



Jayhawk Chapter MOAA Newsletter

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September Program:

Our speaker for the September meeting will be Chad Lawhorn, Managing Editor of the Lawrence Journal-World and author of "Lawhorn's Lawrence." His focus will be on current events in Lawrence and the Journal World; he will then open the floor for questions and/or comments.

★★★★★ CHAPTER
awarded for

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

★★★★★ CHAPTER
awarded for

2004 / 2006 / 2007 / 2015

President's Comments. . .

I am pleased to report that our Jayhawk Chapter of MOAA has received recognition with a Four Star Level of Excellence (LOE) Award for 2015. Congratulations to the 2015 Officers and Elected Board and all of the Jayhawk Chapter Membership. A big THANK YOU goes to all Chapter members who provided significant information about the numerous activities they are involved with in Lawrence and the surrounding communities. At the state level, the Kansas Council of Chapters (KCC) has received recognition as a Five Star Council for 2015. Congratulations to LTC Dave Darwin, USA (Ret) serving as the Council President, and to the KCC Executive Board, Appointed Officers and Chapter Membership of the Council. In total for 2015, the Kansas Council of Chapters and three of the Kansas Chapters are recognized as Five Star LOE Council/Chapters, and two Kansas Chapters recognized as a Four Star LOE Chapters. I contacted MOAA Council and Chapter Affairs and asked what areas we could improve on for our 2016 submission to achieve our goal of receiving Five Star recognition. I received a very comprehensive response from MOAA Council and Chapter Affairs Deputy Director COL Brian D. Anderson, USAF (Ret) that informed us our 2015 LOE nomination package was right at the cut line between the LOE Four and Five Star Awards. He also identified three areas where our emphasis should be placed. I have shared this with our Board of Directors, and will provide more details by separate communication. I am confident it is something we will be able to accomplish.



I hope you are keeping up with the issues, especially with both the Senate and House versions of the 2017 Defense Authorization Bills. You can find a lot of information in the August 2016 and September issues of the Military Officer Magazine in the Washington Scene Section (August pages 27-38, and September pages 29-40). If you haven't already read these articles, I respectfully request you take a few minutes to get familiar with that information. Also, please make time for responding to the Take Action e-mails that MOAA will likely be sending out when Congress returns to Washington after the Labor Day weekend.

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* Reservations should be sent
to Jim Cooper by
14 September



JAYHAWK CHAPTER NEWS



President's Comments (continued)

Jayhawk Chapter had four members attend the Kansas Council of Chapters Quarterly Meeting on August 6th in Topeka at VFW Post #1650. Major General Victor Braden was the Guest Speaker who provided an overview of past, present and future military capabilities, along with several "eye opening" statistics of today's military (i.e. less than 1% of Americans are in the military now which leads to a disconnect between military and civilian populations).

Activities coming up in the next of couple of months include our Chapter Board Meeting on September 13, and Chapter Dinner and Business Meeting on September 20 where we will host the Staff and Cadets of the KU Army ROTC Unit. We also will be placing an emphasis on recruiting new members into MOAA, both as National and Jayhawk Chapter Members, and starting the process of developing a slate of nominees as Officers and Board Members of the Jayhawk Chapter for 2017.

I hope you have had enjoyable summer activities whether at work, play or just kicking back, and I look forward to seeing you at our September Dinner Meeting.

Mike

PERSONAL NEWS

From Gerald Rutledge: Just an update to happenings with Ruthie and me. In July, I was selected to go on the Honor Flight to Washington, DC. It truly is a great honor and thoroughly enjoyable.

Other news, we are moving.....again , back to Indy for medical reasons. We have purchased a house there and have our house on the market.



Army News LTC Tracey Olson, USA

No report received from the Army ROTC unit this issue.
You can meet LTC Olson and Major Haralson at our 20 September meeting.



Navy News CAPT Dave Meron, USN



Greetings from the Jayhawk Navy!

During the month our midshipmen returned to campus and we welcomed 13 new midshipmen to the Jayhawk Battalion. Midshipmen completed many different summer training "cruises" including patrolling

onboard destroyers in the Pacific Ocean, flying in F/A-18's during training missions, and completing Marine Officer Candidate School. A strong incoming freshman class joined this great Jayhawk Battalion with our

annual New Student Orientation, where they learned about their strengths individually and as a team.

