ct/3826378:4426670207:m:3:230981068:FECF0EC032F20567377D6B3E38AC08BC>

## MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for December 12, 2008:

### Legislative Year in Review

The 2008 legislative year ended with a sense of disappointment when a flap over pork-barrel spending caused the Senate to abruptly drop consideration of numerous MOAA-endorsed amendments in the rush to finish the FY2009 Defense Authorization Act.

Among those were amendments that would have expanded concurrent receipt, improved compensation for military widows, and improved Guard and reserve retirement credit, among others.

While it's frustrating to see action deferred another year on those high-profile goals, it's also important to acknowledge that Congress did approve many other initiatives sought by MOAA and The Military Coalition:

- Post-9/11 GI Bill: As of August 1, 2009, the new GI Bill will cover the full tuition at any state/public college or university, plus a stipend for books and housing. Additionally, eligible members willing to extend their current service for four or more years will be able to transfer the new benefits to a spouse and/or child(ren)
- Medicare/TRICARE Physician Payments: Reversed a 10.6% cut in payments to doctors that would have threatened military beneficiaries' access to quality care, and substituted a 1.1% increase
- Military Pay Raise: Won a 3.9% military pay raise for active duty, Guard, and Reserve troops (one-half percentage point higher than the defense budget request)
- TRICARE Fees: Barred a Pentagon proposal to impose large health fee increases for retirees under 65 and retail pharmacy copays for all TRICARE beneficiaries
- Reserve TRICARE Premiums. Won a major reduction in TRICARE Reserve Select premiums for currently serving Guard/Reserve members and families, effective in January 2009

- Preventive Care Services: Authorized the Pentagon to waive copays and deductibles for certain preventive health services to encourage military beneficiaries to pursue healthy lifestyles
- Tax Issues: Authorized disabled military retirees to file up to five years of amended income tax returns in the event of delays in award of a VA disability rating. Authorized survivors to deposit the \$100,000 military death gratuity into an IRA
- Paternity Leave: Authorized 10 days of leave, in addition to regular leave, to allow military fathers to bond with a newborn child
- In-state tuition: All states must now provide continuity of in-state tuition when military parents move (14 states did not at the beginning of 2008)

Also during 2008, we realized the fruits of past years' labor on several fronts:

- SBP age-62 annuity: As of April 1, 2008, all military survivors age 62 and older had their Survivor Benefit Plan annuities increased to equal 55% of the deceased member's covered retired pay. This was the final installment of a four-year phase-in that cumulatively raised SBP annuities by almost 60% for survivors age 62 and older. Before enactment of the MOAA-sponsored change, survivors received only 35% of covered retired pay
- Paid-up SBP: Effective Oct. 1, 2008, military retirees who have attained age 70 and paid at least 30 years of SBP premiums have been awarded "paid-up SBP" status, so that premiums for SBP will no longer be deducted from their retired pay
- Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC): Thousands of members medically retired with less than 20 years of service due to combat- or operations-related injuries became eligible for CRSC
- Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance: As of October 1, survivors subject to deduction of VA survivor benefits from their SBP annuities began receiving a modest rebate of \$50 per month. We hope to build substantially on this tiny first step in coming years

#### New Rules Ease Job Woes for Military Spouses

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) recently announced new proposed rules that would make it easier for spouses of military members to get jobs with the federal government. The new rules will allow federal agency managers to hire military spouses non-competitively - and skip the normal requirement to advertise a federal opening.

The new rules apply only to spouses who follow their military member on a military directed move and spouses of members seriously disabled or killed by service. The change will be retroactive for spouses who moved within one year of when the regulation takes effect.

OPM posted the new regulations on the Federal Register for a 30-day public comment period on December 5. After the public comment period and any subsequent revisions by OPM, the new rules will go into effect.

#### Tax Man Cometh - and DFAS Can Helpeth

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) has posted the following schedule for issuing members' tax statements for the 2008 tax year. The first date indicates when statements will be accessible on line through myPay. The second date indicates when they will be mailed out to those who have not registered for on-line access.

