



# Jayhawk Chapter MOAA Newsletter



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

## March Program:

Our guest speaker will be Coach Ray Bechard, the KU Volleyball coach (KU's volleyball program has recently achieved national prominence under Coach Bechard).

☆☆☆☆☆ CHAPTER  
awarded for

2002 / 2003 / 2005 / 2008  
2009 / 2010 / 2011 / 2012  
2013 / 2014 / 2016

☆☆☆☆☆ CHAPTER  
awarded for

2004 / 2006 / 2007 / 2015

## President's Comments. . .

### Greetings Jayhawk Chapter members.

Keep in mind that Spring is right around the corner although it is hard to remember when you are attempting to stand up on your ice-covered driveway and scrape a quarter inch of ice off your windshield.

The new year has started out fast and does not look like it will slow down. The State legislature is in session, Kansas has a new Governor and we still have the same partisan issues at both the state and the national level creating an impact on both budgets. Looks like a temporary pause in the shut-down threats as a two year temporary measure was passed.

Jim has another great meeting speaker on line for March. To remind everyone that to accommodate his efforts we are having the March meeting a week earlier than our traditional third Tuesday of the month. This month our meeting is the 13<sup>th</sup> of March at the Lawrence County Club. Please mark the change on your calendar. For those on the Board of Directors the BOD meeting for March will be the 6<sup>th</sup> of March at 1830. We are fortunate to be located where we can get good programs and greatly blessed to have Jim and his ability to inspire these individuals to come talk to us.

Coming up as well are the award ceremonies, and at the end of the semester the commissioning ceremonies for the great cadets and midshipmen finishing their educational and precommissioning requirements through the KU ROTC programs. These ceremonies are terrific and extremely well done and I encourage all of you to put one or two of them on your schedule to attend if possible. The ROTC leadership always welcomes the support and is proud to show off their members.

I want to personally thank everyone for the kind words, positive support, and prayers for my sister and our family during Dad's (Ernie as most of you knew him) recognition time and funeral. I know most will both miss and remember him in many different ways and I appreciate the kind remembrances.

I am looking forward to seeing you all at the Club on Tuesday the 13<sup>th</sup> of March and wish you all safety through the rest of the winter period, good health through the flu season and God's speed.



*George*

## Volume XXIII, Issue 2

1 March 2018

### Staff:

- President:  
COL George W. Pogge, USA (Ret)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President:  
CAPT James S. Cooper, USN (Ret)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President:  
Vacant
- Secretary:  
COL John W. Halladay, USA (Ret)
- Treasurer:  
CAPT James S. Cooper, USN (Ret)
- Past-President:  
LCDR Michael R. Miller, USN (Ret)
- Directors:  
MAJ Andrew D. Bauch, USAF  
LT Gary Bjorge, USN (Fmr)  
LTC Michael R. Devlin, USA (Ret)  
LTC Tracey Olson, USA, ROTC (06/17)
- Newsletter Editors:  
COL John & Shirley Halladay
- Web Master:  
COL George W. Pogge, USA (Ret)

### Inside this issue:

March Program	1
President's Message	1
Jayhawk Chapter News	2-3
Army News	3
Navy News	3
Air Force News	4
Jayhawk Legislative Corner	5
MOAA Legislative Updates	6
Dinner Reservation Form	11
MOAA calendar & websites	12

**\* Reservations should be sent  
to Jim Cooper by  
08 March**



# JAYHAWK CHAPTER NEWS



## **DUES NOTICE**

*I neglected to include the Dues Notice in the January Newsletter.  
**Chapter Dues (\$20.00) were due 01 January.**  
 If you have not already sent Jim Cooper your dues, please do so immediately.*

## **MEETING DATE CHANGE**

**Please note that our meeting date has been changed to 13 March.  
 Reservations should be to Jim Cooper by 08 March.  
 His new address is 5216 Brown Lane, Lawrence, KS 66049-5112**

## **CONDOLENCES**

**COL George Pogge** passed away 13 January at his home. Services were held Tuesday, 06 February, at Lawrence Free Methodist Church in Lawrence. Burial followed at The Veterans Administration Cemetery in Leavenworth, KS.

Ernest was born April 11, 1927 in Clarion, Iowa the son of William Henry Christian and Dorothy Henrietta Ernestine Lassen Pogge. He served his country for over 40 years in the Army, retiring as Colonel. He served during World War II and the Korean Conflict and also in the Army Reserve.

He worked for the US Forest Service, US Army Corp of Engineers and US Geological Survey. He was also a Professor of Civil Engineering at the University of Kansas from 1967 until he retired in 1998.

He married Emma Eliza Ball on December 20, 1950 in Westmoreland City, Pennsylvania. She preceded him in death on January 2, 2015. Survivors include his daughter, Dorothy Pogge; his son, George Pogge both of Lawrence; three grandchildren and one great-grandchild. He was preceded in death by one grandchild and one great-grandchild.

Memorials can be made to the Ernest Pogge Scholarship fund in care of the KU Endowment Association or Free Methodist World Mission and may be sent in care of Warren-McElwain Mortuary.

**Faye Newsom**, widow of **CAPT "Buck" Newsom**, passed away peacefully on 15 February 2018. She was 96 years old.

Faye was born in Salt Lake City, Utah on March 28, 1921 to Alberta and Sterling Nelson. She attended the University of Utah and won the Salt Lake City tennis championship. She joined her sister, Betty Taylor, in San Francisco during the WWII years. It was here that she met the love of her life, John "Buck" Newsom. Dating for only eight weeks, they married on December 14, 1945. After a brief honeymoon, Buck was shipped off to service on the USS California. The military life of the Navy had begun for Faye and Buck.