Twenty-one (21) members of the Jayhawk Battalion went on cruises this past summer to various parts of the world, including travel to Italy, Singapore, and Hawaii. MIDN 1/C Dalton Prinz went on his first class cruise to VFA-192 stationed at Naval Air Station Lemoore. During his cruise, MIDN Prinz learned about his future career as a Naval Aviator and was given incentive rides in an F/A-18. While at the squadron, he was able to connect with a KU NROTC unit alumni, can I get a Rock Chalk!! In addition, three midshipmen traveled to the Pacific where they conducted maritime security patrols onboard the USS DECATUR (DDG-73). MIDN 1/C Joshua Gathright and Alex Hines qualified as Conning Officer during their cruise. Three USMC midshipmen graduated from Officer Candidate School, a milestone event in their careers.

On August 15th, members of the Jayhawk Battalion began the school year early supporting New Student Orientation. The staff and student facilitators prepared a great program challenging



MIDN conducting the O-Course

the incoming students to learn about themselves and the value of teamwork. The orientation gave the incoming freshman an introduction to both college and military lifestyles away from home. Events included: physical fitness test, third class swim qualification, morning PT, and the USMC Obstacle Course.



CO conducting the Oath of Office

At the end of the week, I was proud to administer the oath of office to the 13 newest members of the Jayhawk Battalion.

After the school year starts, the battalion will assemble drill, color guard, pistol, and endurance teams to prepare for upcoming drill meets.

I would also like to inform you that the Jayhawk Battalion is planning our Annual Alumni and Homecoming Tailgate for the 22nd of October at the Military Science Building. We hope to see you there! To keep updated with the most current events, visit the Jayhawk Battalion's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/KUNROTC/.

Thank you for your continued support of the Jayhawk Battalion!

Rock Chalk and Go Navy!

CAPT David J. Meron



Air Force News LtCol Bill Pastewait, USAF

Hello from Detachment 280, the Flying Jayhawks!

We are excited to start the new academic year at KU with a new class of cadets. We have 34 new freshman cadets, which is our largest recruiting class in the last decade. Additionally, we have two (2) new sophomore cadets in the program and six (6) dual-enrolled cadets. We're happy to see all the hard work recruiting last year pay off.

Speaking of recruiting, we've had a change in our Recruiting Flight Commander position. Captain Nathaniel Cunningham separated from the Air Force and was replaced by Major Andrew Robinson. Major Robinson is an Air Force Reservist and joins us as part of Air Force ROTC's Voluntary Period of Active Duty. Over 60 reservists joined AFROTC this year to help boost our program. Major Robinson has extensive

experience in remotely piloted aircraft and brings operational experience to our program.

We had three staff members participate in AFROTC Field Training this summer. Field Training is currently 24 days, split between Maxwell AFB, Alabama and Camp Shelby, Mississippi. At Camp Shelby, the intent is to familiarize cadets with a deployed environment and the various leadership challenges that can arise. Captain David Rogers and I supported Air Expeditionary Force-1 as the Director of Support and Master Scheduler. Staff Sergeant Anna Romero supported Air Expeditionary Force-2 as one of five NCOs.

We also welcomed back eight cadets that completed the rigorous Field Training program. Of the cadets, Cadet Connor Sipe was awarded Distinguished Graduate for being the top cadet in his flight and Cadet

Riley Botz was awarded Superior Performer for being in the Top-4 cadets in his flight. All eight cadets now enter our Professional Officer Course program and are one step closer to receiving their commissions as Second Lieutenants in the Air Force.



Detachment update:

We held our new Student Orientation on 18 – 19 August. This two-day orientation allowed us to offer some new experiences for incoming cadets including trips to Looking Glass puzzle room in Lawrence. We had a great turnout, especially from our cross-town schools.

Finally, we had several awards during the summer. Detachment 280 was selected Team of the Quarter for the 2nd Quarter of 2016. The cadre were recognized as

the top detachment of 34 within the Northwest Region for this quarter. Captain Rogers was also selected as Instructor of the Quarter for the 2nd Quarter of 2016. This was his second quarterly award in a row!

Additionally, Cadet Alexander Pruss was awarded the Order of Daedalians Scholarship Award from the Wichita, Kansas Chapter, Air Capital Flight No. 83. This \$2000 scholarship included \$750 from the chapter and \$1250 matched nationally.

