



# Jayhawk Chapter MOAA Newsletter



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## May Program:

Our guest speaker will be Chief Justice of the Kansas Supreme Court Lawton Nuss, a KU NROTC graduate.

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## Greetings from the President . . .

Dear Jayhawk Chapter Members and Friends,

I hope you enjoyed the March Dinner Program and the informative presentation on KU's Professional Military Graduate Education Program by Dr. Adrian Lewis. It was great to have the opportunity to honor the KU Air Force ROTC students and cadre and to have two of KU's Wounded Warriors present at the dinner. I also want to thank the members who attended and responded to our speaker interests questionnaire. The most requested speaker topic was Kansas History, followed closely by Iraq/Afghanistan and other Regional Issues and Current Events. Other topics which garnered significant interest included Community Issues/Leaders, Military History Topics and Energy Issues. We will look for opportunities to bring in future speakers to address these topics.



I want to thank the following members who generously contributed their time on March 25th and 26th to man the MOAA information table at the Kansas National Guard Convention - John Halladay, Buck Newsom, Mike Lee, Jim McMurray, Bob Johnson, Dean Bevan, and Dwight Jackson. Their efforts helped recruit 40 new MOAA members to the various Kansas chapters.

I hope you will be able to join us for our upcoming dinner program on Tuesday night May 24th. Our guest speaker will be The Honorable Lawton Nuss, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of Kansas. A fourth-generation Kansan, Chief Justice Nuss attended the University of Kansas on a Naval ROTC scholarship. He graduated in January 1975 with a BA in English and History and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps, serving as a combat engineering officer with Fleet Marine Force Pacific. After his discharge in 1979, he entered law school at KU, graduating in May 1982. Chief Justice Nuss began his law practice in Salina and for 20 years was involved in a wide range of legal issues and proceedings. He was appointed to the Kansas Supreme Court by Governor Bill Graves in August 2002, becoming the first Court member in more than 20 years to move directly from the practice of law to the bench. He became Chief Justice in August 2010.

I hope you will be able to join us on May 24th so we can provide a large turn out and warm welcome for this distinguished, high profile speaker!

# Tom

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**\* Reservations should be sent  
to Jim Cooper by  
19 May**



## JAYHAWK CHAPTER NEWS

***PLEASE NOTE THAT OUR MEETING DATE IS TUESDAY, 24 MAY***

**BG Vic Braden** made a presentation entitled "Kaleidoscope: Peering into the Dysfunctional World of Southern Afghanistan" to the Wichita Chapter of MOAA on 20 March 2011.

**Herschel Stroud** reported that Jacque had a basal cell carcinoma removed from her nose the latter part of March and the forehead pedicle graft was removed on 14 April.

**Stan Sneegas** reports "On Thursday April 28 at 09:00 our youngest son, Spc. Alan Sneegas, will graduate from Army Basic Training at Ft. Benning, GA. Barb and I, with our oldest son, CAPT Andrew Sneegas, will be attending. On Friday we will take Alan to Ft Gordon, GA for his AIT training with the Signal Corps." (L to R – Alan, Barb, Stan and Andrew)



Winners of the 2011 Jayhawk Chapter Spring Golf Outing were **Al Gallup, Erv Hodges, John & Shirley Halladay** with a 9-hole score of 38.

### From Jim Cooper:

Sandy and I had an absolutely great trip to Chile in March. We accompanied our long-time Navy friends whose parents were Chilean, and who visit Chile almost annually. We anticipated having a good time, but the trip was just fantastic.

After an overnight, three-leg flight (Continental to Houston, United to Lima, and LAN airways to Santiago) we spent the first day in Santiago catching up on sleep. The next day we flew on to Pucon, about 480 miles south of Santiago, in the Andes Mountains and the Lake District. Pucon sits in the shadow of Villa Rica volcano – the great scenery reminds one of Colorado in September, only with more and bigger lakes, and lots of volcanoes - keep in mind that the seasons in the southern hemisphere are opposite to ours. We spent several days in the area, at our friends' cousin's condo. It is on the fourth floor, and overlooks both Lake Villa Rica and Villa Rica volcano. After a couple of great days exploring the local area, which included visiting a geothermal hot springs, "Termas Geometricas", we all rented a van and took a road trip into Argentina.



We drove through some beautiful mountain scenery – the border station was in a pass with a really rough gravel road. We drove on to Junin, apparently a town very well known for trout fishing. We had some really good trout for lunch before heading off to St Martin de los Andes, our next stop. Another great drive, smoother now, and found San Martin to be very reminiscent of Bavaria in appearance. There is a major German influence in this part of Argentina. San Martin is a very nice town, again reminiscent of Vail or Aspen. We spent the night and had some great Argentinian grill for dinner.