During their almost 70 years of marriage, they lived in 10 different cities in the United States. Faye enjoyed making a house a home for her family in all of these places. She was a very active military wife and wonderful mother.

When Buck retired as Captain in the Navy, they settled in Lawrence, Kansas. Throughout the years, Faye enjoyed tennis, golf and bridge. She was an expert seamstress and tailor.

She will be sorely missed by her daughter, Jennifer Rogozinski and husband, Peter; son, John "Bo" Newsom, Jr.; daughter, Betty Amyx and husband, Ron. She is also survived by adoring granddaughters, Kaitlin Witthaus and husband, Chris and Hayley Morris. She is also survived by her brothers, Cal and Norm Nelson; niece, Lynn Taylor; and numerous other family members.

At Faye's request, the family will celebrate Faye's life with a private family gathering.

Memorial Contributions may be made in her name to the Visiting Nurses Association and may be sent in care of Warren-McElwain Mortuary.

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

## PERSONAL NEWS

**From Dean Bevan:** Judy and I visited friends in South Padre Island last month. On Feb. 22-23-24, I directed a play, "Yankee Tavern," at Theatre Lawrence.

**From Jim Cooper:** Sandy and I are moving! Just within Lawrence – our fire move! As most of you know, our roof and attic were damaged in a house fire (resulting from fireworks fired by an unknown party somewhere in our neighborhood) the evening of July 3rd last. The interior of our house sustained extensive water damage, and it had to be entirely redone.

Well, we realized that (1) it is time to downsize from three levels to two levels with a main floor master bedroom and (2) our house will never look as good as it does now, so we listed our house, and it sold in 96 hours! We bought shortly thereafter, so effective March 1st, our new address is 5216 Brown Lane, Lawrence, KS 66049-5112 – up behind the new Walmart in the northwest corner of town. It is two levels, main floor master, three car garage.

We're extremely fortunate – the fire turned out to be a blessing in disguise, although we wouldn't wish the experience on anyone else – there are much easier ways to do it for sure. Anyhow, please note our new mailing address! We're anxious to get settled in!

**From Charles Heller:** Michelle has a new job. She is the SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educator at the Douglas County, K-State Extension office (this is the Food Stamp program) and I have a part-time job as an "Emergency Substitute Teacher" for the Lawrence and Perry-Lecompton School Districts. I also Substitute at the Juvenile Detention Center for Douglas County.

**From Your Editors:** It is a delight to let all of you know that LtCol Bill Pastewait, Commander of the KU Air Force ROTC Unit, has been selected for promotion to Colonel.



## Army News LTC Tracey Olson, USA

### Greetings Jayhawk Chapter!

The Army ROTC Unit is looking for veteran groups to organize and staff a water point during our Ranger Buddy Competition (07 Apr 18). This is a new initiative that will allow the veteran group some free publicity and allow our

manning efforts to be solely focused on the competition.

**CAPT Michael Hayes**  
*Executive Officer*



## Navy News CAPT Dave Meron, USN



### Greetings from the Jayhawk Navy!

The 2018 Spring Semester is underway, and battalion members are busy with schoolwork and many Naval ROTC events.

The week before classes started, several staff and students volunteered to judge JROTC cadets in various competitions at the 2018 Shawnee Mission North Invitational Drill Meet in Overland Park, Kansas. The group worked closely with Shawnee Mission North High School's Naval JROTC Senior Naval Science Officer, CW04 Grayless. JROTC cadets from Missouri, Nebraska, and Kansas competed in 11 events total, demonstrating proficiency in academics, athletics, and close-order drill. Capt. Irma Mosqueda (MOI), acted as lead judge

for the personnel inspection. The students and staff enjoyed promoting the Navy, Marine Corps, and KU.

On 19 January, the Aviation Club visited Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma. The group first made a stop at the Oklahoma City National Memorial. Afterward, the group was able to visit with members of the VQ-4 squadron, and even had an opportunity to fly in the D-level



Aviation Club stands with LCDR Allen in front of an E-6B Mercury at Tinker AFB

flight simulator. We are looking forward to another trip later in the semester.

MIDN 1/C Alexander Hines, OC Robert Ashby, and MIDN 1/C Ashley Shepherd participated in Spring Ship Selection on 12 and 13 February. MIDN Hines selected the USS DONALD COOK (DDG-75) out of Rota, Spain. OC Ashby selected the USS THOMAS HUDNER (DDG-116) out of Mayport, Florida. MIDN Shepherd selected the USS FORREST SHERMAN (DDG-98) out of Norfolk, Virginia. Their hard work throughout their time here earned them all their first choices! Bravo Zulu!



(L to R) MIDN Hines, MIDN Shepherd, CAPT Meron and OC Ashby at the last Ship Selection

Last week, we hosted our first ever Warhawk Ball. This Dining Out style event included our guests of honor, LCDR Conor Heely and LCDR John Allen, who are department heads at VQ-4, based out of Tinker Air Force Base. The event was a great opportunity to create camaraderie in the battalion and to practice military professionalism and traditions.

As you can see, this semester has already been busy, but the midshipman have been working hard to prepare for the upcoming Drill Meet at the University of Colorado Boulder scheduled for 02-03 March. Last year, we placed second overall, and we are working hard to do well again. Also in long range planning is our Spring Awards Ceremony on 25 April and the Joint Commissioning Ceremony on 14 May.