We have a big year ahead with many new events on the horizon. Thanks again to MOAA Jayhawk Chapter for all the great support with our cadets and the detachment.

Very Respectfully,

LtCol Bill Pastewait

Commander, Air Force ROTC Det 280

KANSAS COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS, MOAA

LTC Ray Rhodd (Ret), President



MG Victor Braden, 35th Division Commander, Army National Guard

MG Braden presented an inspirational talk for the Kansas Council of Chapters on 6 Aug 2016 at Topeka, KS. This summarizes his presentation and are my notes only and not an official transcript. His talk covered the Military today with the civilian support as such. Our military forces today are supported by about 5% of the population. With an eligibility of civilians being about 25%, it can become difficult to fill the required needs of the military.

He also covered a number of the aspects of the world situation as for nations expecting support for different regions in the world. This included the Pacific nations with respect to military as well as the wealth of resources available to this country. The Middle East and Africa's civil wars are causing a considerable migration to Europe, as well as the Middle East influx of migrants.

One of the things looked at was the wealth of Arctic oil available, as well as the USA exports of oil to China and other regions and then importing oil. China gets more oil and soy beans from the USA than from other countries.

Military cyber space is becoming a real problem, as well as for our whole country.

Of the 18 Divisions in the Army, 8 Combat Arms are National Guard, plus Reserve support commands.

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, 01 July 2016:

MOAA Supports Key Veterans' Legislation

Although the FY17 Military Construction and VA Appropriations Bill stalled this week on Capitol Hill, Congress continued to press forward on several other important veterans' bills.

On Wednesday, the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs considered a number of health care and benefit measures aimed at enhancing the delivery of care and services to our nation's veterans and their families.

In a statement before the committee, MOAA urged members to support many of the bills, including:

- S. 2210: Veteran Partners' Efforts to Enhance Reintegration (PEER) Act. This measure would establish a two-year pilot program to incorporate peer specialists for patient-aligned care teams at 25 VA medical centers to promote integration of mental health services in the primary care setting.
- S. 2279: Veterans Health Care Staffing Improvement Act. This bill would increase efficiency in the

recruitment and hiring of VA health care professionals by, among other things:

- creating uniform credentialing standards for certain health care professionals working in the agency so employees can practice in any location in the VA health system.
- granting full practice authority to advanced practice nurses and physician assistants, bringing VA in line with practices of DoD and other agencies.

“MOAA is especially pleased to see the effort to align the VA nurse workforce with other federal health care services,” said Capt. Kathy Beasley, USN (Ret), MOAA deputy director of Government Relations. “In the Navy we would never train a sailor on 10 skills, then limit them to using only three. Our veterans need all the skills Advanced Practice Registered Nurses can provide.”

- S. 3035: Maximizing Efficiency and Improving Access to Providers at the Department of Veterans Affairs Act of 2016. The measure would require DoD to carry out an 18-month pilot program using medical scribes to support physicians in at least five Veterans Health Administration facilities. The intent is to let doctors focus on patient care rather than paperwork, reduce appointment wait times, improve patients' access to electronic medical records, and ease physician shortages through increased productivity.
- S. 3032: Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2016. This bill would provide the same COLA increases in VA disability compensation and survivor annuities as received by Social Security recipients.
- S. 3042: Justice for Servicemembers Act of 2016. This bill would close a loophole that currently exists in procedural rights under the Uniform Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). Presently, servicemembers returning to their civilian jobs who find their employer has violated USERRA may not be fully protected if they signed an employment contract that requires disputes be mediated by an arbitrator rather than litigated in court.

Arbitration prevents servicemembers from appealing an unfavorable decision and places the employer in a much more advantageous position than the servicemember. Closing this loophole is important to preserve protections intended by Congress when USERRA was enacted.

At a press conference held before the committee hearing, MOAA Deputy Director of Government Relations, LtCol (select) Aniela Szymanski, USMCR, thanked Sens. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) and Al Franken (D-Minn.) for their leadership in standing up for Reserve and National Guard members.

“As a currently serving reservist, I am intimately familiar with the challenges of balancing a reserve and civilian career,” said Szymanski. “I can attest through my own experiences and those of our members that these actions by employers cause enormous strain on the ability of members to stay in the Reserves and Guard because they are faced with an almost impossible decision of serving their country versus feeding their family.”