The next day we headed off to Bariloche. Quite a bit larger than San Martin, and we found a brand-new hotel, located right on the edge of Lake Nahuel Huapi. The hotel was looking for business – a combination of being new and untested and the fact that we were there in the transition season between summer and fall. Bariloche is a great town – we had another great meat grill for dinner that night as well, at the restaurant "El Soliche de Alberto". Massive hunks of meat on a huge indoor brick grill tended by two huge tattooed Argentinian guys – lots of great red wine, great service – and the meat was great. Argentina has the best chocolate in South America, and Bariloche is reputed to have the best in Argentina – there are chocolate shops



**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.**

everywhere, competing for space with leather shops on Bariloche's streets. The best shop is supposedly "Mamoshka", a Russian-themed shop on the main street – we didn't try chocolate at all the shops, but Mamoshka's is certainly very good. Leather is another great buy.

After a couple of days in Bariloche we drove back to Pucon. Our friends' cousins were done with the condo for the season, so they flew back to Santiago the next day, and we drove their vehicle back to Santiago for them. We stopped for the night in Concepcion, on the coast, to visit some friends who are in the Chilean Navy – Concepcion is Chile's largest naval base.

The next day we drove from Concepcion to Santiago via Santa Cruz, in the heart of Chilean wine country. In this area we saw a lot of damage to roads and buildings still evident from the February 2010 earthquake. It was another pretty drive and we finally got back into Santiago late.



We enjoyed a couple of days in Santiago exploring the City Center and enjoying visits with more of our friends' relatives before returning to Kansas via the three-legged route in reverse.

The food was great, wine was superb, pisco sours were tangy, weather was clear and sunny for most of our trip, and the folks were all incredibly friendly – of course it always helps to travel with 'locals'. It is interesting to note that many of the folks in Chile and Argentina mirror the heavy European influence in South America – Italian, German, French, English, Russian – in their names, appearance, mannerisms. The area we were in is also considered part of Patagonia.

It was a great trip and Chile/Argentina are now on our list of Favorite places – if you get the chance, we highly recommend visiting!

### **TRICARE 'HOME DELIVERY' CONVENIENCE**

TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery allows beneficiaries to save time and money by delivering maintenance medications safely and securely to their home through the US Mail. TRICARE beneficiaries switching to pharmacy home delivery from retail pharmacies in 2010 saved 66 percent on their copayments, up to \$176 a year for a non-formulary prescription. Pharmacy home delivery also features an automatic prescription refill option. To sign up for pharmacy home delivery or to learn more about the program, visit the TRICARE website at <http://www.tricare.mil/mybenefit> or call the Member Choice Center toll free at 877-363-1303.



## *Army News* *LTC Victor Hamilton*

### **Greetings Jayhawk Chapter!**

It has been a fruitful year for the University of Kansas Army ROTC "Jayhawk Battalion." For the first time in 17 years the team of Cadet's Bergman and McConnell won the Ranger Buddy Challenge. 25 Schools participated from 14 states. The Team of Cadets Knoll and Meyer took third place in the CO-ED division also. We are very much looking forward to retaining our title next year.

The Jayhawk Battalion is gearing up our Juniors or MS IIIs for the Leadership Development Assessment Course in Fort Lewis, Washington this summer. 16 of

our strongest Cadets will assess during this summer. We have our sights on finishing number one among 40 host institutions scattered across our nine-state Brigade. We are confident that we will achieve our goals.

We are looking forward to our Spring ROTC Awards ceremony on 12 May 2011 at the Military Science Building on the Campus of KU and all of us would like to sincerely thank all of our programs sponsors and supporters ranging from the University to MOAA to AUSA and many more. It is a grand event and all are welcome.

On May 23, 2011 we will commission 20 young Lieutenants into the United States Army. They represent many branches within the United States Army Reserve, Kansas National Guard, and the Regular Army.

On 24 May 2011 our MS IIIs will conduct a pre-LDAC mini-camp at Camp Clark, Missouri. It will be four days of extensive field training to refine our talents before the big assessment at Fort Lewis. Four Cadets will attend the Leadership Training Course this summer as well. They are all Sophomores. The Battalion will send four Cadets to Airborne School, Two to Air Assault School, three to Cultural Language and Understanding Internships, and one remains on a study abroad program this semester in France.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone at MOAA for all the support you have given me, Trish, and the Program. I am departing this summer for another command in Fort Huachuca, Arizona, and will miss each of you. My replacement, LTC Storm Reynolds will be in place on 01 July 2011. Show him the same support you have given our program and the sky will remain the limit.

