



Jayhawk Chapter MOAA Newsletter



This newsletter is published bimonthly by the Jayhawk Chapter of Kansas, Military Officers Association of America, as a service to all members. The Jayhawk emblem is used with the permission of the registered trademark owner, the University of Kansas.

January Program:

Our guest speaker will be
Kansas House of Representatives Minority Leader, Paul Davis

☆☆☆☆☆ CHAPTER
awarded for
2002 / 2003 / 2005 / 2008

☆☆☆☆ CHAPTER
awarded for
2004 / 2006 / 2007

The President's Corner . . .

Dear Jayhawk Chapter Members and Friends:

It's been quite a year for the Jayhawk Chapter! We started the year by being honored by MOAA for our superior recruiting efforts in the association-wide "Give Me 10!" program and ended the year by attaching a steamer to our Chapter flag recognizing our selection as a Five-Star Chapter. In between, we had top-notch programs, including a visit from MOAA President, Vice Admiral Norbert (Norb) R. Ryan, Jr., USN (Ret) and presentations by former Governor, Mike Hayden; Congresswomen Lynn Jenkins; LCDR Richard Federico, U.S. Navy JAG Corps; and Director of the Lawrence Convention and Visitors Bureau, Judy Billings.



We also continued 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.

I have thoroughly enjoyed serving as your President. I have gotten to know members of the other MOAA chapters from around the state and nation, but the best part has been working with you, the other members and officers of the Jayhawk Chapter. With that in mind, I'd like to express my thanks to the outgoing members of the Chapter Board of Directors, John Basso, John Moser, and Past-President Mike Sullivan, and extend a welcome to incoming 2nd Vice President Bob Johnson and Board members David Kent, and Gena Stuchbery. I also want to express my thanks to continuing Board members Jim Stokes and Dwight Jackson (who moves over from 2nd Vice President), Past-President Bernie Kish, Tom Arnold (who moves up to 1st Vice President), John Halladay and Jim Cooper who will remain as Chapter Secretary and Treasurer, respectively, and especially to my good friend, Charles Heller, our new President. Special thanks are also due to Stan Sneegas, our Chapter webmaster, and always at the top of my list, Shirley Halladay, our super Newsletter Editor!

And please join us at our next meeting on Tuesday, January 19. It's Inauguration Night, and our guest speaker will be Kansas House of Representatives Minority Leader, Paul Davis, who will update us on the coming legislative session.

See you soon!

Dave

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*** Reservations should be sent
to Jim Cooper by
14 January**

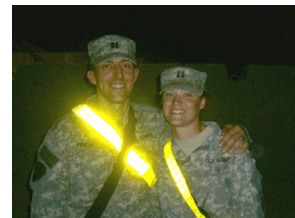


JAYHAWK CHAPTER NEWS

DUES: 2009 CHAPTER DUES (\$20) ARE DUE 1 JANUARY 2009

From Ray Finch:

John and Raelean Finch (son and daughter-in-law of Ray and Jean Finch) are serving as military intelligence officers in Afghanistan. They were reunited briefly at Kandahar Air Base (photo) before being reassigned to a forward operating base in another part of the country. They hope to return to Lawrence in August 2010.



From Dave Darwin:

I was invited as a Distinguished Visiting Professor at the American University in Cairo (AUC), where I gave four lectures. We had a great time and really enjoyed meeting with our hosts and the students at AUC. It was not all work, however. We



at the Pyramids

visited the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (that's where the contents of King Tut's tomb are on display along with other artifacts dating back 5000 years), the Great Pyramids and the Sphinx in Giza, the back alleys of Old Cairo (not the tourist area), Al-Azhar Mosque, built in 972 and the site of the oldest university in the world. We also traveled to Luxor where we visited the Valley of the Kings (tombs of the Pharaohs), the Temple of Hatshepsut (the only female Pharaoh), the Colossi of Memnon, and the Karnak and Luxor Temples. All in all a very full week!



at Luxor Temple

From George Schaeffer:

No Florida this year. I built a house in Durham, ME. I was general contractor, electrician, plumber, HVAC tech, mason, sheetrock hanger . . . you get the picture. We moved into the house in early November. Still need to do interior trim. RVing will be a part-time passion for now.