MOAA thanks the Committee for considering these important pieces of legislation and for continued support of our veterans and their families.

Coalition Continues to Fight for Military Kids

By: Brooke Goldberg,

Deputy Director, Government Relations

The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) held its 18th National Training Seminar this week in Washington D.C., inviting educators, youth development professionals, military and education leaders, non-profits, and others to engage and collaborate to address challenges in educating military-connected children.

Military children move three times more often than their civilian counterparts – as many as six to nine times between Kindergarten and 12th grade. This creates social challenges military children overcome with grit, perseverance and determination – the theme of this year's MCEC event.

They also face many other challenges; meeting highly variable state-specific academic requirements, establishing relationships with counselors and coaches, maintaining positive momentum in areas of strength and interest, knowing where to find resources when needed, and learning in a foreign environment where English is not the first language. All of these challenges must be faced and overcome, sandwiched in between a parent's permanent change of station and the reestablishment of the entire family.

MOAA Legislative Update, 22 July 2016:

The Uncomfortable Tie Between Military Widows and Drugs

By: Col. Steve Strobridge, USAF (Ret)

Vice President, Government Relations

There is, in fact, a link between the two, and it involves abuse.

But it's abuse of the widows, not the drugs.

We've talked before about the military “widows tax” — the unfair situation in which military survivors whose sponsors died from a service-related cause are made to forfeit up to \$1,000 a month or more because current law requires deduction of VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) from the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) coverage purchased by most military members retiring from a service career.

Congress acknowledged the unfairness of the situation in 2007 and authorized a partial rebate called the Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA), which started out at only \$50 a month but has been increased to \$270 a month for this year and will rise to \$310 a month as of Oct. 1. The intent expressed by the House Armed Services Committee at the time was to continue raising the SSIA until the widows tax was erased.

But funding was a problem back then, as it is now. To keep the cost down, the SSIA law was set to expire Oct. 1, 2018 — in the full expectation future Congresses would find additional funds to keep increasing it.

Carter Supports Defense Bill Veto

Just as defense bill negotiations get underway on Capitol Hill, Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter sent a letter to House and Senate Armed Services Committee leaders threatening a presidential veto over a list of 44 objections to various provisions in the House or Senate version of the bill.

Carter said many proposals “would impact the Department's ability to operate efficiently and effectively in this time of constrained resources and ongoing conflict.”

Issues drawing Carter's ire include the House's addition of \$18 billion the Pentagon didn't request and

taking those funds from the wartime operations account, which would require the new president to submit a request for supplemental war appropriations. He also cited the defense bills' proposals to reorganize and downsize the defense department and reduce the number of generals and senior civilians.

MOAA was pleased to see the Pentagon objects to the Senate-proposed housing allowance cuts that would severely penalize dual-military couples and junior enlisted members who take military roommates to save money. MOAA agrees with Carter's statements that the proposal "would reinstate previously failed policies" and "disproportionately affect female servicemembers and military families in which both military members have chosen to serve their country."

However, MOAA strongly disagrees with the Carter letter's objections to the:

- House-approved increases in force levels for all services instead of the Administration-proposed cuts;
- House-approved 2.1 percent military pay raise rather than the 1.6 percent proposed in the Pentagon's budget;
- House's refusal to impose disproportional TRICARE fee increases recommended by the Pentagon; and
- Senate-approved plan to allow more flexibility in moving spouses and families in conjunction with PCS moves to allow for work, education, or health issues.

You can be influential in the final outcome of the defense bill. Use [MOAA's helpful August Recess package](#) and visit your elected officials while they're in their home districts during the summer break.

TRICARE Regions, Contractors Changing

If you're enrolled in TRICARE Prime in the South or West TRICARE region, you'll see some changes coming next year.

On July 21, the Pentagon announced it is consolidating the current three TRICARE regions (North, South, and West) into two (East and West).

The new East region will combine the old North and South regions and will cover the District of Columbia; Alabama; Arkansas; Connecticut; Delaware; Florida; Georgia; Illinois; Indiana; the Rock Island Arsenal area of Iowa; Kentucky; Louisiana; Maine; Maryland; Massachusetts; Michigan; Mississippi; the St. Louis, Missouri, area; New Hampshire; New Jersey; New York; North Carolina; Ohio; Oklahoma; Pennsylvania; Rhode Island; South Carolina; Tennessee; most of Texas; Vermont; Virginia; West Virginia; and Wisconsin.