Best wishes to all my fellow MOAA members,

***LTC Victor S. Hamilton***

Professor of Military Science  
University of Kansas



## *Navy News*

### *CAPT Carl Carpenter, USN*



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

The Spring semester is rapidly coming to a close and for many of our Midshipmen and Officer Candidates that means that they will soon be commissioned as officers in the Navy or Marine Corps. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May we will be commissioning 12 new officers – seven as Navy Ensigns and five as USMC Second Lieutenants. We are very proud of these young men and women and hope that some of you will be able to join us for the Joint Service Commissioning Ceremony on May 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10 AM in the Kansas Union. Our guest speaker for this year's ceremony is scheduled to be RADM Douglas L. McClain. These future officers are listed below:

MIDN Kellan Arpke – a future Navy Pilot

MIDN Abigael Blank – a future USMC Second Lieutenant

MIDN Anne Gockel – a future USMC Second Lieutenant

MIDN Barton Gunter – a future Navy Pilot

Officer Candidate Dennis Hugo II – a future Nuclear Submariner

MIDN Christian Jensen – a future USMC Second Lieutenant

MIDN John McDonald – a future Navy Pilot

MIDN Sean Morrow – a future USMC Second Lieutenant

MIDN Joshua Reid – a future USMC Second Lieutenant

MIDN Edward Rostetter II – a future Navy Pilot

MIDN Cody Smith – a future Navy Surface Warfare Officer

MIDN Elizabeth Whitford – a future Navy Surface Warfare Officer

While our seniors have been busy preparing for graduation and their transition to active duty, the rest of the Jayhawk Battalion has been very busy this semester. Our USMC option and Marine Corps Enlisted Commissioning Program students just finished a demanding Warrior Weekend training program that is designed to prepare them for the challenges of Officer Candidate School. The Aviation Club made an overland field trip to Patuxent River Naval Air Station in Maryland. Over twenty students spent a recent weekend in Boulder, Colorado, participating in a grueling competition sponsored by the University of Colorado NROTC Unit that included color guard drill competition, pistol marksmanship and endurance sports events. We are also preparing a “Dining Out” Mess Night Dinner.

The Spring Awards Ceremony was recently held on April 27th. The ceremony recognized many of our Midshipmen and Officer Candidates for their outstanding performance during the year. I wish to thank the Jayhawk Chapter of MOAA for their support to the Unit in the form of awards and scholarships, which were presented during the ceremony.

This will be my final newsletter as I will be retiring in June 2011 after 31 years of active naval service. I will

be relieved by CAPT Thomas Neal who is coming from a recent tour in the Washington, DC area. I began my military experience at the naval ROTC program at Oregon State back in 1976 and wanted to complete my military service at a naval ROTC unit. I believe there is no more important or rewarding responsibility than preparing young men and women for service to our country, and I couldn't think of a more enjoyable place to be doing that than here in Lawrence, Kansas. Although my wife, Maria, and I are not Midwesterners, the warm welcome we have received made us feel very much at home in Lawrence. We plan to remain "anchored" here

in Lawrence for several years, though we will likely be planning several excursions to warmer areas during the Kansas winter months!

Thank you again for your support of the University of Kansas Naval ROTC Unit. Your support and contributions continue to make a big difference to the men and women in the Midshipmen Battalion.

*Rock Chalk. . . Jayhawk. . . KU!*

*CAPT Carl Carpenter*



## *Air Force News*

### *LtCol Gena Stuchbery, USAF*

*No Report this issue*

## **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 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for March 4, 2011:**

#### Don't Force Dumb Defense Decisions

This week, MOAA President VADM Norb Ryan, Jr. (USN-Ret) wrote a letter to House and Senate Appropriations Committee leaders urging immediate action on the FY2011 defense appropriations bill to avoid forcing the Pentagon into temporary cutbacks that will end up raising costs and hurting readiness.

Nearly six months into FY2011, Congress still hasn't passed this crucial funding bill, leaving the Pentagon and the rest of the country operating under last year's budget constraints.

### **MOAA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for March 11, 2011:**

#### Senators: Defense Will Be Cut

Deputy Defense Secretary William Lynn ran into a bipartisan wall in yesterday's Senate Budget Committee hearing when he asserted that the Pentagon's FY2012 defense budget request represents a "reasonable" amount to address wartime national security needs while also supporting Administration efforts to contain the deficit.

"It may look that way [to you], but it's not," responded the Committee's top Republican, Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-AL), "in light of the national debt we have and the [fiscal] crisis in our country."

Committee Chairman Kent Conrad (D-ND) agreed, saying, "The days of the open checkbook are ended - for everyone. We're on a collision course for a financial crash."

Sessions noted that, in contrast to cuts in other parts of the budget, the Administration has proposed a five-percent increase for defense, and 10-percent increases for some other departments. "These aren't acceptable increases, and I don't think they'll be approved," he said.

MOAA is as concerned and frustrated as anyone about Pentagon inefficiencies in contracting and elsewhere. Dozens of GAO and Defense Inspector General reports have documented that hundreds of billions are wasted or unaccounted for.

#### Strong Letter - Enclosed

This week, leaders of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees issued a bipartisan slap at the VA's belated and too-narrow implementation of relief for wounded warrior caregivers included in last year's Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act (Public Law 111-163).