Our Salvation Army Bell Ringers:



Tom Arnold & Buck Newsom



Don & Darlene Sheriff



Bernie Kish & John Mosher



Jim Stokes, Stan Sneegas
& Max Lucas

Ray Finch also rang bells but went grocery shopping before we could get his picture.

APACHE BLESSING

MAY THE SUN bring you new energy by day.

MAY THE MOON softly restore you by night.

MAY THE RAIN wash away your worries.

MAY THE BREEZE blow new strength into your being.

MAY YOU WALK gently through the world and know its beauty all the days of your life.

~ Apache Blessing

HAPPY NEW YEAR !!!



Army News *LTC John Basso*

Happy Holidays, Jayhawk MOAA,

After a hectic fall semester, the battalion gets a chance to catch its breath prior to spring semester. Before I outline some of the key events we will conduct in the spring, let me congratulate our two newest lieutenants, Allan Blair and Daniel Novak. 2LT Blair has branched Air Defense Artillery but will first serve four years as an Infantry officer. 2LT Novak will serve as a Military Intelligence officer. Both are outstanding young leaders who will serve our nation and its Army with distinction. Special thanks go to Bernie Kish for his inspiring words at the commissioning ceremony.

The spring semester begins with a visit from the Cadet Command Deputy Commanding General, BG Bray, and with our command inspection that validates our systems every three years. The spring semester also includes a series of field leadership labs that allow us to take our juniors' leadership and tactical capacity and advance it to make them adaptive leaders. We do this by emphasizing changes of

mission that require them to rapidly adjust to new circumstances such as dealing with Afghani tribal leaders who have information on bomb material caches as they lead their squads on patrols. The graduation exercise to ensure they've learned their lessons well will be at Fort Riley in April as KU Army ROTC hosts 600 cadets from five battalions in our Joint Spring Field Training Exercise.

Also in April, on the 24th, we will once again host the KU Ranger Buddy Competition and again expect 120 cadet teams from across the nation. Finally in May, we will host our dining in, awards ceremony, and commissioning. More on those events in the next update.

Rock Chalk!

LTC John Basso



Navy News *CAPT Carl Carpenter, USN*

NO REPORT



Air Force News

LtCol Gena Stuchbery, USAF



Merry Christmas MOAA!

It has been a busy fall semester that has just flown by. We finished off the semester with our annual Joint Veterans' Day weekend activities, some self-defense training, End of Semester Awards Ceremony, and Cadet Wing Change of Command. The cadre members and cadets have earned a well-deserved holiday break.

On 6 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 Fallen Heroes presentation followed by some incredible words from our guest speaker.

Afterward, the cadets began their annual ritual 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 second annual Lawrence Veteran's Day 5K Run which was hosted by the KU ROTC units. There were nearly 50 runners and all proceeds went to Veterans Upward Bound. Later in the morning, we sent our Color Guard and a dozen or so cadets to take part in the

annual Ottawa Veteran's Day Parade. The group was well-received, and the parade was a tremendous tribute to our nation's finest. The weekend activities were capped off on Sunday, 15 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!

The next week, our cadets assembled at Robinson Gym for some self-defense training. Nearly 20 LINE (Linear Infighting Neural-override Engagement) instructors from Fort Leavenworth worked with our cadets, teaching them basic self-defense techniques. The hands-on small group instruction was a fun and worthwhile experience for everyone involved.

Our final event of the semester was our Fall 2009 Awards and Change of Command Ceremonies. On 8 December, the Detachment Commander handed out nearly seventy awards ranging from Physical Fitness to Warrior Spirit to Achieve-

ment, Commendation, and Meritorious Service. The day was topped off with our Cadet Wing Change of Command, where Cadet/Col Britton Hufford passed the guidon to Cadet/Col Tanner Popp.

We also had the opportunity to congratulate our 2008-09 AFROTC Instructor of the Year, Capt Corey Edmonds, and the AETC Staff level Personnel NCO of the Year, TSgt Kip Gomez during the cadet award ceremonies. Kip is now competing at AF level in his award category. Awesome job, cadre!

Well, another semester is nearly in the books at KU. It has been a great term for the Air Force ROTC Detachment. Thanks again for your continued support and interest in the young people that make up our future Air Force. We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Blessings this Holiday Season,

Lt Col Gena Stuchbery

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 October 30, 2009:

GAO Upholds TRICARE Contract Appeal.