The new contractor for the East region will be Humana Government Business, Inc., which currently manages the South region.

The West region will remain unchanged geographically, but the regional contractor will change next year from United Health Care to Health Net Federal Services LLC, which currently manages the North region.

What does this mean for beneficiaries?

Those in the current South region probably won't see much change as their contractor will remain Humana. Those enrolled in the US Family Health Plan also will see no changes.

For those in the current North and West regions whose contractors will change, it depends on how many of the providers in the current contractors' networks will agree to

transition to the new contractors'. In the past, new contractors have proven fairly successful in recruiting the old contractor's providers to continue participating. But it's possible that some number of beneficiaries will need to switch to a new doctor.

Regardless, these changes aren't scheduled to happen until next year, and there's not even a specific date at this point.

MOAA and The Military Coalition Take a Stand

In passing their different versions of the FY17 Defense Authorization Bill (H.R. 4909 and S. 2943, respectively), the House and Senate included hundreds of differing provisions on issues from force levels and pay changes to health care and survivor benefits.

MOAA Legislative Update, 29 July 2016:

Now's the Time to Visit Your Legislators

Between July 18 and September 5, most U.S. senators and representatives will be on recess in their home districts to meet with constituents. This is a great opportunity for you as a MOAA Council/Chapter leader - or simply as a MOAA member - to visit your elected officials' local offices and advise them of your and MOAA's concerns on important matters.

Specifically, we need your help to influence the FY17 Defense Authorization Bill. The goal is to ask legislators to make sure that bill:

- Retains the pay raise and force level improvements in the House-passed bill version.
- Drops Senate-proposed housing allowance cuts (\$10,000-\$20,000 or more annually in some cases)
- Prevents disproportional TRICARE fee increases for retired members and families
- Makes real progress toward eliminating the military "widows tax"

It's imperative to let our legislators know how we feel about these important topics. These aren't just "defending our rice bowl" issues; they're critical matters for sustaining retention and readiness - the core of our national defense - over the long term.

To assist you in preparing for these meetings, we've developed fact sheets and talking points on the key issues listed above.

You can use MOAA's website to find your legislators' local offices.

- Use this short "elevator speech" to summarize key talking points
- Use this statistical summary (PDF) to highlight the number of people affected in your state

One-Page Fact Sheets for Four Key Issues:

1. Troops Deserve Full Pay Raise and Force Increases
2. Reject Military Housing Allowance Cuts
3. Oppose Disproportional TRICARE Fee Hikes
4. Reduce Military "Widows Tax," Don't Just Maintain It -

What's New at the VA

By: Cmdr. Rene Campos

Deputy Director, Government Relations

Lots of things are happening in the area of health care and benefits that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) wants you to know about.

Women Veterans Chat Line

The VA is calling on all women veterans, whether or not they are enrolled in the VA health system, to check out a new online, one-on-one chat service dedicated to them. The chat service will help women veterans get answers to questions about benefits, eligibility, and services.

The VA has found that women veterans typically underutilized health care services, mostly due to either a lack of knowledge about VA benefits and services, or a misunderstanding of their eligibility and veteran status. Women veterans can go online to chat anonymously with a trained VA female staff member in the Women Veterans Call Center. Many call center staff are veterans themselves, helping to guide and direct women veterans to needed services and information.

The chat service is available by visiting the [Women Veterans Care website](#) and clicking on the "Chat with the Women Veterans Call Center" icon. This service is available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. EST and on Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. EST.

The Million Veteran Program

Five years ago, the VA launched the [Million Veteran Program \(MVP\)](#). This epic research initiative partners with our nation's veterans to learn more about how genes affect health.

Veterans enrolled in MVP donate their health information to help the VA better understand diseases like diabetes and cancer in order to improve the health care of all veterans.

This national research program is building one of the world's largest medical databases by collecting blood samples and looking at genetics, military exposure, lifestyle, and health information. The goal is to be able to answer questions like:

Why does a treatment work well for some veterans but not for others?

Why are some veterans at a greater risk for developing an illness? and

How can we prevent certain illnesses in the first place?

The VA needs more veterans in the program and you can help. If you are enrolled in the VA health care system, you can be a part of this program by scheduling an appointment by phone at: 1-866-441-6075, or as a walk-in at a [local participating MVP clinic](#).