We appreciate the continued support of MOAA for these upcoming events and invite you to join us.

Rock Chalk!



(L to R) LCDR Allen and LCDR Heely present MIDN Heyroth with the Midshipman of the Month Award for January

***CAPT David J. Meron***



## ***Air Force News*** ***LtCol (P) Bill Pastewait, USAF***

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

We've hit the ground running in the Spring Semester with several training events geared towards preparing sophomore cadets to attend Field Training. This includes everything from marching, physical fitness, leadership development, expeditionary Air Force concepts, and hygienic rules for training such as the proper method for making your bunk and folding your clothes. Cadets will spend two-weeks at Maxwell AFB, Alabama this summer. Sophomore cadets are currently competing for enrollment allocations to attend Field Training.

We had one staff member selected to hold a field training staff position. Captain Garrett Carson will attend Session 2 as Field Training Instructor. Cadets Logan Albers and Catherine Pallesen were selected as alternates for the Cadet Training Assistant positions.

The highlight of the semester so far is rated duty assignments! Three cadets were selected for rated duty assignment with Detachment 280 scoring 100% (three out of three candidates) selections for the third year in a row. Cadet Samuel Anderson, Michael Coghlin and Garrison Freeman were all selected for pilot slots.

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

We are hosting an AFROTC Open House on Saturday, 31 March from 0900 – 1200. This is an opportunity for local area high schools, JROTC units or current college students to check out Air Force ROTC. Parents are also encouraged to attend and lunch will be provided for the attendees. This will be our third time for the Open House and we are hoping for another large turnout in another effort to grow the numbers of incoming freshmen cadets.

We will be hosting a Dining Out on Friday, 20 April from 1800 – 2200 at the Oread Hotel on the KU campus. This formal military dinner is an opportunity for cadets to learn about military customs and courtesies. As a Dining Out, non-military members are invited to attend and experience a formal military program.

Scholarship results should be out soon and we are hoping to add some additional scholarship cadets to the Flying Jayhawks!

Very Respectfully,

***LtCol (P) Bill Pastewait***  
Commander, Air Force ROTC Det 280

## Jayhawk Chapter of MOAA Legislative Corner

by Mike Miller, LCDR, USN, (Ret); Legislative Chairman

In December, 2017, Representatives from the Kansas Council met with representatives from other Veterans Service Organizations (VSO's) to prepare a list of legislative priorities for the coming year. Veterans, families and procurement contracts to Kansas companies have an economic impact of \$7.7 billion. This included \$50 million to city revenues, \$73.5 million to county revenues and \$270.2 million to state revenues.

Military members and families have sacrificed to ensure the security and safety of our country and of those in other allied countries around the globe. The past decade has seen thousands of Kansans deployed worldwide to ensure peace and freedom in the world. In return, protecting pay, force levels, benefits, retirement, and health care for military service members and their families are top priorities for the Military Officers Association of America, Kansas Council of Chapters, and should be top priorities for our Nation and our State. Please consider support of the following legislative initiatives during the 2018 Session:

After discussions were completed the VSOs identified the following priorities to forward during the 2018 Legislative Session:

- **Authorize Full Funding (\$3M) of Kansas National Guard Tuition Assistance Program**
- **Support maintenance of FY 2018 funding levels for military/veteran programs/agencies (Adjutant General and Commission on Veterans Affairs)**
- **Urge separate fee fund for lottery sales supporting KCVA using percentage of sales**
- **Remove caps from use of federal dollars to maximize state funds for KCVA**
- **Eliminate tax on VSO funds raised to help veterans**

This article adds discussion and explanation to each of these items.

### **Authorize full funding of the Kansas National Guard Educational Assistance Program**

The military is a volunteer organization. Only a small portion of the population has experienced military service since the compulsory draft for military service ended. Coupling the desire to serve in the military with the rigorous physical and mental requirements to serve in today's military, results in a dwindling of the number of eligible men and women in the 18 to 25 age group. Competition between the active forces and the reserve components for the ever smaller pool of people is intense.

To attract people, military organizations must offer benefits that are meaningful and significant in the eyes of prospective recruits. One such program is the Education Assistance program. The cost of a college education is significant and programs that offer assistance in meeting those costs attract students who might otherwise be forced to forego the opportunity. In addition, the education that these programs support make our service members more capable to their units and organizations and make them more capable citizens now and in the future. These programs are an *investment* that pays dividends to the individual, the military and to the greater society.

The states surrounding Kansas have similar tuition assistance programs that are fully funded, Kansas National Guard recruiters find themselves at a disadvantage when a service member has a better offer from a unit in one of these bordering states. HB 2541, currently before the 2018 Kansas Legislature, improves the statutory framework for this program. Those changes, and full funding of the tuition assistance it offers, will greatly aid Kansas

National Guard units in meeting their recruiting and retention goals. MOAA members, representing the Kansas Council of MOAA Chapters, spoke before the Kansas House Committee on Education in support of this bill

### **Support maintenance of FY 2018 funding levels for military/veteran programs/agencies (Adjutant General and Commission on Veterans Affairs)**

The news often carries items about the search for funding state and local government programs as well as discussion about the need to revise tax systems and address the size of government. If government revenue sources are reduced, then government programs must also be reduced to fit the funds that are available to support them. It is the position of the VSO's that any search for funding should not come at the expense of military associated programs that help support the service members and their families who are making sacrifices for all Kansans. VSO's believe that this segment deserves more of our support for what they do, and not be treated as just another line item expense on a budget spread sheet.