In a March 8 joint letter to President Obama, Senate Committee Chair Patty Murray (D-WA) and Senior Republican Richard Burr (R-NC) and House Committee Chair Jeff Miller (R-FL) and Senior Democrat Bob Filner (D-CA) complained that the VA missed the implementation deadline of January 30, 2011 and restricted eligibility rules, "contrary to the intent of the law, [creating] hardship for veterans and family caregivers meant to be helped by the new program."

The letter asks the president to direct the VA and Office of Management and Budget to implement regulations for the new program within 60 days and ensure that the rules "comply with the specific eligibility criteria...set out in the law."

#### **MOAA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for March 18, 2011:**

##### MOAA Testifies on TRICARE Fees

MOAA Government Relations Director Col Steve Strobridge (USAF-Ret), was invited to offer MOAA's views at a March 16 House Armed Services Military Personnel Subcommittee hearing on DoD's proposal to raise TRICARE Prime enrollment fees by \$5 per month for a family and raise retail pharmacy copays by \$2 or \$3. No changes are proposed for TRICARE Standard or TRICARE For Life, and military disability (chapter 61) retirees and survivors would be exempt from the Prime fee increase. Co-pays would be eliminated for generic medications ordered through the mail-order pharmacy system.

Strobridge told the Subcommittee MOAA doesn't advocate that fees should never rise, but that DoD's past proposals to raise fees \$1,000 to \$2,000 a year failed to recognize the very large premium military people pre-pay for their health care through decades of service and sacrifice.

"We're encouraged the new DoD proposal does a far better job of acknowledging that than did the proposals of several years ago," Strobridge said. "Our principal objection is to the DoD plan to index future TRICARE Prime fee increases to some undetermined health care index that they project to rise at 6.2% per year." (See MOAA's chart showing how this would grow fees dramatically over time, vs. a COLA-based index.

He asserted current law leaves too much about the fee-setting process to the Defense Department's discretion. DoD went years proposing no changes - making beneficiaries believe there wouldn't be any - and then a new Secretary proposed tripling the fees, which upset beneficiaries and implied they hadn't earned their health care.

Strobridge said no, noting that health care is an earned benefit, not a need-based program. "Once you start talking about ability to pay, you inevitably start looking at last year's family income on your tax return, because retired pay alone doesn't tell anyone's full income story." Federal civilian and legislators' health plans and the vast majority of civilian health plans aren't means-tested, and military health care shouldn't be either, he said. The service and sacrifice itself constitutes the bulk of the military premium, he reiterated, and that's the same for all grades.

##### MOAA on VA Issue Priorities

Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA) and Rep. Jeff Miller (R-FL), newly appointed Chairwoman and Chairman of the Senate and House Veterans Affairs Committees, respectively, welcomed representatives from MOAA and other military and veterans' groups providing testimony at a March 16 joint hearing before the two committees.

In her opening remarks, Senator Murray emphasized that "VA care is a cost of war." She and Chairman Miller noted that their priorities include support for the caregivers of severely wounded warriors, meaningful employment for

veterans, and better access for women veterans in the VA system.

MOAA's COL Bob Norton (USA-Ret), thanked Murray and Miller for their leadership in ensuring veterans' needs are met even while the government faces difficult budget decisions.

Norton focused on three areas: prompt implementation of new support services and benefits for caregivers, women warriors and veterans in rural areas, including National Guard and Reserve veterans; veterans' employment needs; and survivor benefits issues.

MOAA strongly supported last year's enactment of stipends, training, health care and other services for caregivers of severely wounded warriors. The VA is still working on rules to implement the law. Norton urged the Committees to hold hearings to ensure the VA promptly fields the new benefits, and specifically urged eligible caregivers' immediate enrollment in VA health care (CHAMPVA).

Worsening unemployment among veterans was a prevailing theme during the hearing. Norton said early intervention "before, during and after" separation is the key to successful readjustment. MOAA recommends the VA and DoD do more to educate separating veterans on their Post-9/11 GI Bill options, including new job training authority that begins on August 1.

He also recommended enactment of "real incentives" for employers to hire veterans, including a tax credit bill sponsored by Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-MT) and Ranking Member Chuck Grassley (R-IA).

MOAA inputs also recommended:

- Special attention to the unique needs of women warriors as they enter the VA system
- Further progress in modernizing the disability claims system through upgrades in technology, training and quality control
- Raising the dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) rate for qualifying survivors to equal 55% of the disability compensation payable to a 100% disabled veteran
- Authorizing Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits for surviving spouses of members who died on active duty during the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts. (Surviving children, but not surviving spouses, have such benefits under the "Gunnery Sergeant John D. Fry Scholarships" program established in 2009.)
- Strengthening reemployment and financial protections for activated Guard and Reserve troops and their families

#### **MOAA Legislative Update for March 25, 2011:**

##### Military Kids At Risk

The impact on military families who have lived through a decade at war was alarmingly highlighted when military children were included in the "high risk" category for high school drop-outs this year.