The GAO ruled this week that the Defense Department failed to follow the rules in awarding the new TRICARE contract for the South region (currently held by Humana Military Healthcare Services) to UnitedHealth Military & Veterans Services.

Symposium Highlights Guard/Reserve Needs

On Oct. 24, MOAA hosted a professional symposium in San Diego entitled, "Helping the Home Team: Guard/Reserve Warriors, Families and Employers."

General Craig McKinley, USAF, the first four-star Chief of the National Guard Bureau kicked off the symposium saying, "We're in uncharted territory. We've never had a war extend for 8-plus years under the all-volunteer force. I don't see the operations tempo decreasing...The most pressing national security challenge is our economy - trying to balance military needs at home and abroad with a staggering budget deficit." He expects the defense budget will be flat for FY2011 and 2012.

"Since 9/11, many Guard/Reserve members have put their civilian careers on hold...Their return to a civilian career could be tough...[the strong support of] State governors and Adjutants General for Yellow Ribbon programs will be key [in that process]," McKinley said. "The resiliency of our fighting force is amazing...[and] they feel the love of America...Please

watch to ensure that regardless of political decisions, we continue to support our people in uniform."

Spouse Panel Talks Families

Six currently serving military spouses engaged in a lively panel discussion at MOAA's Military Spouse Symposium in San Diego on Oct. 24.

Bill Keller, an Air Force retiree and spouse of an Air Force officer, noted that male spouses are becoming more common, because a higher share of female servicemembers are staying for a career. One challenge, he said, is that military families often live long distances from the military installation and don't feel as connected. "As a result, we're trying to help by focusing on one family at a time."

Marianne Sernoffsky is the family programs coordinator at Camp Rochester, the pilot for a new Reserve program that establishes military support offices in areas with significant Reserve populations but no military installation. "Our community center supports not only ID card holders," she said, "but also parents, siblings and friends of members of all services and components, including veterans and retirees."

Josi Hunt, a Navy spouse, said more and more married sailors are joining the Navy, and Navy families are adjusting to a new reality under which thousands of Navy personnel are assigned as individual augmentees with ground combat units in Iraq and Afghanistan. "We do six-month sea rotations very well," she said, "but Navy families aren't used to 12-to15 month deployments."

Tanya Queiro, a Marine spouse recently selected as Military Spouse of the Year, is a wounded warrior recovery care coordinator. She articulated the unique challenges faced by family members who must become caregivers for the severely wounded. "Many family members give up their jobs and careers to be caregivers. Some of them have to take the lead and be 'the strong ones' for their families, and that can pose its own stresses for them and their wounded servicemembers."

Kristy Kaufmann, the spouse of an Army officer coming off a command tour, said, "We need more open, honest dialogue, because things are not going well for families and kids. Many feel isolated from the rest of the community [especially after multiple deployments]...We need to change the 1950s Family Readiness Group model that depends on spouse volunteers and add more resources for support programs...Too often, the 'can do' attitude means 'can do without.'"

Zoe Trautman, a Marine spouse, said the Marines are experiencing a "baby boom", and that for the first time, the number of family members matches the number of Marines. She asserted the need "to put family programs on a wartime footing...we have problems reaching family members assigned to isolated and remote commands...we need a community-based engagement." She said it's essential to use "the new media" to reach younger spouses, and urged MOAA chapter leaders to reach out to recovery care coordinators, who need mentors for the wounded and their families. She also urged orientation efforts for military kids' public school teachers, many of whom "know nothing about the military" or the stresses they may be under due to repeated deployments.

Widows Win SBP Lawsuit

On October 22, the Defense Department announced it will not appeal the August 2009 ruling of the U.S. Court of Appeals in the case of three widows who sued the government to keep both their VA survivor benefits and their military Survivor Benefit Plan annuities. At issue is a 2004 law that restored DIC payments to veterans' surviving spouses who remarry after their 57th birthday. Before the law change, survivors lost DIC upon remarriage at any age.

In July 2007, three widows filed a lawsuit claiming that the unique wording of the 2004 law entitled widows who remarry after age 57 to receive both Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuities from DoD and VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC), without any offset between the two.

Defense Department lawyers argued that was a flawed interpretation, arguing that the 2004 law's language barring offset for any other "veteran's benefit" didn't apply to SBP, because SBP is a DoD benefit, not a VA benefit. After the U.S. Court of Federal Claims ruled in favor of the widows, the government filed an appeal.