### **Urge separate fee fund for lottery sales supporting the Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs (KCVA) using percentage of sales**

By dedicating a portion of lottery sales from specific lottery games for the support of designated military programs, instead of supporting the general fund, establishes a more secure funding source for these programs. This also allows interested groups to promote ticket sales of the specified lottery games as that would be a true financial support vehicles for the programs they support.

### **Remove caps from use of federal dollars to maximize state funds for KCVA**

The Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs has been faced with caps placed on its ability to use some of the federal dollars it is allocated. Removing these caps will enable the Commission to more fully and adequately fulfill its mission to Kansas Veterans.

### **Eliminate tax on VSO funds raised to help veterans**

Veterans Service Organizations are organized as section 501(c) (19) organizations under the Internal Revenue Code. The Kansas Legislature has exempted from charging and collecting Sales taxes more than 40 organizations that are organized under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The VSO organizations which do not have a Sales Tax exemption believe the charitable work they are doing in support of veterans is at least comparable to the charitable work that organizations with a Sales Tax exemption are doing. These VSO's ask that an exemption be passed for them to eliminate this expense that drains support away from what they offer to veterans.

As these exemptions require a change to the current Sales and Use Tax law, the legislature must Act for this to happen. VSO's have appeared before the Legislative Committees to discuss this initiative, but no action has been taken by the Legislature on the VSO's request. Several other organizations are seeking sales and use tax exemptions in the current Legislative year and this proves that the Legislature is willing to consider these requests in the present fiscal climate.

V/R,

*Mike*

## 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, 05 January 2018:

#### The Core of Our Nation's Military is the All-Volunteer Force

This didn't happen on accident, nor did it originate within DoD. The all-volunteer force was initiated by President Richard Nixon shortly after he won the election in 1968. President Nixon had stated openly his priority of ending the draft and creating an all-volunteer armed force.

Several factors motivated the president. The draft wasn't fair—it disproportionately impacted lower income individuals who were less able to get deferments. This inequity, and the general concept of conscription, was to Nixon a blatant attack on individual liberty, his love of which being the product of a Quaker upbringing. Plus, the Viet Nam war was taking its toll on the military and the nation and was made worse by a wide range of discipline issues during and after military service.

The president appointed the Gates Commission in 1969 to address these issues and deliver the plan for an all-volunteer force. The commission was thorough and methodical, taking into consideration the broad range of manpower and personnel issues to include determination of requirements, modeling projections, recruiting and retention, and the need for significant changes to the pay system. The commission completed its work in 1970 and passed into law in 1971 eliminating the draft with an eventual effective date of July 1, 1973. This same legislation also authorized a substantial pay increase and created enlistment bonuses.

The cost of an all-volunteer force, relative to a model of conscription, was a negligible \$3 billion in 1973 but the evolving factors skew any year-to-year comparison once taking into account recruiting, quality of life, pay raises, an emerging global presence, and tenure patterns of those who serve until retirement. Over the years, the costs of military pay and benefits have been consistent, accounting for nearly one third of the defense budget.

The move to an all-volunteer force has been successful beyond measure. In spite of unyielding demands on our men and women from all quarters of our country and beyond, our nation's military remains peerless. But some people think our all-volunteer force costs too much. I believe a majority would disagree. This means there are two camps:

- 1) The few who believe our men and women in uniform are overpaid, and their benefits too costly to the government.
- 2) The many who say, "Our men and women in uniform are our most valuable weapon system" and earn their pay and benefits through service and sacrifice.

#### It's Open Season for BRS

The start of the new year also initiated the official start date of the new Blended Retirement System (BRS) for all new entrants into military service and, even more importantly, the beginning of the one-time-only period for eligible currently serving personnel to make the decision to opt in to the new retirement system.

Active duty servicemembers with 12 or less years of active service and reserve-component personnel with less than 4,320 retirement points are eligible to opt in to the BRS or stay with the legacy retirement system. Those already serving who exceed those limits were grandfathered into the legacy system and do not have a choice.

#### Veterans Fared Well in 2017; 2018 Rings in Uncertainty

As lawmakers close the books on 2017, most veterans and their families can be thankful for some significant improvements in how the VA will deliver their health care and benefits in the new year.

While getting major legislation through Congress proved challenging this year, this was not the case for some important

veterans' bills that made it through with bipartisan, bicameral support.

MOAA and other veterans' service organizations remained actively engaged throughout the year, working with the VA, Congress, and the administration to ensure veterans' best interests were represented through legislative language and testimony on Capitol Hill. As such, lawmakers introduced hundreds of bills in the first session of the 115th Congress, pressing forward and doing their best to make sure veterans didn't get caught up in partisan politics, which often is the norm these days for both chambers.

Additionally, both the Senate and the [House](#) Veterans' Affairs committees passed their respective pieces of legislation to reform the VA health care system and community care programs. Unfortunately, passing tax reform and stop-gap funding caused the sidelining of these bills until January 2018.

#### The Military Family Survey Data Point No One Is Talking About

The [2017 Blue Star Families \(BSF\) Military Family Lifestyle Survey](#) reported that "almost half (49 percent) of male military spouse respondents reported working full-time, compared to just 27 percent of female military spouse respondents."

Why are these numbers so disparate?

In 2015, there were 707,233 married active duty servicemembers and almost 100,000 of those servicemembers had male spouses. About half of those male spouses also were in the military.

We don't have exact numbers from BSF, but one could assume at least some of the male spouses who reported working full-time could be in the military as well (given the ratios of dual-military marriages for female servicemembers vs. male servicemembers).