- Retiree Annual Statement: Dec. 10 (myPay) or Dec. 16-22 (U.S. mail)
- Retiree 1099R: Dec. 22 (myPay) or Dec. 16-22 (U.S. mail)
- Annuitant Account Statement: Dec. 15 (myPay) or Dec. 22-24 (U.S. mail)
- Annuitant 1099R: Dec. 15 (myPay) or Dec. 22-24 (U.S. mail)
- VSI/SSB W-2: Jan. 2 (only available through U.S. mail)
- Active Duty Army, Navy, Air Force W-2: Jan. 22 (myPay) or Jan. 23-29 (U.S. mail)
- Reserve Army, Navy, Air Force W-2: Jan. 2 (myPay) or Jan. 5-8 (U.S. mail)

Retirees who don't have access to myPay and have requested a hardcopy of a Retired Account Statement and a 1099R will be sent a combined mailing in late December or early January. Annuitants will receive a combined mailing of both the Annuity Account Statement and the 1099R.

If you don't receive your statement(s) by January 15, 2009, you have several options:

- Access the myPay system (<https://mypay.dfas.mil/>) and adjust your account
- Request a 1099R through DFAS' Interactive Voice Response System (1-888-332-7366)
- Contact DFAS Customer Service Center at 1-800-321-1080

Additional information can be found on the DFAS website at:

<http://www.dfas.mil/retiredpay/taxinformation/2008taxinformation.html>.

#### **MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for December 19, 2008:**

##### COLA Nosedive for 2010?

The 5.8% cost of living adjustment (COLA) retirees will see in their Jan. 2 checks will be the largest one since 1982.

But the new fiscal year is a whole different story, as steeply falling prices have started off next year's COLA calculation in a deep hole. This month, the Bureau of Labor Statistics announced that the consumer price index dropped 2.3% in the month of November.

That makes a whopping decline of 3.8% for the first two months of FY2009 - the biggest two-month drop in more than 60 years.

Check out MOAA's comparison of the last two years' starting COLA tracks vs. this year's and draw your own conclusions about what that may mean for the 2010 COLA. <http://echo4.bluehornet.com/ct/3896495:4548148442:m:3:230981068:5B2486DDFAFD6B3BF6E133B5EC8C5C2>



In case you're wondering: if inflation is negative for the year, there would be no COLA in 2010. Retired pay would not be reduced.

On a related note, we've received some questions about when paychecks will reflect various other increases in pay for active duty and retired members. It can get confusing, because the dates aren't all the same.

Here's a quick-reference summary of what payments you'll see reflected in what checks:

- Active duty/Guard/Reserve pay raise: Jan. 15 check
- VA disability compensation COLA: Jan. 2
- Military retired pay COLA: Jan. 2
- Concurrent Receipt (non-combat-related) phase-in increase for 50%-90% disabled retirees with 20+ years of service: Feb. 2
- Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) COLA: Jan. 2
- Survivor Benefit Plan COLA: Jan. 2

#### VA Wrongfully Recovering Disability Pay

Apparently for the past 12 years Veterans Affairs has been wrongfully collecting disability and pension payments from the widows of deceased veterans. This became public in early December when Senator Daniel Akaka (D-HI), Chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, confronted department officials about the practice which is contrary to the law.

In 1996 Congress enacted a law stipulating that disability and VA pension checks issued in the month of a veteran's death shall be payable to the surviving spouse. In other words, recoupment for disability or other pensions during the month of death is barred by law.

Astonishingly, the VA never changed their pay system to account for this legal provision and have acknowledged as much.

Now, the VA is scrambling to fix the problem and pay all affected survivors. Secretary Peake has established a special task force to do that, and anticipates issuing checks to affected survivors at the end of this month.

Surviving spouses who have questions can contact the VA Survivors' Call Center at 1-800-749-8387, Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm CST.