But the U.S. Court of Appeals issued a strong rejection of the government's appeal, and the Pentagon's decision not to appeal the case to the U.S. Supreme Court ends the discussion.

The Defense Department has issued guidance to the services and Defense Finance and Accounting Service to identify all SBP annuitants who are eligible for DIC and who

remarried after their 57th birthday. Qualifying survivors will be eligible to receive both payments in full, retroactive to January 1, 2004 or the date of their remarriage, whichever is later.

Payments will be reduced by the amount of any previous SBP premium refund and by the amount of any Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance payments the survivor may have received.

Although the number of survivors affected is relatively small, this decision gives us yet another equity argument to change the law for all remaining SBP-DIC widows. It simply doesn't make sense to have two separate standards in the law, one that allows payment of full SBP and DIC for survivors who remarry after age 57 and another that forces a dollar-for-dollar offset between the two benefits for all others.

DoD/VA Summit Focuses on Unseen Injuries

SecDef Robert Gates and VA Secretary Eric Shinseki jointly opened this week's joint DoD/VA Mental Health Summit to reinforce their commitment to eliminating the stigma associated with seeking mental health care and their commitment to building a true seamless transition between the two departments in caring for wounded and other disabled warriors and their families.

Secretary Gates said that troops injured in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan continue to face "frustrating, adversarial, and unnecessarily complex" bureaucratic hurdles. He said the two departments must do a better job of dealing with brain injuries and mental health ailments that are "widespread, entrenched and insidious."

Secretary Shinseki noted that veterans are returning home with invisible wounds that are just as debilitating as physical traumas sustained on the battlefield. "Who's vulnerable? Everyone," he said. "Warriors suffer emotional injuries as much as they do physical ones."

During the three-day summit, more than 100 experts representing a wide range of perspectives met for intense discussion. MOAA and several other military and veterans associations participated, and MOAA shared perspectives gained from our own recent wounded warrior symposium on challenges associated with PTSD, TBI, and depression.

MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for November 6, 2009:

MOAA Urges TSP Improvements.

MOAA testified before the House Subcommittee on the Federal Workforce, Postal Service and the District of Columbia to push several improvements to the Thrift Savings Program for servicemembers.

Spouses Win Residency Relief.

MOAA's efforts to change the law to let military spouses pick the same state of domicile as their servicemember came to fruition this week as Congress passed the Military Spouse Residency Relief Act.

"Congress is sending a message that spouses are a vital part of the military," said Joy Dunlap, MOAA's military family advocate. "It's about giving military spouses choice, helping their careers, and uniting couples who want to vote in the same state."

MOAA was an early and ardent supporter of the legislation. Admiral Ryan spoke at the introductory press conference, and MOAA provided testimony, briefings, e-mails and phone calls to Hill staffers. Most recently, MOAA highlighted every legislator's support status in the November Military Officer magazine.

MOAA Makes Case to Speaker Pelosi

On Nov. 4, MOAA Government Relations Director Col Steve Strobbridge (USAF-Ret) and Deputy Director COL Bob Norton (USA-Ret) joined other military and veterans association leaders at a Capitol Hill discussion with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), senior House Committee chairmen, and more than 20 U.S. representatives.

This was another in a regular series of meetings called by senior House leaders to pulse veterans groups on their legislative priorities.

Speaker Pelosi noted to general applause that the House has passed a number of significant bills in honor of Veterans' Day, including two-year appropriations for VA health care - a top legislative priority for all major veterans' service organizations, since Congress rarely approves VA appropriations by the start of the fiscal year.

Armed Services Committee Chairman Ike Skelton (D-MO) expressed his bitter disappointment at the Senate's rejection of his effort to phase out the disability offset to military retired pay for all disability (chapter 61) retirees. "I went around to my House colleagues with a tin cup and found the budget offsets, but the Senate wouldn't accept them," he said.

Strobbridge thanked Skelton for his efforts on concurrent receipt and his earlier initiative this year to ease penalties for SBP-DIC widows, and pledged MOAA's support to keep pushing both issues in 2010. Strobbridge also expressed appreciation for the support from multiple House leaders to ensure that any health national reform legislation would not pose adverse effects for military and VA beneficiaries. But he urged immediate congressional action to stop the 21% cut in Medicare and TRICARE payments now scheduled for January 2010 unless current law is changed.