MOAA Government Relations Deputy Director Kelly Cotton joined DoD leaders and other association representatives at a military education roundtable this week to identify solutions for this growing problem.

There are 1.1 million military children between the ages of 5 and 18. 75,000 parents of those children have been deployed multiple times since 9/11.

Military children attend 6-9 schools on average before graduating high school, and different state curriculum requirements and graduation standards add to the stressors that military children face when transferring schools.

Mr. Robert Gordon, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, Military Community and Family Policy said this is not just a DoD problem, but America's problem. There is still much research being done, but we know that military children's test scores are declining, and school attendance and engagement are becoming greater struggles.

Just as multiple factors contribute to the well-being of the military child, there are several opportunities for organizations and communities to help. For example, President Obama has called on all states to adopt the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children through his Strengthening Military Families campaign.

35 states have signed the Compact so far. MOAA chapters having played key roles in winning their states' approval, and many others are actively pushing adoption in the remaining states.

The Boys and Girls Club of America has over 390 Military Youth Centers around the world, and Girls, Incorporated is leading a diversity initiative to raise awareness and educate communities on daughters of military service members. A recent RAND study showed these girls have higher levels of anxiety than their civilian peers.

MOAA will continue to work with Congress and continue our partnerships with the Military Child Education Coalition, Military Impacted Schools Association, and other organizations to build national and community support to reduce education risks for our military children.

### **MOAA Legislative Update for April 1, 2011:**

#### New Rules Changes Could Affect Military Legislation

Mail Your Postcards ***(This should have been done!!)***

#### Defending the Military Budget

Tom Philpott interviews new House Armed Services Committee Ranking Member Adam Smith (D-WA) on the challenges of supporting the military as Congress looks to slash government spending.

#### April Fooling on Defense Funding

Testifying before the House Armed Services Committee on March 31, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates urged against any further defense budget cuts, considering the new additional missions being taken on by the military.

"We're in serious budget trouble," Gates told the committee, citing expensive new missions in Libya and relief efforts in Japan, even while Congress has yet to approve the FY2011 Defense Appropriations Act and the additional \$157 contingency fund for war operations.

But Gates added some fuel to the budget-cutting debate when he said the Pentagon could reprogram money within the contingency fund to pay for the Libya and Japan efforts.

That only piqued additional questions about how that could be done, considering previous assertions by the Administration – before the Japan and Libya operations were envisioned – that any further reductions in the budget request would hurt readiness.

These may be legitimate questions, but they're beside the point for the short term, from MOAA's perspective.

#### New Rules Changes Could Affect Military Legislation

The House of Representatives approved a number of new rules at the start of the new Congress that could significantly affect the process of considering defense and other legislation.

First, the new rules bar commemorative legislation from being considered in the House.

Nearly one-third of all bills passed by the previous Congress involved resolutions declaring National Deep Vein Thrombosis Awareness Month, honoring sports accomplishments, or commemorating other noteworthy people or events.

More significantly, House leaders have dramatically changed the way they deal with legislation that comes before the House for action. Previously in both Republican- and Democratic-controlled Houses, the party in power kept a tight rein on the amendment process, using the Rules Committee to limit floor amendments to issues the leaders were willing to consider.

This year, the new rules will operate much more like the Senate's, with individual members able to offer a variety of amendments for open debate. Among other things, this change could have serious impacts on the annual defense authorization bill.

Historically, the House quickly approved its version of the defense bill with few amendments, while the Senate often had to consume a week or more, scheduling debate time on an agenda that included hundreds of proposed amendments. This year, that could be the scene in both chambers, which could be good or bad news.

On one hand, it gives MOAA's legislative champions greater opportunities to have their amendments considered. On the other, it opens the process to a potential budget-cutting free-for-all, with the possibility of disadvantageous amendments being offered on relatively short notice with limited time for rebuttal before a vote is taken.

The only predictable thing about that change is that it's sure to drag out the legislative process and increase the potential for unintended consequences.

Finally, the House has instituted new rules intended to block "pork" spending (earmarks). Accordingly, new House Armed Services Committee Chairman Howard "Buck" McKeon (R-CA) has issued guidelines that no provision can be inserted in Committee action on the defense bill that designates money to be spent in a specific district or locality. Any alternate spending initiatives will have to be subject to open debate and vote, and any proposal to increase spending will have to be offset by an equivalent spending reduction.

#### Roth TSP Option Delayed

This week, Thrift Savings Plan officials announced the implementation of the Roth Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) option

for military personnel and federal civilians will be delayed until April 2012 at the earliest. Earlier, officials had hoped to implement the new option in January.

