



# Jayhawk Chapter MOAA Newsletter

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## May Program:

LTC Brian Steed, Asst. Prof. of Military History and Middle East Foreign Area Officer at the Command & General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, who will speak on ISIS vs. ISIL.

☆☆☆☆☆ CHAPTER  
awarded for

2002 / 2003 / 2005 / 2008 / 2009  
2010 / 2011 / 2012 / 2013 / 2014

☆☆☆☆☆ CHAPTER  
awarded for

2004 / 2006 / 2007

## President's Comments. . .

WOW !! We are now about a third of the way through 2016, and I think it has been even busier than last year !!

Since our last Newsletter there have been several events and activities that both Kansas Council of Chapters and Jayhawk Chapter Leadership have attended or participated in including:

- \* Major General Victor J. Braden, ARNG (Jayhawk Chapter Member) has been promoted to that rank, and on March 6<sup>th</sup> assumed Command of the 35<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division at Fort Leavenworth.
- \* National, State Council of Chapter and local MOAA Chapter members were in Washington D.C. from April 11-14 to "Storm the Hill" to discuss 2 Major Issues, 1) Oppose disproportional TRICARE Fee Hikes (fix TRICARE problems before raising fees), and 2) Act This year on the SBP-DIC Offset (partial rebate expires Oct 2017, so Congress MUST act this year to prevent the possibility of Military Spouses being penalized \$15K/year when service caused the death.
- \* Kansas Council of Chapters Quarterly Meeting that was held in Manhattan on April 23 in conjunction with the National Guard Association of Kansas (NGAKS)

We have also had or will have representation and participation at the three KU ROTC Award Ceremonies being conducted in April and May. The KU Joint Commissioning Ceremony will be held at the Kansas Union Ballroom on Monday, May 16<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am. I encourage you to attend this if your schedule permits to witness the pinning of MOAA sponsored Gold Bars onto the uniforms of the new 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenants and Ensigns.

I am happy to report on a couple of items as follows:

- \* Our Chapter Secretary COL John Halladay, USA, (RET) has been steadily improving in his recovery and has been able to participate in some Chapter and Council Meetings/Events. **A special THANK YOU goes to Shirley Halladay** for all the additional work she has done for our Chapter and Council during John's recovery.

At the April Kansas Council of Chapters Meeting a KCC Certificate of Merit was presented to COL Dave Darwin, USA, (RET) for his contributions as KCC President in 2015, and as Past President in 2016. CAPT Jim Cooper, USN (RET) was also awarded a KCC Certificate of Merit for his leadership excellence and dedication to sustain Chapter initiatives for scholarship grants, coordination of Chapter activities and flawless management of Chapter finances. COL George Pogge, USA, (RET) was also awarded a KCC Certificate of Merit for his Chapter involvement with other Veteran Service Organizations and participation in legislative issues.

I look forward to seeing you at our Dinner Meeting on Tuesday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, and remember to "Never Stop Serving".

*Mike*



## Volume XXI, Issue 3

1 May 2016

### Staff:

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- Newsletter Editors:  
COL John & Shirley Halladay
- Web Master:  
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\* Reservations should be sent  
to **Jim Cooper** by  
**12 May**



# JAYHAWK CHAPTER NEWS



**CHAPTER DUES (\$20.00) were due in January.  
There are still some members who HAVE NOT paid their dues!  
Please send your check to CAPT (Ret) Jim Cooper  
1115 Stone Meadows Drive, Lawrence, KS 66049-3961  
as soon as possible so we can finalize the Chapter Directory.**

*Speaking of the Directory . . .  
If any of you have changes in address, phone, etc.,  
please call John or Shirley Halladay at 843-6184  
We need to finalize the Directory before 17 May.*

## PERSONAL NEWS

### From Dean Bevan:

On July 8 and 9, at 7:30 pm, Theatre Lawrence will present an evening of my one-act plays. These have been performed across the US, from NYC to Seattle, Palm Springs to Fredericksburg, and more than a dozen other cities in between.

I also represented the Jayhawk Chapter on April 21<sup>st</sup> to present gold bars to cadets commissioning from KU's Army ROTC Battalion as well as the MG Clay Comfort Scholarship Award.

### From Ray Finch:

John Finch and his family moved to Augusta, Georgia in February, where John has assumed the position of Battalion XO in a MI battalion. John was also informed in April that he was picked up BZ to LTC. John is the son of Jean and Ray Finch, who hope to soon visit.

### From Graham Kreicker:

In March, Graham Kreicker (COL. USMCR Ret.) spent three weeks on an intensive tour of Jordan and Israel.

### From Mike Miller:

On Monday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, Chapter President Mike Miller scratched one off his Bucket List when he had his first Hole in One on the 3<sup>rd</sup> hole during Senior League play at Eagle Bend. This also made him a member with those who have bowled a 300 game (Nov 2011) and had a hole in one.

### From Shirley Halladay:

I am delighted to report that John was released from LMH Rehab on 11 March. He spent three and a half weeks under Visiting Nurses (VNA) care. I give his VNA physical therapist, Jeff, a whole bunch of credit for getting him back on his feet as quickly as he did. It took a lot of work from both of them, but in that time period he made it from a walker to a cane and now goes without the cane most of the time (unless I "make" him take it because of unfamiliar territory).

### From LTC Davis McElwain, KU Army ROTC:

Honorary Jayhawks,

On behalf of the Army ROTC Program at the University of Kansas, I would like to give you a heart-felt thanks for your commitment, generosity and support of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ROC ceremony and the awards and scholarships that you and your organization presented to our cadets.

Thank you for your participation and support in creating a day to celebrate the achievements and accomplishments of the Jayhawk Battalion cadets.

Without all of your dedication to the University of Kansas Army ROTC program and moreover, the cadets, this organization could not have prospered in the way I have seen it over the last few years. You and your organization epitomize all the qualities that we instill in our cadets here at the University of Kansas. Your organization is an invaluable member of the Jayhawk Battalion and a critical component to our storied success and the success of our cadets.