Newly Released VA Phone Apps

Did you know the VA has a number of mobile apps to help you stay healthy and happy?

That's right, 31 apps to be precise, and only a click away at the [VA's App Store](#). The store provides easy access to a wide range of apps to meet the individual needs of veterans and their health care professionals.

Here's just a few of the more recent apps we thought MOAA members might be interested in checking out:

My VA Health - allows you to access your official VA medical record and enter information about your health.

Ask a Pharmacist - enables My HealthVet account veterans to safely and easily access information about VA pharmacies and medications.

MOVE!@ Coach - is a weight loss app for veterans, servicemembers, their families, and others who want to lose weight.

Stay Quit Coach - is designed to help veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) quit smoking.

Mindfulness Coach - is designed to help veterans, servicemembers, and others learn how to practice the technique of mindfulness.

PTSD Coach - is for servicemembers and veterans who have, or may have, PTSD. The app provides readily available tools to manage PTSD-related symptoms and stress, including self-assessments, symptom-tracking capabilities, educational materials, and coping skills to address and monitor stress.

MOAA Legislative Update, 05 August 2016:

Clinton vs. Trump: Part One

MOAA reached out to Presidential candidates Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump for their perspective on issues important to MOAA members. Each candidate received the opportunity to provide responses to the same four questions.

The October issue of MOAA's Military Officer magazine will feature an article with the full set of MOAA questions and candidate responses. During August, MOAA's Legislative Update will preview one question and answer per week from the article.

The following reflects the unedited candidates' responses, in their entirety. Differences in length reflect the choices of the respective campaign offices. The answers reflect the views of the candidates, and not necessarily those of MOAA.

Question 1: Sequestration law requires the defense budget to absorb 50 percent of a nearly \$1 trillion budget cut over a 10 year period. What is your view of that allocation and the share of future budget cuts that should be taken from defense?

Donald Trump:

Answer: Our first task after taking office is to restore robust growth in our economy. Without a strong economy, we will not be able to begin the effort to modernize our military forces and restore combat readiness. I will ask Congress to rescind sequestration and will present a budget that will begin the process of recapitalizing our military. Our goal will be to reshape the armed forces to fight current and future enemies while at the same time establishing fiscal responsibility in our budgeting and acquisition processes.

Hillary Clinton:

Answer: As Commander-in-Chief, I would ensure that the United States military is the best-trained, best-equipped and best-supported fighting force in the world. This requires us to resource our military at a level that ensures we can defeat any threat to our vital interests.

Sequestration has been damaging to our force and must be eliminated.

The budget roller coaster imposed by a Republican Congress has undermined our security, our ability to plan for the future and our investment in our people and future capabilities. What the Department of Defense needs - and deserves - is a stable and predictable defense budget set according to strategic need rather than arbitrary budget caps. I will put a priority on reaching a sustainable budget deal that balances our need for adequate defense spending with key domestic priorities. I support lifting the Budget Control Act caps for defense and non-defense spending. I will commit to a smart, strategic, and

sustainable spending plan that maintains a truly unrivaled joint force.

At the same time, the American people deserve a defense program that demonstrates good stewardship of taxpayer dollars. As President, I will prioritize smart reforms to both defense and non-defense spending. Now more than ever, the country cannot afford to waste precious defense dollars on outdated systems, processes, or programs that poorly serve our men and women in uniform.

Q2: In the past, large post-war force reductions have left insufficient forces to meet the next unexpected contingency. Considering the extraordinary stresses on our military over the past 15 years of war and continuing threats from ISIS, Iran, North Korea, and others, what force levels (relative to current forces) do you believe are needed to be prepared for potential future contingencies?

We will get plenty of this on the news!!

Absentee Voting - Myths and Realities

Absentee voting issues for military members and families tend to become an issue in every election cycle. If you plan to submit an absentee ballot for this upcoming election, make sure you know the facts.

According to the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP), there are many misconceptions about the absentee voting system. Check out some of the most common myths below:

Myth: Absentee ballots only count in close elections.

Reality: False. Absentee ballots submitted in accordance with State laws are counted for every election. The difference is that in a close election, the media reports that the outcome cannot be announced until after the absentee ballots are counted. However, all ballots are counted in the final totals for every election - and every vote (absentee or in-person) counts the same.