In addition, the association leaders urged support for a number of other topics, including Reserve retirement age credit for all activated service since 9/11/01, improved health care access, faster action on VA disability claims processing, wounded warrior caregiver relief, veterans' education and training improvements, and relief for homeless veterans.

MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for November 13, 2009:

MOAA Charter Signed Into Law.

The President signed the MOAA Federal Charter legislation into law this week (Public Law 111-95). What exactly does that mean for MOAA and our members?

On November 6, President Obama signed the MOAA Federal Charter legislation into law. Several members have asked us what that means to the organization and its members, exactly. Here are the answers.

Q: What is a "Federal Charter"?

A: It constitutes formal congressional acknowledgment of the public service role of certain patriotic and national organizations. It sets in law the mission, organization,

responsibilities and congressional reporting requirements of the chartered group.

Q: What does a Charter do for MOAA?

A: The most practical effect of the MOAA Charter is that at least 10 states require a Federal Charter for participation in state-level veterans' advisory panels. The MOAA Charter now clears the way for all MOAA Councils and Chapters to directly influence deliberations on military and veterans' issues being considered by state governments.

Q: Are there other benefits to having a Charter?

A: Chartered veterans' groups are considered "first among equals" by the VA; for example, chartered organizations are separately listed in the VA's book of military and veteran service organizations. Chartered groups often get preferential treatment at patriotic ceremonies honoring veterans.

Q: With the Charter, will MOAA now be handling VA claims for MOAA members and other veterans?

A: No. The Department of Veterans Affairs has a separate process for certifying veterans' service organizations to represent veterans' claims. MOAA will continue to offer world-class advice on military, veteran and survivor benefits via the MOAA Member Services Center, MOAA media and Benefits Information Department presentations around the nation.

MOAA Attends Military Family Summit

This week MOAA participated in the National Leadership Summit on Military Families hosted by DoD, US Department of Agriculture, and the University of Maryland. The objective of the summit was to identify key initiatives to meet military families' needs and action steps to accomplish them.

More than 200 attendees prioritized the top need as a comprehensive review of current programs and systems to reduce redundancy and improve effectiveness. The group also agreed on the need for a strategic communications plan for family programs as well as expansion of collaborative partnerships among a broad range of federal, state, local and non-governmental organizations. Other core areas of need focused on psychological/behavioral health and child/youth programs.

Another issue highlighted by a panel of spouses was the difficulty of obtaining drop-in childcare appointments at installation child development centers -- and finding childcare in general. "You survive deployment because you hang out with girlfriends and get a break from your kids...and childcare is a huge component of that," said one spouse.

The need for engaging and utilizing partners at a variety of levels, from national to local, was a common theme. "This is an American commitment...not a DoD project," said one key speaker.

Organizers of the Summit plan to deliver a report in early 2010 with specific recommendations to improve family support and readiness programs.

MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for November 20, 2009:Senators Urge President to Offer Troops Pre-Tax Accounts.

The Pentagon has refused to provide currently serving military people the same Flexible Spending Accounts that federal civilians can use to pay out-of-pocket health and dependent care expenses with pre-tax money. Two senators are preparing a letter urging President Obama to extend the troops equal FSA benefits. You can help by asking your senators to sign the letter.

<http://echo4.bluehornet.com/ct/6019880:6982194528:m:3:230981068:965584CA2B2AC21CB32548843E4994A9>

MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for Tuesday, November 24, 2009:Defense Budget Future:

Bleak? Last week, witnesses at a House Armed Services Committee hearing painted a dreary picture of future defense funding problems.

Happy Thanksgiving

Even in these difficult financial and politicized times, there's plenty to be thankful for this holiday. November is Military Family Month, so be sure to keep the hundreds of thousands of military families who are enduring this holiday without their loved ones in your thoughts, and give thanks for all military people and families who have been and continue to be the saviors of our national well-being.

For MOAA's part, we're extremely grateful for the strong support of our members. You're invaluable in helping ensure our government does the right thing by the uniformed services community. In the last few days alone, our members have generated over 50,000 messages to Congress on three important issues. This truly shows that together we have one powerful voice.

This year we're thankful that Congress approved a 3.4% percent pay raise for the troops, TRICARE coverage for "gray area" guard and reserve members, and relief for military spouses through the Military Spouse Residency Relief Act.