Thank you again for your support and the role you play in support of our mission!

LTC Davis K. McElwain

**The newsletter is only as good as the material available,  
so each member is requested to forward news and other items of interest to the editors.**



## *Army News* *LTC Davis McElwain, USA*

### **Greetings Jayhawk Chapter!**

On April 9, 2016 Cadets from across the United States challenged themselves to find out just how physically and mentally strong they are. They competed in the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual University of Kansas Army ROTC Ranger Buddy competition at the Sesquicentennial Park area at Clinton Lake southwest of Lawrence.

Teams competed as far as North Dakota, Nevada and Tuskegee University, Alabama. Cadets on male, female or co-ed teams underwent a series of events as they competed for the title of Best Ranger Buddy Team. The competition started at 5 a.m. with a 15-kilometer buddy team ruck march followed by nineteen skill tasks events that required knowledge of knots, military reporting formats, individual movement techniques, first aid tasks, weapons tasks, and a final 5-kilometer buddy run.

KU successfully defended its first place finish in the Male Division. Cadets Parker Pezzati and Joseph McConnell won first place in the Male Division for the sixth year in a row. Wheaton College came in second and the University Of North Dakota placed third. University of Kansas Cadets Caroline Patelli and Cody McCurry also placed second in the coed division.



Pictured Left to Right COL Morgado, Cadets Patelli and McCurry, CSM Waterhouse. Second Place COED Ranger Buddy Competition Winners.

This elite event is for top-notch cadets to compete in and a way to encourage excellence and focus on those skills that will best prepare them for a career as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant. Additionally this continues to be an excellent Spring event to keep the Ranger Challenge Team technically proficient and continue their high level of training.



Pictured Left to Right COL Morgado, Cadets Pezzati and McConnell, CSM Waterhouse. First Place Male Ranger Buddy Competition Winners

### **Jayhawk Detachment Bids Farewell to PMS and SMI**

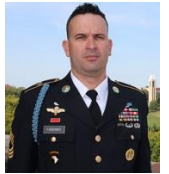
As the Jayhawk Detachment prepares to close out the 2015-2016 school year, we will bid farewell to LTC Davis McElwain, Professor of Military Science and MSG Michael Fairbanks, Senior Military Instructor. LTC McElwain will leave to take Battalion Command of the 41<sup>st</sup> Signal Battalion in Yongsan, Korea. MSG Fairbanks was one of few senior non commissioned officers selected to attend the United States Sergeants Major Academy. He will report at the end of the summer after serving as regimental Cadre at Cadet Summer Training located at FT Knox, KY.



LTC McElwain, originally from Lawrence, Kansas, graduated from Wake Forest University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Chemical Corps. After transferring to the Signal Corps, he deployed to Iraq as the S6 for 2nd Battalion, 4th Field Artillery Regiment for the initial invasion in 2003 where his unit was

awarded the Valorous Unit Award. He commanded Alpha Company, 44th Signal Battalion in eastern Afghanistan in 2005-2006. He served as the Executive Officer of 53rd Signal Battalion, a 350-Soldier unit in charge of operating and protecting the Wideband Global Satellite Constellation for the United States Government. His most recent assignment was as the S6 in charge of communications for 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division deployed to Afghanistan, where his unit was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation. LTC McElwain arrived at the University of Kansas Army ROTC Program July 2014. Under his leadership and mentorship, LTC McElwain commissioned 31 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenants onto Active or National Guard/Reserve Duty. LTC McElwain's successor is LTC Tracey Olson who is currently stationed at FT Leavenworth, KS. LTC Olson will assume responsibility of the Jayhawk Detachment June 2016.

MSG Fairbanks is originally from La Porte TX. He enlisted in the United States Army in January 1997 and completed United States Army Infantry School OSUT at Fort Benning, Ga. He has served in 1/75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 19<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 327<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, University of New Mexico Army ROTC, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 34<sup>th</sup> Armor. He participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom from Feb 07 to Nov 08 and Operation Spartan Shield/Inherent Resolve from Jun 14 to Mar 15.



MSG Fairbanks has held positions of responsibility and leadership to include Team leader and Squad Leader, Drill Sergeant, Platoon Sergeant and First Sergeant. During his time with the KU ROTC Program, MSG Fairbanks was directly responsible for the following event involvement:

- Salute to Service Games (Football, Volleyball, Baseball, and Softball)

- World Record Ugly Sweater Contest Duty

- Facilitated 9 Basketball Handouts

- Multiple Color Guards including Sporting KC

- Ranger Buddy Planner/Facilitator

MSG Fairbanks' successor is not yet identified.

### **Spring 2016 Army ROTC Commissionees**



At the end of Spring 2016 Semester, the Jayhawk Detachment will commission thirteen 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenants. CDT Nathan Algarra majored in Mechanical Engineering. He will receive his active duty



commission into the Engineer Corps. CDT Devante Green majored in Exercise Science. He will receive his active duty commission as an Ordnance Officer. CDT Colton Leddy majored in Biology. He will receive his active duty commission as a Military Intelligence Officer, branch detailed Infantry. CDT Caroline Patelli majored in Geology and will receive her Reserve Commission as a Military Intelligence Officer. CDT Paul Stueve majored in Athletic Training and will receive National Guard commission as a Medical Service Officer. CDT Allison Long majored in Nursing and will receive her Reserve commission in the Nurse Corps. CDT Parker Osborne



majoring in Applied Behavioral Science and will receive her Active Duty commission as an Ordnance Officer. CDT Parker Pezzati majored in Business Administration. He will receive his Active Duty Commission as an Infantry Officer. CDT Laura Benz

majoring in Nursing and will receive her Active Duty commission in the Nurse Corps. CDT Grant Moyer majored in Strategic Communications and will receive his Active Duty Commission as an Aviation Officer. CDT Nathan Law majored in Atmospheric Science with a focus in News Media Forecasting. He will receive his Active

Duty Commission as a Military Intelligence Officer, branch detailed Armor. CDT Elizabeth Hover, majored in a Masters in Social Work. She will receive an Active Duty Commission in the Medical Services Corps. Finally, CDT Stephen Blank majored in Business and will receive his National Guard Commission as an Aviation Officer.