So why aren't we talking about these differences? What can we learn from male military spouses? How do they balance career ambitions and guilt over not being a stay-at-home parent? Does that balance affect their career outcome? How can the female military spouse population adopt male spouse perceptions or even change their own reality to better align with those experienced by the male military spouse community?

### MOAA Legislative Update, 12 January 2018:

#### MOAA Prompts TRICARE Fee Corrections

As we start off new year, it's dawning on beneficiaries - if they previously were unaware - that [big changes are occurring](#) in the TRICARE program. The key changes are:

- consolidation of TRICARE's existing three regions into two (East and West);
- consolidation of TRICARE Standard and Extra into TRICARE Select;
- shifting of TRICARE operations to the calendar year (beginning Jan. 1) rather than the fiscal year (beginning Oct. 1);
- new enrollment requirements starting with an open enrollment period in December 2018; and
- a new cost structure for TRICARE Select and some fee increases in TRICARE Prime.

Over the past several weeks, MOAA heard loud and clear from beneficiaries who examined these new fees - especially those associated with the TRICARE Select option - and became concerned with the impacts of these fee increases.

In regards to this new cost structure, MOAA led an effort encouraging the Defense Health Agency (DHA) to be transparent in how it calculated these new fees - and we succeeded. MOAA's advocacy has resulted in some fee reductions.

As we had anticipated, the DHA used an incorrect methodology in some of its fee calculations. Upon a

reexamination, several fee categories in TRICARE Select for both active duty family members (ADFM) and retirees were revised to be lower.

For example, in the “grandfathered” Group A, ADFM primary care and specialty care visits (in network) were reduced from \$27 to \$21 and \$34 to \$31, respectively. For retirees, the same visits were reduced from \$35 to \$28 and \$45 to \$41. Click [here](#) and choose your plan for more detailed information on all of the cost changes.

“We are thankful the DHA listened to us and reexamined the way they determined these new fees. As we had suspected, they discovered some flaws in their calculations, and this resulted in lower fees for our beneficiaries,” said Capt. Kathy Beasley, USN (Ret), MOAA’s director of Government Relations for health affairs.

The bottom line on this story is MOAA’s persistence in its advocacy pays off - for you. Keep us informed of your experiences and opinions on TRICARE via discussions on [MOAA’s Facebook page](#) so we can better represent *you* on Capitol Hill.

### Findings from MOAA’s TRICARE Survey

MOAA would like to thank our members who participated in our recent health care survey. In December, MOAA asked TRICARE users and MOAA members a few questions about their experiences with whatever health plan they primarily used. We examined their responses around several important dimensions such as access, affordability and quality of their health care. This information will be used as a baseline going forward, particularly as we digest the changes coming into effect with the new year.

Here are some high level takeaways from our initial results:

- 67 percent of respondents primarily used TRICARE For Life (TFL)/Medicare in the past 12 months. 15 percent used TRICARE Prime, and 12.4 percent used TRICARE Standard. This was reflected in the response rate to various questions; there were fewer responses to questions pertaining to non-TFL plans, and many more responses to TFL-related questions.
- 67.5 percent received 100 percent of their health care through military hospitals, clinics, or some other form of TRICARE. An additional 14.6 percent received 75 to 99 percent of their care in this way.
- 26.8 percent said primary care visits were “always” available within seven days. An additional 30.4 percent answered “often.” Otherwise, questions about scheduling time frames had generally low response numbers.

Satisfaction questions, however, yielded more frequent responses. Respondents were overwhelmingly satisfied with the quality of their health care. 56 percent indicated they were “very satisfied”, followed by an additional 36.7 percent who were “mostly” satisfied. Provider choice was also popular (58.2 percent “very satisfied,” 27.5 percent “mostly satisfied”).

- 93.9 percent of respondents indicated they had never postponed a doctor visit due to cost concerns in the past 12 months. 33.6 percent were not at all concerned about affording their medications, and 22.5 percent were “not very concerned”. 21.9 percent, however, indicated they were “somewhat concerned” about affording medications. Still, 42.4 percent of respondents were very satisfied with what they paid for medications, and 36.2 percent were mostly satisfied.

There was little agreement on what aspects of a health plan should be more expensive and if health care costs would need to be increased, reflecting the general satisfaction with the current rate structure described above.

### BRS Limits TSP Matching For Some Reservists

The new Blended Retirement System (BRS) might be a great transferable retirement savings tool, but the potential to

maximize the value differs by servicemember. If this 401(k)-style plan is to be of significant value for members of the Ready Reserve, certain current contribution restrictions must change.

As of Jan. 1, 2018, reserve-component personnel with less than 4,320 retirement points are eligible to choose between the new BRS or stay with the legacy retirement system. Those who already are serving and exceed those limits are grandfathered into the legacy system and do not have a choice.

It’s a big decision, and factors beyond one’s anticipated length of service ought to be weighed heavily. For new entrants, however, the BRS is the only choice, and contribution restrictions will be a concern. The government is sure to save money on this deal, but will the servicemember?

Currently, members of the Ready Reserve are not permitted to contribute to the military Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) when not drawing a military paycheck. This means that when performing some required inactive duties, such as weekend drills, serving in the Honor Guard for Funeral Honors Duty, or taking correspondence courses, these servicemembers cannot take advantage of their retirement benefit.

Additionally, some members of the Guard and Reserve are prohibited from making the maximum annual contribution to their TSP accounts because of civilian employment. These individuals should not be restricted from taking full advantage of military retirement just because they hold a job in the private sector through which they max out a separate 401(k)-style plan.