Finally, we're thankful we live in a country resilient enough to persevere through the tough economic times we've encountered over the last year.

If you're traveling this holiday, travel safely, take care of your family, and have a happy Thanksgiving.

Defense Budget Future: Bleak?

Last week, the House Armed Services Committee heard a depressing defense budget forecast from representatives of the Congressional Research Service, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), and think tanks.

During the hearing entitled "Resourcing the National Defense Strategy: Implications of Long Term Defense Budget Trends," witnesses said steep increases in defense spending will be needed to continue a two-war effort despite the current competing federal deficit, but that may be difficult to achieve.

Because of the burgeoning federal deficit and the potential for an expanded war effort in Afghanistan, Congress may be left struggling to find ways to fund future military

needs. CBO estimates that current budgets envision defense spending dropping to 3.2 percent of Gross Domestic Product (total national output of goods and services) in 2015 and to 2.6 percent of GDP by 2028.

Researchers told the Committee that weapon spending may lose out if the Pentagon continues to incur rising personnel and operations costs without a significant increase in the Department's budget.

DoD Announces 2010 TRS, Dental Premiums

By law, TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) Premiums are now based on the actual cost of delivering care to Guard and Reserve families. Previously, the Defense Department developed TRS premiums based on federal civilian health costs. When military associations and Congress questioned that, the Government Accountability Office did a study and determined that TRS premiums were significantly higher than actual costs would indicate.

So Congress directed a substantial premium reduction, implemented in January 2009, and required that 2010 premiums would be 28% of the average of actual cost of delivering care to Guard and Reserve eligibles in 2007 and 2008.

The Defense Department has announced that:

The TRS member-only premium for 2010 will be \$49.62 per month - a \$2.11 (4.4%) increase from 2009.

The TRS family premium for 2010 will be \$197.65 per month - a \$17.48 (9.7%) increase.

2010 TRICARE Dental premiums for active duty families and Reserve component members and families will rise by 4.7%, beginning Feb. 1, 2010.

<http://echo4.bluehornet.com/ct/6049389:7021976947:m:3:230981068:B0F30D9EE7BA91E30375F5B5E507E8CB>

MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for December 4, 2009:MOAA on GI Bill.

MOAA offered recommendations for GI Bill improvements at a House Veterans Affairs Committee panel on Thursday. Pending legislation (H.R. 3554 and S. 1668) would fix this inequity

Senate Approves Family-Caregiver Bill

On November 19, the Senate unanimously approved S. 1963, the Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2009, a major MOAA goal.

Progress on this issue has not come easily. One Senator prevented the bill from moving forward due to a lack of funding offsets. MOAA joined forces with a number of other veterans' organizations to pressure Congress to end the gridlock and get it to the Senate floor for a vote.

The legislation will alleviate some of the heart-wrenching situations families of wounded warriors have encountered. Many caregivers have been forced to quit their jobs, deplete their savings and retirement accounts, give up their own health care benefits, or become destitute as a result of caring for their wounded servicemember or disabled veteran.

The bill also contains a number of other important provisions:

- * Increased mental health care funding for women veterans suffering from military sexual trauma
- * Medical services for newborn children of female vets
- * Improved access to care in rural areas
- * Creation of programs to combat veteran homelessness

The House has passed a less-extensive bill, H.R. 3155, and Congressional leaders are expected to meet shortly to resolve differences between the bills. Please contact your legislators and ask them to support the more robust Senate caregiver bill.

Is Walter Reed Transfer on Track?

On Dec.2, a House Armed Services Committee hearing reviewed progress on construction and realignment of the new Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) at Bethesda and the new community hospital located at Fort Belvoir, VA.

Committee members wanted to know if the scheduled relocation of Walter Reed Army Hospital functions to a new joint-service facility in Bethesda is on track to meet the September 15, 2011 deadline directed by the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission.

Chairman Solomon Ortiz (D-TX) wanted to know if DoD was fully committed to the original BRAC vision of a "world class facility." A May 2009 report by the Defense Health Board (DHB) raised concerns about construction modifications, funding shortfalls, and joint service command and control issues.

Mr. Al Middleton, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Budgets and Financial Policy, said construction at the WRNMMC Bethesda campus is on track and more than 60 percent complete. "We understand that "world-class healthcare facilities is a long-term commitment to improvement beyond BRAC, and that additional investments are required to achieve that end state," he said.