The Jayhawk Detachment will have a commissioning ceremony for our cadets May 16, 2016 at the base of the Campanile. Congratulations to each of them and we wish them the best!

Check out our website at [www.armyrotc.ku.edu](http://www.armyrotc.ku.edu) for more details on these events, and take a look here <http://armyrotc.ku.edu/-ranger-buddy-competition> Additionally, find us on Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/KUArmyROTC> and follow us on Twitter: [http://twitter.com/KU\\_ArmyROTC](http://twitter.com/KU_ArmyROTC)

**WE BUILD LEADERS!**

**ALL IN!**

**JAYHAWKS LEAD THE WAY!**



*LTC Davis McElwain*



## Navy News CAPT Dave Meron, USN



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

April is the last full month of academics for our midshipmen, who are winding down and starting preparations for their finals. The battalion conducted their change of command ceremony giving the new leadership a few weeks to develop before summer break. The Commanders Cup Trophy provided a good competition and was awarded to the Alpha Two Platoon. Finally, the midshipmen took time out of their studies to help our community by assisting in the Big Event.

MIDN 1/C Nicholas Morrison formally relieved MIDN 1/C Stephen Walker as the Jayhawk Battalion Commanding Officer (BCO) during a ceremony held on April 20<sup>th</sup>. MIDN Walker talked about how you learn about your personal leadership styles and wished everyone luck before giving the command to MIDN Morrison. MIDN Morrison is looking to maintain the highest standards and success rates that his predecessors have done before.

The Spring 2016 Commander Cups trophy was awarded to the Alpha Two Platoon who was led by MIDN 3/C Christmond Belcher. In order to win the trophy, platoons earn points by correctly answering general military knowledge questions, physical fitness competitions, and competing in leadership evolutions. With the addition of MIDN Belcher the platoon is comprised of MIDN 1/C Joshua Shope and Sydney Jourdan, OC Ben Davis, MIDN 2/C Nicholas Herren, and MIDN 4/C Charley Beck, Jacob Ellenberger, and Kurt Wenske. The comradeship and competition between the platoons really shows how eager the midshipmen are to succeed.



Saturday April 16<sup>th</sup> members of the Jayhawk Battalion took time out of their demanding schedule to participate in the Big Event. The Big Event is a volunteer based activity that provides a helping hand to Lawrence residents by completing projects in their neighborhoods.



Our midshipmen enjoy giving back to the community with events such as this. In addition to this event, the battalion has also participated in two Habitat for Humanity events.

With the school year ending down, the battalion only has a few more events scheduled. On April 27<sup>th</sup>, we will holding our annual awards ceremony in Woodruff Auditorium located in the student union. The future aviators within the battalion will be attending the annual Flight Jacket Dinner on May 12<sup>th</sup> at O'Neill's Restaurant. The final event will be the commissioning ceremony, which is going to be held on May 16<sup>th</sup> in the Kansas Union Ballroom.

Thank you for your continued support of the Jayhawk Battalion!

**Rock Chalk and Go Navy!**

*CAPT Dave Meron*



## Air Force News

### LtCol Bill Pastewait, USAF

#### Hello from Detachment 280, the Flying Jayhawks!

It's been a great year for the Flying Jayhawks! As we close out the semester we are preparing to commission 9 new 2Lts into the United States Air Force. On Monday, 16 May, we will commission:

Cadet JonElliott Brubaker – Medical  
 Cadet Andrew Gunneson – Space Operations  
 Cadet Beatrice Horne – Air Battle Manager  
 Cadet Robert LaRue – Developmental Engineer  
 Cadet Lauren Patelli – Intelligence  
 Cadet Lauren Sturm – Nuclear Operations  
 Cadet Sebastian Thomas – Pilot  
 Cadet Madeline Ulloa – Navigator  
 Cadet Bradley Watkins – Medical

As these seniors prepare for graduation and commissioning we submitted 9 cadets to compete for an enrollment allocation (EA). The EA grants a student with a slot to Field Training and a chance for entry into the Professional Officer Course. We were extremely pleased to have a 100% selection rate for our detachment this year! All of our cadets will attend Field Training this summer. This program consists of two weeks “in-garrison” at Maxwell Air



LtCol Bill Turner with Cadets Brubaker and Adame



LtCol Steve Jackson with Cadets Hupe and Beck



Alumni Storyboards

Force Base, Alabama, and two weeks “deployed” to Camp Shelby Army National Guard, Mississippi. Successful completion allows them to contract into the Professional Officer Course and moves them one step closer to commissioning.

We hosted our Alumni Leadership Laboratory on 19 April. This event was an opportunity to recognize just a fraction of our over 1,200 alumni that received a commissioning through Detachment 280. The Alumni Leadership Laboratory incorporated both senior and sophomore students. Each group was assigned 1 of 8 alumni and were responsible for interviewing the alum, collecting photographs or memorabilia, creating a storyboard of that person and presenting them

at the event. We were fortunate to recognize the following alumni: Lt Col Ron Strong, Lt Col T.J. Williams, Lt Col Richard Morris, Lt Col Bill Turner, Lt Col Steve Jackson, Lt Col Paul Sparkman, Capt Darcy Harris and Capt Carl Kulp. This was a fantastic event and the cadets really enjoyed linking up with these former cadets and hearing all the great stories about the Air Force, KU and Detachment 280.