Myth: Military spouses and dependents cannot use military absentee voting forms.

Reality: False. Military family members who will be 18 years old by Election Day should use the same Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) and Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) that members of the Uniformed Services and Overseas Citizens do, even when voting absentee Stateside. Dependents attending college overseas should also use those forms.

MOAA Legislative Update, 19 August 2016:

Who Cares About TRICARE for Life

*By: Col. Steve Strobbridge, USAF (Ret)
Vice President, Government Relations*

An [Aug. 1 op-ed on Politico.com](#) by Todd Harrison, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, rightly took the Senate to task for proposing very large housing-allowance cuts for thousands of servicemembers.

It called the Senate initiative “perhaps the most misguided proposal with the greatest potential for unintended consequences.”

Rather than highlighting, [as MOAA did](#), the devastating financial impact of the plan for various types of servicemembers, the op-ed cited other downsides, including potential effects on local housing markets and the possibility of raising DoD housing costs.

Unlike MOAA, again, it didn't take issue with making significant cuts in personnel accounts. Indeed, it cited bogus arguments to the effect “rising personnel costs are squeezing out investments in new technologies and weapon systems.”

In fact: (a) personnel costs are no longer growing, (b) the growth in the first decade of the century was a necessary correction for more than a decade of previous cutbacks that caused retention and readiness problems in the late 1990s, and (c) personnel costs have remained steady at a little over 30 percent of the DoD budget for the past 30 years. (What's actually squeezing new technologies and weapon systems is exploding cost overruns in both acquisition and operations and maintenance accounts.)

But the author's main argument against cutting housing allowances is that “immediate cash compensation is what employees value most — more than noncash forms of compensation (like health care) and deferred benefits (like retirement pensions).”

So the author's recommended alternative is to cut “benefits many servicemembers don't even know they have and therefore do not value, like the Medicare-Eligible Retiree Health Care benefit [TRICARE For Life (TFL)].”

In effect, this is the old argument that we could gut retirement benefits and give the troops a pickup truck and they'd be happier.

If we only checked first-termers, this might prove true. But the longer people serve, the more value they place on those longer-term benefits — and the stronger the benefits get as retention incentives.

Twenty years ago, Congress and DoD went down the “let's cut future benefits” path by cutting retired pay value 20 percent (remember the “Redux” retirement change?), closing large numbers of military hospitals and clinics, and effectively locking Medicare-eligible retirees out of any military health care.

In the ensuing years, declining career retention and exit surveys indicating the main difference was Redux led the Joint Chiefs to urge its repeal. Concerned that angry retirees were influencing younger friends and family members not to enlist/reenlist over broken promises of “lifetime health care,” the Chiefs also urged a health care fix for Medicare-eligibles. These were major factors in Congress' repeal of Redux and subsequent enactment of TFL.

So op-ed authors can make all the assertions they please that troops don't know or care about retirement and health care.

History shows those who pursue a military career care about them — a lot.

COLA Sinking

The July CPI is 234.789, and .2 percent above the FY 2014 COLA baseline. Because there was not a positive COLA in FY 2015, the FY 2014 baseline is used.

The CPI for August 2016 is scheduled to be released on September 16, 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.



JAYHAWK CHAPTER MOAA

A membership meeting will be held **Tuesday, 20 September 2016**,
at the newly remodeled Lawrence Country Club.

Dinner cost is \$24.00/meal.

The Program: Our speaker for the September meeting will be Chad Lawhorn, Managing Editor of the Lawrence Journal-World and author of "Lawhorn's Lawrence." His focus will be on current events in Lawrence and the Journal World; he then will open the floor for questions and/or comments.

Social Hour: 1800 hours Dinner: 1845 hours

The Menu: Tossed salad, Chicken Marsala, rice pilaf, seasonal vegetables, dinner rolls & butter, Chef's choice dessert
Vegetarian option: Garden Pasta

Send your reservation and check payable to Jayhawk Chapter MOAA to arrive no later than Wednesday, 14 September 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).

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
KANSAS COUNCIL WEBSITE: www.kansasmooa.org
JAYHAWK CHAPTER WEBSITE: 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	20 September
Tuesday	15 November

***Have a safe and enjoyable
Labor Day!***



FIRST CLASS MAIL

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IN GOD WE TRUST