Prohibiting maximum contributions prevents reservists from achieving the intended retirement benefit of the BRS. Without the ability to make maximum TSP contributions due to civilian employer plan contributions, these individuals lose the government’s matching contribution, and the overall value of their military retirement is dramatically lower than it otherwise would be if they were not contributing to a civilian employer’s plan. This is a consideration that Guard and Reserve members who can afford to maximize retirement contributions will have to weigh when deciding whether staying in the Guard and Reserve until retirement is a sound financial decision. The end result for them will likely be less savings than what others will accrue.

### **MOAA Legislative Update, 19 January 2018:**

#### Armed Services Committees Need Funding to End “Widows Tax”

MOAA is calling on lawmakers to end the widows tax on 67,000 military survivors.

Compared to the last session of Congress, there appears to be more momentum to address the issue. Currently, the number of House cosponsors to end the widows tax is up from 175 to 207; in the Senate, the number of lawmakers supporting repeal has increased to 37 from 30.

#### Widows Tax Explained

Current federal law requires survivors of deceased military members to forfeit part or all of their Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuity when they are awarded VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC). This loss of any portion of the SBP annuity is known as the “widows tax.”

Congress recognizes the inequity and has worked hard over the years to address the issue. Starting in 2008, Congress established the Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA) to help military survivors affected by the widows tax.

SSIA began as a 10-year temporary benefit. Thanks to the hard work of House Armed Services Committee chair Mac Thornberry (R-Texas), a provision in the FY 2018 National Defense Authorization Act makes SSIA permanent at its current level of \$310 a month. Future increases will be indexed to inflation.

#### State of Play

“Last year’s work by Chairman Thornberry was a strong good faith effort showing how seriously he takes this issue. There’s concern in the survivors’ community that lawmakers may consider the issue fixed and they can move on to other

priorities," said Jamie Naughton, Associate Director of Government Relations at MOAA.

Raising awareness of the issue is important. According to DoD's Office of the Actuary, over 40 percent of military survivors affected by the widows tax live in five states: Texas, Florida, California, Virginia, and North Carolina.

The increased support is deeply appreciated, but we know lawmakers won't be able to do much unless they're given the budget authority necessary to pay for ending the tax.

The first step in the process is to get the House and Senate Budget Committees to give their counterparts on the Armed Services Committees - who have jurisdiction over military survivor issues - necessary funding to provide relief.

#### 2018 Healthcare Trends: Impacts On Military Beneficiaries

As we begin 2018, we take a look at the past few years to predict some of the trends we might see in the health care environment this year.

In 2016, health care comprised 17.9 percent of the nation's GDP (up from 17.7 percent in 2015). Consumers continue to bear more of the costs of their care, which are passed on to them from their employers. According to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, U.S. households finance a little over 28 percent of the costs of health care and the rise in these costs increased an average of 4.3 percent in 2016 over the prior year. (A continued good-news story for military beneficiaries is that the percentage of health care costs in DoD's budget has remained stable or even decreased.) Controlling costs will continue to be important, and organizations and health plans will manage this in a variety of ways.

Here are four trend areas that will shape health care in 2018:

**Greater emphasis and reliance on technology:** The use of various technologies will become even more pronounced as they become essential enablers in the expansion of access to care. The electronic health record (EHR) systems are proliferating in all practice environments.

The use of mobile technologies will expand rapidly. Both providers and consumers continue to find new uses for digital health technology, such as fitness trackers, heart monitors, diabetic sugar monitors, and smartphone applications. Clinical research supports that consumers can experience better outcomes when they can track results and are better informed about health.

**Continued shift from volume to value:** The goal in health care continues to be value over the volume of care. New models are being used and tested to provide better clinical outcomes for patients.

**Rise of the consumer in health care:** The market for health care will continue to become more competitive, which gives rise to the need for organizations, providers, and health plans to improve the patient experience. Again, mergers such as CVS and Aetna will have a great chance at this by establishing a more retail convenience experience for customers. This aspect has grown in importance, as consumers have more access to and choice of health care than ever before.

Organizations and health systems already are competing for patients and are learning patients are educated and knowledgeable. What patients value - and MOAA surveys confirm - is easy access, a pleasant experience, and quality health care at a price that reflects their service and sacrifice to the nation.

#### **MOAA Legislative Update, 26 January 2018:** Excitement Builds for the New TRICARE Retiree Dental and Vision Plan

This week, MOAA had an exclusive preview of TRICARE's widely anticipated new dental and vision plans. This new insurance option for certain beneficiaries is set to be offered

starting Jan. 1, 2019. The newly designed option was included in the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act with the legislated start date of 2019. The later starting time is meant to allow for better planning and communication for this new plan, as it will be offered and administered through the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP).

Here's the rundown on who is eligible for what. All TRICARE retirees and their families are eligible for both the dental insurance and the vision coverage. Active duty military families are only eligible for the vision coverage.

The FEDVIP dental program of offerings will replace the existing TRICARE Retiree Dental Plan, which is currently provided through Delta Dental. *That program will sunset Dec. 31, 2018.*

Here's what will be offered. The retiree dental plan and the new addition of a vision plan will allow for beneficiaries to make a selection from among several dental and vision carriers with a variety of benefit options. For example, in 2018 the FEDVIP program lists 10 dental carriers and four vision carriers (Delta Dental is included) with comprehensive dental and vision insurance at competitive group rates.