Finally, I want to recognize some of our staff members that won quarterly awards. Capt David Rogers was selected as the Northwest Region Instructor of the Quarter, TSgt Nichole Pearsall was selected as the Northwest Region NCO of the Quarter and Mrs. Jaime Snyder was selected as the Civilian of the Quarter. We wish them all the best as they compete at the Air Force ROTC HQ level.

The highlight of the semester so far is scholarship awards! Cadet Velia Colunga from Benedictine College and Cadets Shogun Thomas and Daniel Staudacher from the University of Kansas were recipients of a Type-II Air Force ROTC scholarship for sophomore cadets. This competitive scholarship covers \$18,000 in tuition per year and includes books and stipend payments.

#### ***Detachment update:***

Cadet Madeline Ulloa was a late selection for rated duty assignment and will commission as a Navigator in the United States Air Force. This brings our rated selections to four (4) for the detachment.

#### ***Coming Up:***

Commissioning will take place at 1000 on Monday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, in the KU Memorial Union.

Sophomore cadets and Cadre are off to Field Training!

Our commissionees are off to be 2Lts in the United States Air Force!

Thanks for all the fantastic support from MOAA this year! Is it greatly appreciated!

Very Respectfully,

***LtCol Bill Pastewait***

Commander, Air Force ROTC Det 280

### ***KANSAS COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS***

*Ray Rhodd, President*

Congratulations to Chapter President, Michael R. Miller, LCDR (Ret) USN; Chapter Treasurer James S. Cooper, CAPT (Ret) USN; and Immediate Past President of the Kansas Council of Chapters, David Darwin, LTC (Ret). During the Kansas Council of Chapters (KCC) Symposium

on 23 April 2016, these three gentlemen were presented KCC MOAA Certificates of Merit to recognize extraordinary contributions to sustain the Jayhawk Chapter and the KCC. - Mike's citation reads: *“The purpose of this award is to recognize legislative excellence demonstrated by proactively*



*communicating issues and recommendations to our legislative representatives in the Kansas State Legislature and the United States Congress, and your untiring support of our Nation's military veterans and their families."*

- Jim's citation reads: *"The purpose of this award is to recognize leadership excellence and dedication to sustain chapter initiatives for scholarship grants, coordination of chapter activities, and flawless management of chapter finances. He consistently volunteers to coordinate and lead chapter activities, and to take responsibility for successful completion. His leadership of multiple activities demonstrates untiring support of our Nation's military veterans and their families, and reflects in word and deed the goals of the Jayhawk Chapter."*

- Dave's citation reads: *"The purpose of this award is to recognize ongoing leadership and mentoring to ensure success of Council and Chapter activities, and legislative excellence demonstrated by proactively communicating issues and recommendations to our legislative representatives in the State Legislature and United States Congress, and your untiring support of our Nation's military veterans and their families."*

**MOAA 2015 Col Marvin J. Harris Communications Award Contest:** The purpose of this award is to recognize excellence in communicating MOAA initiatives and activities to chapter members and the general public. MOAA affiliates compete in two categories of competition: (1) print and e-newsletters, and (2) websites. Multiple chapters of the KCC submitted packets to MOAA HQ by the suspense date of 1 February 2016. The Wichita Chapter received the Four Star award for Print Newsletter and the Five Star Award for its Website (see <http://www.kansasmoaa.org/index.htm>). This website also includes information for the Kansas Council of Chapters. The Kaw Valley Chapter was recognized with the Four Star Award for its Print Newsletter. MAJ (Ret) Walt Nelson at the Wichita Chapter leads chapter coordination for their print/electronic newsletter and website, and Ms. Karen Morrow of the Kaw Valley Chapter leads chapter coordination for their print/electronic newsletter.

**Levels of Excellence (LOE) Awards:** The purpose of the LOE Awards is to evaluate MOAA Councils and Chapters against a standard set of rating criteria to determine compliance with MOAA goals and objectives. Submission of LOE packets is voluntary and not all Councils and Chapters qualify for either a Four- or Five-Star LOE Award. The Kansas Council and member chapters submitted respective LOE packets to meet the suspense date of 1 March 2016.

**MOAA State Hill Day and Honors to Korean War Veterans:** On 23 February 2016, MOAA members from across the state gathered at the Kansas Statehouse to meet their state legislators, participate in Kansas Military Appreciation Day, and to render honors to Korean War veterans. Many veteran organizations were present to host displays and information tables with information and personnel. MOAA hosted a table, and distributed information regarding the advocacy efforts of MOAA and concurrently, membership in MOAA chapters. Volunteers staffed the MOAA table. Legislative appointments were completed by the MOAA members as follows: John Becker, Ray Rhodd, Delbert Hill, Tony DeJesus, Karen and Chuck Morrow, Chuck Bredahl, George Pogge, Mike Miller, Stan Sutton, Mike Slusser and Sheli and Mark Sweeney. The legislative issues and recommendations were coordinated by the KCC among member chapters and other veteran service organizations.

**Scholarship Grant Awards:** Chapters awarded scholarship grants to deserving students graduating from high schools with JROTC programs. The purpose of these grants is to enhance opportunities for young men and women to gain a college education, for they are the future of this Nation.

**Ongoing Legislative Advocacy:**

- (1) State level issues and recommendations.
- (2) Veterans Treatment Courts.
- (3) Reintegration, Employment and Quality of Life.
- (4) Elimination of the Survivor Benefit Plan/Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (SBP/DIC) offset (see enclosure 2).

A proposed letter to acknowledge KCC advocacy for elimination of the SBP/DIC Offset is being circulated among KCC chapters.

## **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, 11 March 2016: Lawmaker Blasts Plan to Cap Military Pay Raise**

At a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing Tuesday, Personnel Subcommittee chair Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) told service chiefs he's not happy DoD is proposing yet another reduced military pay raise for 2017.