But the VA issue isn't the only problem here.

Current law still requires the Defense Department to recoup the final month's military retired pay from military widows, and then reissue them only a pro-rata check for the number of days the retiree was alive.

MOAA says what's good for the VA is good for DoD.

We've been working with Rep. Walter Jones (R-NC) to change the law to let military widows keep the final month of retired pay, and we'll push that hard in 2009.

New military widows are traumatized enough without the added, insensitive shock of having the Pentagon reach into their bank accounts to recoup retired pay that usually has already been spent on housing, car payments or other bills.

#### Retirees Get Some Relief - Next Year

As part of the economic recovery effort, Congress recently passed H.R. 7327, the Worker, Retiree and Employer Recovery Act of 2008, which is now on the President's desk for signature.

This legislation provides a temporary waiver of some required distributions from IRAs and 401(k) plans.

**The good news is that people age 70½ or older won't be forced to take a distribution from their employer retirement plans next year if they would prefer not to.**

**Most retirees' plans have taken a beating during the recent stock market decline, and being forced to take money out at the market bottom isn't very attractive for many people who would like to wait and see if the market rebounds before having to take distributions.**

The bad news is that the exemption doesn't apply to 2008 distributions, so people age 70½ or older who haven't yet taken a minimum distribution this year will have to do so by the end of December.

#### Happy Holidays

With many of the MOAA staff out of town for the holidays, and the next two weeks interrupted by mid-week holidays, this will be the last MOAA legislative update until Friday, January 9.

For those of you who are deployed, along with your spouses, moms, dads and children who remain on the home front, please know that we recognize and deeply appreciate the gift you are giving to our country through your selfless service and sacrifice. You are especially in our hearts and on our minds.

We wish you and yours the merriest of Christmases, a belated happy Hanukkah, and all the best in the New Year.

If you're traveling over the next two weeks, please be safe. We'll need every possible member back with us for the tough legislative battles to come in 2009.



*May you always have work for your hands to do.*

*May your pockets hold always a coin or two.*

*May the sun shine bright on your windowpane.*

*May the rainbow be certain to follow each rain.*

*May the hand of a friend always be near you.*

*And may God fill your heart with gladness to cheer you.*

***Happy New Year***

***from***

***Shirley & John***





# JAYHAWK CHAPTER MOAA



A membership meeting will be held **Tuesday, 20 January 2009**, at the Lawrence Country Club. Dinner cost is **\$20.00/meal**.

**The Program:** Our guest speaker will be former Kansas Governor Mike Hayden. His topic will be "The Changing Face of Kansas."

**Social Hour:** 1800 hours

**Dinner:** 1900 hours

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

Send your reservation and check payable to **Jayhawk Chapter MOAA** to arrive no later than **Thursday, 15 January 2009**, 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).

Chapter Dues (\$20.00) are now payable \$\_\_\_\_\_ for dues

Clayton L. Comfort Award program contribution \$\_\_\_\_\_

**(Separate check made out to "KU Endowment")**

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone

**IF YOU NEED A RIDE TO MEETINGS, PLEASE LET US KNOW HERE \_\_\_\_\_  
AND GIVE US YOUR TELEPHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_**

**TEAR OFF AND RETURN THIS FORM WITH A CHECK PAYABLE TO:  
JAYHAWK CHAPTER MOAA  
CAPT (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)

*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 20 January	MOAA meeting	Tuesday 21 July	MOAA meeting
Tuesday 17 March	MOAA meeting	Tuesday 15 September	MOAA meeting
Tuesday 19 May	MOAA meeting	Tuesday 17 November	MOAA meeting

## **JAYHAWK MOAA DIRECTORY**

*You may think it's way early to start thinking about the 2009 Directory, but we will only have one more Newsletter/ meeting after this one in which 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 either our January or 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!!*



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

***One Powerful Voice.®***

*For every officer at every stage of life and career.*

***We wish everyone a  
safe and  
Happy New Year***