#### **Key facts:**

*Eligible beneficiaries must choose their plan during TRICARE's open season, which is scheduled to be Nov. 12 - Dec. 10, 2018.*

*There will be no automatic transition for those beneficiaries currently enrolled in the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program. Beneficiaries will be required to enroll for coverage.*

*Enrollment and plan changes can only occur during the open season with the exceptions for those beneficiaries with qualifying life events (usually anything that necessitates a change in the DEERS system).*

Here's the kind of coverage TRICARE beneficiaries will get with FEDVIP (besides more choices):

- no wait period for most dental services;
- no annual maximum benefit for some dental plans;
- regional and national dental networks;
- no deductible for some vision plans;
- no limit on brands for frames or contacts for some vision plans; and
- discounts on LASIK offered by some vision plans.

Beneficiaries are encouraged to start getting information and pre-enrollment communications through the website set up just for this program. The website, [www.TRICARE.benefeds.com](http://www.TRICARE.benefeds.com), will be up and running Feb. 1.

MOAA is working with the Office of Personnel Management, which oversees the administration of the federal employees benefit programs, to provide input on communication and feedback on the website, anticipate challenges, and brainstorm solutions for this newly available program for TRICARE beneficiaries.

#### Continuing Resolutions, Shutdowns Hurt Military

MOAA has repeatedly shared concerns regarding a government shutdown. Those concerns remain as we enter yet another continuing resolution. This was only a 5-meter target; there are several targets still ahead.

In the longer term, beyond continuation, the nation must address budget caps, borrowing limits, and cash flow needed to enable a viable DoD. Most important, we need Congress to fully support the bipartisan and bicameral FY 2018 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) by fully funding its appropriations.

But the process is bogged down by politics, complicated by a lack of consensus on what should be our national priorities.

Congress must find a way to break through this current dynamic and fund our government through the end of this fiscal year, to include full appropriations for the FY 2018 NDAA. The impact of failure in this regard reaches way further than most people know.

The impact of a government shutdown affects the daily lives of millions. Some assume the impact on the military will be



negligible because servicemembers will either continue to be paid or get back pay through some other piece of legislation. But there are impacts beyond pay, where relief of any kind is sparse or nonexistent:

Casualty assistance and mortuary support are withheld from the families of the fallen. To mitigate this impact, the Fisher Foundation volunteered to step in and fill this void. They did the same in 2013, prompting Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) to chide his colleagues in Congress, "I'm ashamed. I'm embarrassed. All of us should be." This isn't a hypothetical – this was a real-time issue on day one of the shutdown for two Army families, when an Apache helicopter crashed at Fort Irwin, Calif., killing two soldiers. This prompted an Army senior executive to work with the Office of the Secretary of Defense to figure out how to accept donations for these families.

Servicemembers en route to a new duty station, staying in temporary housing or finishing up their rent in their primary residence, are affected by the cessation of moving services and funding. Brooke Goldberg, MOAA's director of Military Family Policy/Spouse Programs, highlights the impact: "A bad PCS will never be forgotten by a servicemember and their family. Moving is already stressful and disruptive; when a routine move is thwarted with increased complications, it can burden every future move with untenable anxiety."

The cancellation of training for reserve components affects the overall ability to integrate with current missions. "The Guard and Reserve are an integral part of the U.S. fighting force," says Lt. Col. Aniela Szymanski, USMCR, MOAA's director of Guard and Reserve Affairs. "The fact that during the government shutdown they are less able to contribute to the warfighting mission and maintain their training currency and are forced to stand on the sidelines is harmful — not only to their military careers, but to the uniformed services overall. The current reality is that the Guard, Reserve, and active forces are 'one team, one fight,' and government shutdowns seriously degrade that capability."

Generally, the services and support needed to continue safe and effective operations are intermittent, unreliable, and basically marginalized. Checking through resources on the net and on military websites, you see a routine of "call first" or "check locally," as some bases or posts figure out ways to mitigate the closure, while other installations are apparently unable. All of this contributes to uncertainty and further compounds the many challenges our servicemembers already face in the execution of their mission.

Congress is aware of the larger picture when it comes to failures to fund the government; however, the day-to-day grind for servicemembers and their families warrants special mention. Right now in Afghanistan, South Korea, or out at sea, there is a servicemember thinking about tomorrow's mission while also thinking about their spouse and family back home. It's difficult to focus on the mission with these kinds of challenges on their mind.

#### The Defense Officer Personnel Management Act faces scrutiny in 2018

The Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC), Subcommittee on Personnel, held a hearing this week to consider potential changes to the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA). DOPMA was signed into law in December 1980 and has been the guideline for officer personnel management for the services ever since.

The SASC panel, led by Sens. Thom Tillis (R-N.C.) and Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.), heard testimony regarding DOPMA from experts - including two former Undersecretaries of Defense for Personnel and Readiness - as well as the current personnel chiefs of each service.

In the late 1970s, congressional leadership passed the legislation that brought DOPMA into existence to help modernize management practices and to correct problems and challenges with officer management that emerged in the post-World War II era.

Over DOPMA's 38 years of existence, Congress has achieved most of its stated goals: creating uniform promotion rates, standardizing career lengths across the services, and regulating the number of senior officers as a proportion of the force. DOPMA also created reasonable and predictable expectations regarding when an officer would be eligible for promotion.

However, DOPMA has been criticized for creating a system that has resulted in high turnover rates, frequent moves, and relatively shorter military careers. As the law currently is written, DOPMA does not allow new officers to immediately enter career fields (that aren't related to medical or legal specialties), and it greatly restricts certain types of compensation such as retention bonuses for the officer corps. Such bonuses are prevalent in the enlisted career fields and the private sector.