"For the last three years, this administration has failed to allow servicemembers' pay to keep up with the private sector

wage growth," said Graham. "This is the fourth year in a row where the department is shortchanging servicemembers."

The proposed 1.6 percent pay raise is being touted by DoD as the largest raise in the last four years. However, it is still below the average American's 2.1 percent raise, as measured by the Employment Cost Index (ECI). If Congress doesn't reject the Pentagon proposal, the cumulative four-year pay gap will increase to 3.1 percent.

**Eliminating the Widows' Tax**

Survivors of deceased servicemembers are required to forfeit all or part of their military Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuity when military service results in the death of their sponsor. This is often referred to as the "widows' tax."

Retiring servicemembers may purchase SBP insurance coverage to provide their surviving spouse up to 55 percent of their retired pay in the event of their death for any reason. SBP coverage is automatically provided for deaths that occur on active duty.

If death is determined by the VA to be service-connected, the VA pays the survivor an additional payment called Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC). Currently DIC recipients receive \$1,254 monthly, or about \$15,000 a year.

However, under the current law, the amount of DIC awarded must be deducted from military SBP annuities. The widow's tax wipes out most - if not all - of the SBP for the vast majority of survivors.

**Submit Your Resolution**

MOAA's biennial resolutions guide our Board of Directors and staff to serve our association's members. Any member may propose a resolution, which should address a legislative or policy issue related to MOAA's missions and goals.

A committee on resolutions - appointed by the chairman of MOAA's Board of Directors - will review all submissions in April. Members will have a chance to vote on the resolutions later this year. The deadline for submissions is March 16.

Please e-mail submissions to legis@moaa.org with the subject line "Committee on Resolutions."

**MOAA Legislative Update, 18 March 2016:**

**Small Military Pay Caps Add Up To Big Penalties**

By: Col. Steve Strobbridge, USAF (Ret) Director, Government Relations

First, let's summarize the relative size of the caps for each year to date.

For 2014, the military basic pay raise was capped 0.8 percent below the average American's pay raise (as measured by the Employment Cost Index, which is supposed to be the standard for military raises under the law unless the president proposes something different).

For 2015, there was an additional 0.8-percent pay-raise cap. In 2016, the cap was a full 1 percent. The FY 2017 budget proposes an additional 0.5-percent cap.

For 2015 and 2016, the BAH raise was capped 1 percent below actual housing cost growth, and current law will require another 1-percent BAH cap for 2017, 2018, and 2019.

The chart below shows the progressive, incremental losses those combined caps have imposed on an E-5 and an O-3, each with 10 years of military service.

**Losses From Repeated Pay & BAH Caps**

	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>E-5</b>				
Base Pay	\$295	\$597	\$989	\$1,201
Housing Allowance	---	277	555	842
Cumulative Loss	\$295	\$1,169	\$2,713	\$4,756
<b>O-3</b>				
Base Pay	\$563	\$1,141	\$1,885	\$2,288
Housing Allowance	---	329	661	1,002
Cumulative Loss	\$563	\$2,033	\$4,579	\$7,869

While the first-year pay loss was relatively small, the compounded losses have mounted with each passing year.

The pay and allowance loss for 2017 alone will have grown above \$2,000 for the E-5 and almost \$3,300 for the O-3.

Their four-year cumulative losses will approach \$5,000 and \$8,000, respectively.

**MOAA Legislative Update, 25 March 2016:**

**Will You Pay More At The Commissary?**

March 25, 2016

The commissary continues to be a favorite benefit for servicemembers, retirees, wounded warriors, and survivors. Yet, every year, we find the program coming under budget scrutiny.

The money required to keep commissaries operating is small in terms of the overall defense budget, but the desire to use that money elsewhere (approximately \$1.4 billion annually) is high.

Last year, Congress wrote a requirement into the defense bill for the Secretary of Defense to submit a report to achieve budget-neutrality for the commissary and exchange benefits no later than March 1, 2016. Then, the Department was tasked to begin pilot projects to achieve that goal - while also maintaining current levels of patron savings and satisfaction and product quality.

**House Leader Huddles With VA Health Commission**

Rep. Jeff Miller (R-Fla.), Chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, met with the Commission on Care on Mar. 21 to discuss what the VA health system should look like over the next few decades.

The chairman and other congressional leaders championed legislation - the Veterans' Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014, or Choice Act - establishing an independent Commission to make recommendations for needed health system reforms. Those recommendations are to be reported in June.

When a commissioner voiced concern about the possibility of the report falling through the cracks, Miller assured them, "This report will not sit on the shelf."

Though the VA budget has increased nearly 86 percent since 2009, the chairman voiced concern over ongoing problems, seeing little improvement despite the unprecedented investment of money.

Problems ranging from poorly managed construction projects to misconduct by VA employees are ongoing.

Miller told commissioners the VA budget can't keep getting bigger, saying, "The VA's current fiscal path is not sustainable."

He offered commissioners some suggestions on how to frame a new, more sustainable, veterans' health system for the future, addressing system accountability, infrastructure and property management, and "putting veterans in the driver's seat."

Miller questioned whether health coverage for a service-connected or combat-disabled veteran should be the same as a non-combat, non-service connected disabled veteran who served for a shorter period of time, and may have other health insurance.

Regardless, Miller insisted the Veteran Health Administration of the future needs to be veteran-centric, empowering veterans to make their own health care choices.

"I want to see VA transform into a model of accountability...bold changes will happen if veteran service organizations get behind Congress on these changes," he said.

**Your MOAA Letters Matter**

Every year, MOAA provides tear-out letters in the Military Officer magazine to encourage members to mail physical letters to their elected officials. Members have asked whether these tear-out letters really make a difference, or if they even get through to the Hill in a timely way.

MOAA recently visited the House Armed Services Committee offices to check on the arrival of the tear-out letters we included with the February Military Officer Magazine. By early March, the Committee had received thousands of MOAA members' letters.