VADM John Mateczun, who heads the National Capital Region health care Joint Task Force, told the subcommittee, "We are committed not just to world-class care, but to the best care that can be provided any time, any place, to the wounded that are coming to us from the theaters in Iraq and Afghanistan. Casualty care is our number one priority."

MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for December 18, 2009:

Big Medicare/TRICARE Cuts Delayed - For 60 Days.

The Senate will vote on Saturday (Dec. 19) to delay implementation of a 21% cut in Medicare and TRICARE payments to doctors now scheduled to take place January 1, 2010. But the new law would only delay the cuts until the end of February, setting up a new crisis in two months.

Entitlements Commission Threat

Sen. Judd Gregg (R-NH) plans to propose amending H.R. 4314 (a bill to increase the national debt ceiling) to create a special entitlements commission with the authority to recommend changes to Social Security, Medicare, and other entitlements programs (such as military and federal civilian retirement, survivor, and health programs).

Under the terms of the amendment, Congress would be forced to vote on the entire package of commission recommendations, without any chance for amendment and with only very limited time for review and debate.

During the entitlements-threat era of the 1990s, Sen. Gregg and others proposed such things as eliminating COLAs before age 62, capping COLAs below inflation, and means-testing COLAs.

MOAA is concerned that the kind of "fast-track" commission entailed in the Gregg amendment could lead to hasty and similarly ill-advised cuts to crucial benefit programs.

Please send your senators a MOAA-suggested message to oppose the Gregg entitlements commission amendment.

<http://echo4.bluehornet.com/ct/6280009:7367841332:m:3:230981068:2945D6E3E7AA4D431339F49CE7035F0A>

MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for December 23, 2009:

TRICARE Coming for Gray Area Reservists

One of MOAA's significant legislative victories in the FY2010 Defense Authorization Act was winning premium-based TRICARE coverage for "gray area" Guard and Reserve retirees who haven't yet attained age 60.

The new program was authorized to begin on Oct. 1, 2009, but new TRICARE benefit changes typically take a year or more to implement because of contracting, system reprogramming and other requirements.

Last week, TRICARE officials announced that they hope to expedite launch of what they've tentatively named "TRICARE Retired Reserve" coverage by late summer or early fall of 2010.

Unlike the existing TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) program - in which premiums are 72% subsidized by the government - gray area retirees will be responsible for paying premiums equal to the full cost of coverage.

We won't know the exact cost of premiums until the program rules are published in the federal register.

Although considerably more expensive than TRS, the new TRICARE Retired Reserve benefit will provide gray area retirees and their families a competitive health care option when compared to the cost of private insurance, and allow for continuity of coverage under the TRICARE system.

MOAA will provide further updates when we get firmer information on the premiums and implementation schedule.

Happy Holidays

With many of the MOAA staff out of town for the holidays, and the next two weeks interrupted by holidays, this will be the last MOAA legislative update until Friday, January 8, 2010.

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 truly appreciate the gift you are giving to our country through your selfless service and sacrifice. You are 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 very tough legislative battles to come in 2010.



JAYHAWK CHAPTER MOAA



A membership meeting will be held **Tuesday, 19 January 2010**, at the Lawrence Country Club. Dinner cost is \$20.00/meal.

The Program: Our guest speaker will be Kansas House of Representatives Minority Leader, Paul Davis,

Social Hour: 1800 hours

Dinner: 1845 hours

The Menu: *Filet Mignon, 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, 14 January 2010**, 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.

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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).

Chapter Dues (\$20.00) **due 1 January 2010** \$_____

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

KANSAS COUNCIL WEBSITE: www.kansasmooa.org

JAYHAWK CHAPTER WEBSITE: www.jayhawkmoaa.org

*We are making progress,
but we are still asking for members
who can/will receive the Newsletter via e-mail.*

*Please let us know at
jwhalladay@sunflower.com*

2010 Jayhawk MOAA Calendar:

Tuesday	19 January	MOAA meeting	Tuesday	20 July	MOAA meeting
Wednesday	10 March	MOAA meeting	Tuesday	21 September	MOAA meeting
Tuesday	18 May	MOAA meeting	Tuesday	16 November	MOAA meeting



*Newsletter Editor
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***HAPPY
NEW YEAR !!!***