MOAA pushed hard to win this important tax benefit for military personnel and federal workers, and Congress responded in 2009 by authorizing the Roth option.

Under the Roth option, contributions to the TSP are made after taxes are withheld, but distributions in retirement are fully tax-free.

The Roth option can be particularly valuable to military people, because tax-free housing and subsistence allowances reduce their current tax rates, and those who serve a full military and/or federal civilian career will have a reasonable amount of taxable retired pay and other income in retirement. It's especially attractive for service personnel who spend much of the year in a combat zone, where their basic pay is fully or substantially tax-exempt.

TSP officials gave various reasons for the delay, indicating that many federal agencies wouldn't be able to finish upgrading their pay systems by the end of the year. They also are reluctant to make a major change at the end of the year when so many other tax and other changes are taking effect, raising the potential for errors.

But they reported substantial progress, and are almost finished installing a new data program to track which money in the TSP was contributed on a pre-tax vs. post-tax basis.

MOAA will continue to track progress and push for the earliest possible implementation.

## **MOAA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for April 15, 2011:**

### MOAA Storms The Hill for You

MOAA Council and Chapter Presidents from the 50 states and Puerto Rico, accompanied by members of the national Board of Directors and headquarters staff, plus members of MOAA's active duty, Guard, Reserve, spouse and auxiliary advisory committees swarmed Capitol Hill on April 13 to visit nearly all 535 representatives and senators in support of key legislative priorities.

This year, the "Hill-stormers" met with their legislators to focus on:

- Protecting the currently serving force against manpower cuts and pay raise cutbacks Capping any future TRICARE fee increases at the COLA percentage Make progress toward ending unfair compensation penalties imposed on thousands of disabled retirees, military survivors, and Guard/Reserve warriors
- MOAA Hill-stormers received very positive feedback from most legislators, and we hope to see a considerable jump in the number of cosponsors for MOAA-supported bills on these topics. Check your representatives' and senators' cosponsorship status for the bills listed below:
  - H.R. 1092 - Grants Congress, not SecDef, authority to set TRICARE fees
  - H.R. 333, H.R. 186, S. 344 - End deduction of VA benefits from retired pay
  - H.R. 178, S. 260 - End deduction of VA benefits from SBP annuities

- H.R. 181, H.R. 1283 - Authorize Reserve retirement age credit for all active service since 9/11, and eliminate a glitch that denies full credit for active duty tours that span more than one fiscal year

You can enhance MOAA's Hill-storming results by entering your ZIP code in the applicable box for each bill to send your legislators a MOAA-suggested message.

### Testimony Highlights SBP, Pay, Healthcare

On April 13, the Senate Armed Services Personnel Subcommittee, chaired by Sen. Jim Webb (D-VA) held a hearing focusing on personnel and compensation programs for the military community, which Webb led off with an acknowledgement that "Defense is not immune" from budget cuts in this increasingly austere fiscal environment. Webb said the subcommittee intends to conduct scrupulous oversight to ensure funded programs are effective and efficient.

The panel's first witness was Senate SBP champion Bill Nelson (D-FL) who urged substantive action this year on his legislation (S. 260) to end deduction of VA survivor benefits from military Survivor Benefit Plan annuities. He noted that the Senate has passed the bill almost every year, only to see it dropped in final deliberations with the House for lack of funding offsets.

Nelson said he's committed to finding offsets, and that taking care of veterans and survivors should be considered a cost of war. "I've got a lot of experience in the insurance business," he observed, "and I know of no other purchased annuity that would deny payment based on receipt of a different benefit." Webb expressed empathy, noting that his father had purchased SBP as a military retiree.

The final panel featured leaders of several military associations, including MOAA Government Relations Director Col. Steve Strobridge (USAF-Ret).

Strobridge and the other Military Coalition witnesses covered a range of goals, from sustaining the military pay raise and funding for family support programs to eliminating inequities affecting survivors, disabled retirees and Guard/Reserve members.

Strobridge particularly focused on health care issues, urging the subcommittee to resist inclusion of Deficit-Commission-proposed TRICARE For Life cutbacks in the upcoming budget resolution, further oversight to ensure proper care for wounded warriors and caregivers, and putting language in the law acknowledging that career servicemembers prepay very large in-kind premiums of service and sacrifice and capping the percentage increase in TRICARE fees in any year to the percentage increase in retired pay.

Senator Webb expressed his strong concern that the Nation keeps its "moral contract" with military retirees on that score. Strobridge strongly agreed, but reiterated that there's nothing in current law reflecting any such contract, and that putting it in the law is essential to help sustain it in the future.

### Military Champions Honored

At a packed-house Capitol Hill ceremony on April 12, MOAA presented its top annual awards to eight individuals



and organizations for their outstanding support of the military and veterans' community.