**MOAA Legislative Update, 01 April 2016:**  
Top Military Doc Discusses Health Care Issues  
 April 1, 2016

On March 28 Defense Health Agency (DHA) director VADM Raquel Bono, USN, hosted MOAA president Lt Gen Dana Atkins, USAF (Ret.) and several other association leaders to discuss various aspects of defense health programs.

The meeting comes at a critical time as lawmakers mull serious changes to military health care.

The meeting began with a discussion of the budgeting process and the flow of funds through DHA to the services. In response to MOAA's request concerning actions being taken to address shortcomings in access to care, the DHA staff provided a briefing on the services' efforts to increase appointments in military facilities and make progress toward the goal of "first-call resolution" for appointment requests.

Bono's staff also provided an update on TRICARE payment rate changes for Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy for autistic children. MOAA and others have expressed concern the payment reductions could affect access to ABA providers. Defense Health Agency representatives said they would be watching this closely.

It's been a whirlwind two weeks for MOAA's president, who also has had meetings with Secretary of Defense Ash Carter, House Armed Services Military Personnel Subcommittee Chairman Rep. Joe Heck (R-Nev.), and staff members of the Senate Armed Services Personnel Subcommittee.

"These meetings are great opportunities to build relationships and find common areas where we can do what's right for currently serving and retired servicemembers and their families," said Atkins. "There are some areas where we're going to disagree, but we need to keep up the dialogue, keep exchanging information and analysis, and keep working to end up in the right place."

DOD Proposes UCMJ Changes

For the first time in 30 years, the Pentagon has proposed several changes to the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ).

The UCMJ is the foundation of military justice, encompassing procedural and substantive criminal laws for the military. In the wake of military sexual assault incidents, a lot of attention was drawn to the procedural statutes in the code, leading then-Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel to direct a full review in 2013.

After an extensive two year review, the Pentagon has proposed a number of changes, including:

*Publicly Accessible Court Documents*

Unlike the civilian justice system, filed court documents are not publicly available. The only way to currently gain access to that kind of information is by filing a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

DoD would make filed court documents publicly available and easily accessible.

*Individualized Criminal Statutes*

Many criminal offenses currently fall under one broad article. The Pentagon proposes breaking out criminal offenses into separate articles under the UCMJ to better distinguish crimes and "ensure each offense receives separate consideration." The additional articles expand legal protections for sexual assault victims.

The proposals also explicitly prevent suicide attempts as being marked as a crime.

*Stronger Sentencing Guidelines*

Military sentencing procedures are very different from the civilian justice system. For most military crimes under the UCMJ there are no minimum or maximum sentences, leading to considerable variance in sentencing for similar offenses.

The Pentagon proposes sentencing guidelines established by the Department of Justice, to be carried out by military judges in all non-capital trials.

*Right to Appeal*

Judicial review is not currently a right in all cases for convicted servicemembers under the UCMJ.

The new proposals would mirror much of the civilian appeals process, giving servicemembers the ability to determine whether or not to file an appeal. The appellate process would then focus on issues raised by the parties during the original court proceeding.

The Pentagon proposals also would allow the government to appeal sentences under certain conditions.

MOAA supports the Pentagon's proposals to better align UCMJ practices with current judicial standards.

It will still be up to Congress to enact the proposed changes.

Pentagon Pulls Plug on Hiring

Effective March 20, the Pentagon has implemented a civilian hiring freeze that affects all vacant permanent civilian positions for which no tentative employment offer had been presented as of March 19.

So You Want To Work For The Federal Government  
 By Brooke Goldberg

There are more than a few military spouses who, upon looking for employment and submitting a resume full of gaps, have determined the best way to avoid such a predicament is to find an employer with a presence at multiple locations.

We are married to servicemembers, and wherever they go, there also are DoD jobs (usually), so tapping the Federal Government seems like a logical step, right?

It's true, federal employment *can* be a good answer to the portability dilemma. However, a lot of hiccups can arise. When they do, the best defense is to know all of the rules of the game — which isn't easy.

So, let's just tackle one issue today.

Applying for a federal job using a preference designed for military spouses is typically done through one of two methods: applying through USAJobs and clicking a military spouse box, or registering with the Priority Placement Program/Program S at your installation Human Resource Office.

Both of these methods require that you be eligible under an appointment authority, and for military spouses who don't have previous federal employment experience in the Continental United States, we look to Executive Orders (E.O.) 12721 and 13473.

E.O. 12721 is for military spouses who have spent at least 52 weeks working for the federal government under a local hiring appointment at an OCONUS location and are returning CONUS.

E.O. 13473 is for a military spouse who was on a servicemember's orders and accompanied them on a Permanent Change of Station.

Here is where it gets tricky: your eligibility to use these appointment authorities is finite.

For E.O. 12721, you have three years *from the date of return*.

For E.O. 13473, you have two years *from the date the orders were given*.

Did you read that right? I hope so. Even DoD employment specialists admit this is unfair. If you have orders cut six months prior to PCSing to your next duty station, you only have 18 months of eligibility left to use E.O. 13473.

The advice given was to *know your eligibility deadlines* like you know your birthday. Seriously. Know it. And don't be afraid to let the hiring manager or your human resource counselor know you are approaching it. Give them a reminder call. Be tactful and let them know how excited you are to get to work, but you will no longer be eligible if things aren't in order before



you hit the deadline. The risk of not making the call is the regret of having a chance at federal employment slip through your fingers.

### **MOAA Legislative Update, 08 April 2016:**

#### **MOAA Urges Commission to Protect Veterans Health Care**

A flurry of media reports hit the airwaves this week when veteran groups voiced concerns over a controversial proposal being considered by a special commission set up by Congress to look at how to deliver veterans' health care.

The Commission on Care is tasked with examining access to VA health care and to examine strategically how best to organize the Veterans Health Administration for the next generation of veterans.

The "strawman" document calls for phasing out all VA health care treatment facilities over the next 20 years, and pushing all veterans, including those who are 100 percent disabled, into the private sector for medical care.

In a letter to commissioners, MOAA President Lt. Gen. Dana Atkins, USAF (Ret) stressed the need to preserve, but also improve, the VA health system.

"We are concerned that migrating the current system to community-based services... would eliminate some of the best aspects of VA care, such as spinal and polytrauma care, and could produce unintended consequences, such as a reduction in benefits and/or negative health care outcomes."

Instead, MOAA urged the Commission to consider incorporating VA Secretary Bob McDonald's MyVA reform efforts, and plan for consolidating community care efforts.

MOAA also believes the Independent Budget's (IB) veterans service organization concept, a *Framework for Veterans Health Care Reform*, should be seriously considered. The IB recommends moving away from arbitrary federal access standards towards a clinically-based decision made between a veteran (to include family and caregivers) and a health care professional, offering the potential for simplifying eligibility requirements and expanding access.

MOAA believes the IB provides an excellent framework for what a veterans' health care system should look like.

MOAA will join other veteran and military service organizations to meet with the commissioners on April 18 to discuss in more detail the Commission's work and potential recommendations for their final report.

The report is due out in June.

### **Another Round of BRAC?**

On Thursday, defense officials urged Congress to consider another round of base realignment and closures (BRAC).

Officials testified before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs on military facility and installation funding shortfalls.

Across the board, defense and services leaders voiced concerns over reduced funding and the challenges of keeping up with current environmental requirements.

The proposed \$1 billion FY 2017 military construction budget is an 18-percent reduction from last year's budget. The Army's budget is at its lowest since 1993.

Katherine Hammack, assistant secretary of the Army for Installations, Energy and the Environment, spoke frankly of the struggles in funding readiness with a reduced budget, stating, "The Army has decided to take strategic risks to fund installations so it can support soldier readiness."

She said the Army has an excess of about 21 percent in infrastructure, which is expected to increase further with the force drawdown. With another round of BRAC, the Army believes it could save over \$5 million annually to reinvest in training and troops.

### **MOAA Legislative Update, 15 April 2016:**

#### **COLA Climbing**

In order for a positive COLA next year, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) has to make pretty significant increases.

The March CPI is 232.209, and remains .9 percent below the FY 2014 COLA baseline. Because there was not a positive COLA in FY 2015, the FY 2014 baseline is used.

The CPI for April 2016 is scheduled to be released on May 17, 2016.

**Note: Military retiree COLA is calculated based on the CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W), not the overall CPI. Monthly changes in the index may differ from national figures reported elsewhere.**

### **MOAA Storms The Hill**

MOAA council and chapter presidents from across the United States, accompanied by members of the national board of directors and headquarters staff, plus members of MOAA's Currently Serving Advisory Council, Currently Serving Spouse Advisory Council, and Surviving Spouse Advisory Committee stormed Capitol Hill April 13 and visited nearly all 535 senators and representatives in support of key legislative priorities.

MOAA stormers used specially prepared color brochures to urge their elected officials to:

- \* Reject disproportional TRICARE fee hikes
- \* Eliminate the SBP-DIC Offset

MOAA is gratified by your responses to the alert sent last Friday asking you to support this effort by emailing your legislators. MOAA members sent nearly 15,000 messages to Capitol Hill, and many legislators and staffers referenced the messages during their meetings with the MOAA stormers.

### **Reducing Veteran Suicides**

This week, the VA announced a national campaign to reduce veteran suicide rates and refocus efforts aimed at further enhancing the department's suicide prevention program.

Veterans Health Administration Under Secretary Dr. David Shulkin led a mental health summit bringing together mental health and suicide prevention professionals with caregivers, veterans and their families, veteran organizations, and members of Congress to help carve a path forward to prevent veteran suicide.

The summit offered nine recommended actions to strengthen VA's approach to suicide prevention, including:

- Elevating VA's Suicide Prevention Program with additional resources;
- Creating a goal of same-day evaluations and access by the end of 2016 to meet urgent mental health needs;
- Establishing a new standard of care by using measures of veteran-reported symptoms to tailor mental health treatments to individual needs;
- \* Launching a new study, "Coming Home from Afghanistan and Iraq," to look at the impact of deployment and combat as it relates to suicide, mental health, and well-being;
- \* Using predictive modeling to guide early interventions for suicide prevention;
- \* Using data on suicide attempts for surveillance to guide preventive strategies;
- \* Increasing the availability of naloxone rescue kits throughout VA to prevent deaths from opioid overdoses;
- \* Establishing three regional tele-mental health hubs to enhance mental health access; and
- \* Continuing to partner with DoD for a seamless transition from military service to civilian life.

As a follow-up to the summit, the VA asked MOAA and other military and veteran service organizations to engage in an outreach effort at national and community levels to help

increase awareness and commit individuals to help prevent veteran suicide.

Improving mental health and suicide prevention programs have been major MOAA legislative goals for well over a decade.

In a joint hearing before the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees, MOAA emphasized the need for sufficient staffing, resources, and funding to help high-risk active and Reserve servicemembers prior to discharge, and the need for better resources to train and educate mental health providers on the unique cultural needs of veterans and their families.

From now through the end of September, which is Suicide Prevention Month, MOAA will be calling on you to share information about the VA's suicide prevention efforts and available resources.

Additionally, please contact your legislators to support MOAA-endorsed legislation to improve the mental health and wellbeing of our veterans and their families:

*S. 1641*, Jason Simcakoski Memorial Opioid Safety Act would require the VA and DoD to jointly update clinical practice guidelines for the management of opioid therapy for chronic pain, including guidelines for treating post-traumatic stress disorder, psychiatric disorders, or substance abuse or addiction.

*H.R. 1607*, Ruth Moore Act would upgrade disability compensation procedures for veterans with mental health conditions related to military sexual trauma. The bill would also update regulations recognizing the full range of physical and mental disabilities that can result from the trauma.