MOAA's Arthur T. Marix Award for Congressional Leadership (named in honor of MOAA's founder) was presented to:

Sen. Daniel Akaka (D-HI) for his leadership in winning upgraded VA benefits for wounded warrior caregivers and women veterans and a package of major improvements to the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill

Rep. Joe Wilson (R-SC) for championing efforts to upgrade military pay raises, eliminate penalties for disabled retirees and survivors, prohibit inappropriate TRICARE fee increases, and relieve inequities affecting Guard and Reserve members and families

#### MOAA's Distinguished Service Award was presented to:

William P. Hite, General President of the United Association of Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada, for leadership in helping veterans find meaningful jobs in the construction industry

Lieutenant General Jack C. Stultz, USA, Chief of the Army Reserve, for his innovative initiatives, including the Employer Partnership Program and the virtual installation concept to support families who don't live near military facilities

The Dollar General Corporation for its strong support of its Guard, Reserve and veteran employees and their families

Sesame Workshop for its work with the USO in establishing the "Sesame Street Experience for Military Families," which helps military families, and especially children, cope with deployment-related conditions and other stresses of military life

#### MOAA's Colonel Paul W. Arcari Meritorious Service Award

for congressional staff members (named for MOAA's former director of government relations, who retired in 2001) was presented to Ms. Kim Lipsky, Staff Director of the Senate Veteran's Affairs Committee, and Mr. Jacob Parker of Rep. Tom Latham's staff for their tireless behind-the-scenes work with MOAA, The Military Coalition, and others to win support for a wide variety of legislation to support the military and veterans community.

#### First Lady Launches Military Family Campaign

On April 12, echoing President Obama's military family initiative, First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden, spouse of the Vice President, launched an ambitious and unprecedented awareness campaign called Joining Forces.

Joining Forces challenges all Americans to answer the question "How can I give back to those who have given me so much?"

With less than 1% of Americans serving in uniform, and with the country at war for a decade, MOAA was pleased to hear our nation's top leaders and spouses assert that our military members and military families can't be the only ones to bear the burden.

This national initiative will focus on three areas:

- Highlighting that military members and military families are everywhere - including in a community near you

- Promoting programs and services that focus on employment opportunities for military spouses, educational opportunities for military children and military spouses, and wellness of the military family as a whole
- Emphasizing that "Everyone can do something" - an effort started two years ago by Mrs. Obama and Dr. Biden to engage the support of the federal, state, local governments, and communities across the United States

MOAA is already engaged with the Joining Forces initiative through a partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to host a career fair specifically designed for military spouses.

Additionally MOAA's vast Chapter networks have been engaged for years in local communities working on state and local initiatives to support currently serving members, veterans, and military families.

#### **MOAA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for April 21, 2011:**

##### More Budget Woes on the Horizon

As Congress enjoys a two-week Easter recess after finally passing a FY2011 budget mid-way through the fiscal year, the budget crisis remains the hot topic in Washington and continues to make headlines.

The next hurdle for lawmakers upon their return in May will be to tackle the debt ceiling. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner reiterated on Monday that Congress will need to raise the debt limit on government borrowing by July 8 even if he employs "extraordinary measures" to avert the country from defaulting on its obligations.

The current legal debt limit is set at \$14.3 trillion and as the nation's debt inches closer to busting the ceiling, both sides of the aisle agree that they must take action to prevent an economic disaster.

Following that hurdle, Congress will be getting back to work on the FY2012 budget - one that has significant implications for the Pentagon.

Late last week, President Obama made it clear that the Pentagon would not be exempt from additional efforts to trim the federal budget. White House and Pentagon officials confirmed that the Administration is calling for an additional \$400 billion in savings through FY2023...and that's on the heels of the over \$400 billion in cuts that the Pentagon has reportedly made over the past two years.

Defense officials announced that the Pentagon will begin a "comprehensive review" to find the additional savings. Defense Secretary Robert Gates plans to provide President Barack Obama with options - to include the pros and cons of each - in order to make additional defense cuts.

Pentagon Press Secretary Geoff Morrell said Gates "has been clear that further significant defense cuts cannot be accomplished without reducing forces structure and military capabilities" and that the review is not "a budget math exercise."

Regardless of the math, MOAA remains concerned that our military members and their families are already stretched to the limit...cutting forces without any reduction in operational tempo just won't "compute."

Bills of Interest

Legislators have recently introduced several bills of interest to the military and veterans community. Please send your legislators a MOAA-suggested message in support of the following bills:

- S. 697 - (Bob Casey, D-PA) Would provide a tax credit for military spouses pursuing a new state license or certification due to a permanent change of station (PCS) move.
- H.R. 1283 - (Tom Latham, R-IA) Would fix the fiscal year "glitch" that requires that active service for Guard/Reserve servicemembers to lower their retirement age must occur in the same fiscal year.
- H.R. 1297 & S. 721 - (Rep. Louie Gohmert, R-TX, and Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchinson, R-TX) Requires the Treasury, in the event of a government shutdown, to continue to provide pay and allowances to military servicemembers.