MOAA applauds the VA's efforts to break the cycle of suicide among our veterans, and we hope you will help us spread the word on available resources.

#### Study Shows Resilient Military Families

RAND released its Deployment Life Study last week, a longitudinal study of military families facing deployment. Nearly 3,000 families were studied from the Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps over a three year period, with each family being surveyed before, during, and after deployment, in four-month intervals.

Surprisingly, the study showed few long-term adverse effects on military families as a result of deployments, with the major exception of servicemembers who faced some kind of deployment-related physical, psychological, or combat trauma.

The study was largely motivated by the major deployment increases in the middle to late 2000s, but was not commissioned until 2009 and did not begin until 2011.

There are at least some questions whether the study captured a true cross-section of deployment-affected families. For example, the experience level of those surveyed indicates they were relatively seasoned military families. Many families highly impacted by deployment peaks may have left service or otherwise may not have been in the study at all, so those surveyed may represent a more resilient population.

Outcomes of the study may be helpful, however, in determining the focus of future support programs surrounding deployments. This was the first longitudinal study performed that surveyed multiple family members: the servicemember, the parent at home, and teen children between 11-17 (children younger than 11 were surveyed through a parent).

Key findings indicate:

- \* Integration outcomes vary more for servicemembers than spouses and children.
- \* Families that are not facing a deployment still face challenges related to military life, particularly around relocation.
- \* Pre-deployment readiness activities result in better outcomes for post-deployment.

- \* Families face lower levels of financial stress during deployments.

#### **MOAA Legislative Update, 22 April 2016:**

##### Time to End The Military "Widows Tax"

*By: Col. Steve Strobidge, USAF (Ret) Director, Government Relations*

No servicemember, active or retired, likes to contemplate their possible death.

But those with families do exactly that to shield their loved ones from the financial consequences of losing the head of household.

The significant majority of retiring members purchase the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) to provide their surviving spouse 55 percent of retired pay.

But what if the servicemember dies of a service-caused condition? Shouldn't the spouse get something extra in that circumstance?

In theory, they do, because the VA provides Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) — currently a little over \$15,000 a year — in such cases.

But there's a catch: If the deceased servicemember had SBP coverage, the law requires DIC to be deducted from it.

That's right -- the SBP the retiree purchased gets cut by up to \$15,000. For most enlisted retirees, that wipes out most or all of the survivor's SBP.

Is the government entirely unfeeling about this? No, they kindly refund a pro-rata share of the member-paid SBP premiums (without interest) for the lost SBP amount.

Sen. Bill Nelson (D-Fla.) and Rep. Joe Wilson (R-S.C.) have introduced bipartisan legislation to end this so-called SBP-DIC widows tax and authorize payment of both SBP and DIC when military service caused the member's death.

Nelson, a former Florida insurance commissioner, has said, "It would be illegal for any insurance company to say it wouldn't pay on a life insurance policy because the policyholder had other coverage."

That's not the only irony SBP-DIC widows face. Several years ago, a court ruled dual SBP- and DIC-eligible survivors can receive both benefits — provided they remarry after age 57.

So — incredibly — current law punishes these survivors financially for remarrying before age 55 (they lose both SBP and DIC in that case) and also punishes them financially (by continuing the widows tax) if they don't remarry after age 57.

Congress long has recognized the unfairness of the widows tax. Several years ago, Congress authorized a Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA) as a partial rebate for SBP-DIC widows. The SSIA is \$275 a month this year, and will rise to \$310 next year, when it will make up for about 25 percent of the widows tax.

The intent, as expressed by previous House Armed Services Committee Chair Ike Skelton (D-Mo.) was to continue raising the SSIA as a means of eventually phasing out the widows tax.

But the authority to pay SSIA ends as of Oct. 1, 2017 — which means Congress has to act this year to keep SBP-DIC widows from losing the current \$310 monthly allowance.

MOAA stormed the Hill last week to urge legislators to end the widows tax or, at the very least, extend and continue increasing the SSIA.

The vehicle to do that is the FY2017 defense authorization bill, which the House and Senate will be considering over the next month.

You can help protect these most deserving survivors by sending your legislators a MOAA-suggested message urging inclusion of a provision in the defense bill to end the SBP-DIC widows tax.



# JAYHAWK CHAPTER MOAA



A membership meeting will be held **Tuesday, 17 May 2016**,  
at the newly remodeled Lawrence Country Club.

Dinner cost is \$24.00/meal.

**The Program:**

LTC Brian Steed, Asst. Prof. of Military History and Middle East Foreign Area Officer  
at the Command & General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth,  
who will speak on ISIS vs. ISIL.

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

**The Menu:** Tossed salad with two dressings; mustard, herb & bacon roasted pork loin with natural au jus;  
vegetable choice: pasta or caramelized onion whipped potatoes; seasonal vegetables;  
dinner rolls & butter; Chef's choice dessert

**Send your reservation and check payable to Jayhawk Chapter MOAA  
to arrive no later than Wednesday, 12 May 2016, to:  
CAPT Jim Cooper, 1115 Stone Meadows Drive, Lawrence, KS 66049**

**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**

cut here

Yes, please make \_\_\_\_\_ reservations for me and my guests. (Spouse and other guests are welcome.)

The cost is \$24.00 per meal. I am enclosing a check for \$\_\_\_\_\_ for meal(s).

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 Jim Cooper, 1115 Stone Meadows Drive, Lawrence, KS 66049**



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)

**Thank you for receiving  
the newsletter via e-mail !!  
It saves the Chapter for both  
printing and postage.**

**Tentative 2016 Meeting Schedule:**

Tuesday            17 May  
Tuesday            19 July

Tuesday            20 September  
Tuesday            15 November



*One Association, One Voice. Yours.*

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***IN GOD WE TRUST***