**MOAA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for April 29, 2011:**TRICARE Young Adult Rolls Out

On Wednesday, DoD announced that enrollment in the TRICARE Young Adult (TYA) program is open, with coverage set to begin May 1.

The TYA program provides TRICARE coverage to dependent children of the uniformed services who meet the following requirements:

- Between the ages of 21 (or 23 for those enrolled in college) and 26
- Unmarried
- Not eligible for employer-sponsored health care

Premiums have been set at \$186/month for TRICARE Standard. This is a per-person premium, so a family that wishes to enroll two qualifying children would pay \$372 per month for both children. By law, these premiums are designed to cover the full cost of the delivered care, without any DoD subsidy.

For now, TRICARE Standard is the only available option.

TRICARE Prime coverage will be available starting in October and at a premium of \$213/month per person.

Those who were eligible for the program, and have saved medical receipts since January 1, 2011, can receive retroactive coverage to that date, but will also be required to pay back premiums.

Although the premium structure for TYA is uniform for all enrollees, the cost-sharing and catastrophic cap will be based on the sponsor's status (e.g., children of currently serving personnel would have a 20% Standard cost-share vs. 25% for children of retired personnel).

One obvious question MOAA has asked that has so far gone unanswered is whether members who already have a child enrolled under the (considerably more expensive) Continuing Health Care Benefits Program can get retroactive credit to January 1 under TYA coverage and receive a rebate for the premium differential. We hope to have that answer next week.

Recruiting and Retention Update

Following a banner recruiting and retention year in 2010, the Services have continued to meet their targeted goals for both active duty and reserve forces so far this year. An April 25 DoD report on recruiting in the first half of FY2011 provided the following accession data:

## Active Duty:

- Army 34,264 accessions, 102 percent of goal
- Navy 16,011 accessions, 100 percent
- Marine Corps 11,497 accessions, 100 percent
- Air Force: 14,279 accessions, 100 percent

## Reserve components:

- Army National Guard, 27,426 accessions, 106 percent
- Army Reserve, 15,322 accessions, 112 percent
- Navy Reserve, 3,998 accessions, 100 percent
- Marine Corps Reserve, 5,081 accessions, 112 percent
- Air National Guard, 3,413 accessions (nine short of the goal)
- Air Force Reserve, 4,539 accessions, 100 percent

The Pentagon also reported that all components are on target with their retention goals.

These strong recruitment and retention rates -- driven in no small part by a protracted economic downturn and a discouraging civilian job market -- have been the Defense Department's good fortune at a time when a decade of war has placed unprecedented stresses on the all-volunteer force.

MOAA is concerned that data like these sometimes may lead legislators and others to conclude that servicemembers and families don't mind, or are even thriving, under these terrible deployment conditions. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Our troops and families have been running on patriotism and adrenalin for a long time now, and we must not allow ourselves to take their incredible dedication and sacrifices for granted, or believe they will continue to serve no matter how much or how long we abuse them.

At some point, the economy and job market will turn around. And that's when the true test will come. Those who assume from the current numbers that we can cut military force levels or pay raises in this environment do so at the peril of longer-term retention and readiness.

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A businessman attending a banquet was surprised to see that the old man taking coats at the door gave no checks in return.

"He has a good memory," a fellow diner explained. "He's been doing this for years and prides himself on never having made a mistake."

After the banquet, as the businessman was leaving, the old man gave him his coat. "How do you know this one is mine?" the businessman asked.

"I don't, sir." the old man replied.

"Then why did you give it to me?"

"Because you gave it to me, sir."



# JAYHAWK CHAPTER MOAA



A membership meeting will be held **Tuesday, 24 May 2011**, at the Lawrence Country Club.  
Dinner cost is \$22.00/meal.

**The Program:** Our guest speaker will be Chief Justice of the Kansas Supreme Court, Lawton Nuss, a KU NROTC graduate.

**Social Hour:** 1800 hours      **Dinner:** 1845 hours

**The Menu:** *Chicken, 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, 19 May 2011**, 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 Cooper 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 \$22.00 per meal. I am enclosing a check for \$\_\_\_\_\_ for meal(s).

**Chapter Annual Dues (\$20.00)** \$\_\_\_\_\_

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)

***Can you receive the newsletter via e-mail ??***

***If so, it saves the Chapter for both  
printing and postage.***

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

**2011 Jayhawk MOAA Calendar:**

|         |               |              |         |              |              |
|---------|---------------|--------------|---------|--------------|--------------|
| Tuesday | <b>24 May</b> | MOAA meeting | Tuesday | 20 September | MOAA meeting |
| Tuesday | 19 July       | MOAA meeting | Tuesday | 15 November  | MOAA meeting |



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

**IN GOD WE TRUST**