In view of future personnel needs and requirements, including some stated most recently in DoD's 2018 national defense strategy, Congress is considering making some adjustments to DOPMA over the course of the next year.

Changes and adjustments to DOPMA will not come without challenges; they will require Congress to make some tough choices. But as Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis stated upon the release of the new national defense strategy, "Adapting to face tomorrow's challenges doesn't come without tough choices."

#### **MOAA Legislative Update, 02 February 2018:** Rare Sight in Call to End Sequestration

President Donald Trump, in his first State of the Union address, called for the end of sequestration - one of MOAA's top priorities.

"Around the world, we face rogue regimes, terrorist groups, and rivals like China and Russia that challenge our interests, our economy, and our values," he told Congress Jan. 30. "In confronting these dangers, we know that weakness is the surest path to conflict, and unmatched power is the surest means of our defense."

"For this reason, I am asking the Congress to end the dangerous defense sequester and fully fund our great military," Trump continued. The comment drew applause from both parties, a rare sight from a deeply divided Congress.

MOAA included sequestration on our list of [five things we wanted the president to address in his speech](#). But making the request a reality will be difficult, at best.

Sequestration, the enforcement mechanism for reductions in discretionary spending, makes across-the-board cuts to programs if spending exceeds predetermined levels. It sets arbitrary spending caps on federal programs and puts America's national defense capabilities at risk.

Sequestration was a \$1.2 trillion penalty included in 2011 budget negotiations, where lawmakers were tasked with coming up with a bipartisan solution to address the nation's debt. Because they were unable to come to an agreement on a combination of spending reductions and revenue increases, the prospect of meat-axe cuts to defense and non-defense programs has loomed over every federal budget ever since.

It's highly unlikely Congress will be able to fully repeal sequestration. Because the statutory caps are currently in law, any spending above those levels will be seen - at least on paper - as increases in government spending. With a recently passed tax overhaul scheduled to add \$1.5 trillion to the national debt, lawmakers might have little choice but to continue deficit spending.

Rather than full repeal of sequestration, a more likely scenario would be some sort of two-year agreement to raise defense and non-defense spending levels. That deal likely will come together in the upcoming weeks, but that's not necessarily good news.

When sequestration temporarily went into effect in 2013, resulting in civilian furloughs and considerable disruptions in government operations, Congress quickly cobbled together a two-year deal to raise the budget caps.

While the move was welcomed, the way Congress paid for the increased levels was by cutting military retired pay. The move, known as COLA-minus-1, was panned by military and veterans service organizations.

MOAA did the math and calculated those cuts could cost an O-5 over \$124,000 in lost retirement. A retired E-7 stood to lose over \$80,000 in lost pay.

MOAA members flooded lawmakers' phones and inboxes with protests against the move, and Congress quickly repealed the provision.

Lawmakers, government officials, service leaders, and secretaries of defense have all come out against the budget caps. Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis famously assailed the caps, telling lawmakers, "For all the heartache caused by the loss of our troops during these wars, no enemy in the field has done more to harm the readiness of our military than sequestration."

But finding the political will to completely eliminate sequestration in this political environment might be a bridge too far for lawmakers.

### Veterans Health Care on Life Support

The Veterans Choice Program - a temporary program established in 2014 to address massive wait times plaguing the VA's health system - continues to limp along until Congress can pass the broader measures needed to improve veterans' health care.

Shortly after Dr. David Shulkin was confirmed as Secretary of the VA in early 2017, MOAA [expressed support](#) for his continuation of reform efforts from the prior administration but warned of the tough road ahead in balancing the often competing priorities of Congress, the White House, the VA, and the American public.

To some veterans, not much has changed from this time last year as they again wait for Congress to agree on a bill to replace Choice and consolidate all VA community care programs into a single program for veterans accessing care through private providers.

"There's been a series of starts and stops throughout 2017 and up to this point in regards to moving legislation through both chambers of Congress," says Cmdr. René Campos, USN (Ret), MOAA's government relations veterans' health care expert. "Progress is being prevented by major differences in bill language in current versions of [Senate](#) and [House](#) community care bills as well as disagreements regarding to how to pay for the reforms."

This time last year, Shulkin faced a looming deadline to extend Choice before it expired in August. Ultimately, Congress appropriated \$2.1 billion to extend the program, allowing additional time to put a new program in place.

Then, on Dec. 20, the VA notified Congress that funding for Choice was expected to be exhausted sometime in early to mid-January 2018.

As we closed out the books in 2017 for the first session of the 115th congress, President Donald Trump approved \$2.1 billion in emergency funding for Choice as part of a larger stop-gap funding bill to keep the government open until Jan 19.

In the beginning of 2018, MOAA again [reported](#) a tougher than usual political and fiscal environment with lawmakers needing to address a significant amount of unfinished business left over from 2017. That unfinished business - namely Congress and the administration being unable to agree on a final spending bill to keep the government open - resulted in a three-day government shutdown, followed by another three-week continuing resolution.

Last week, the administration offered additional recommendations for the Senate bill and sought to bring costs more in line with the House bill (\$54 billion and \$39 billion, respectively, over five years), signaling the desire for any bill brought forward to have a plan to pay for the massive reform.

So here we are, less than two weeks to the Feb. 9 deadline, with no long-term reform bill or funding in sight.

"One thing is clear: Every day there is a delay in reforming VA community care and getting a 2018 funding bill for the VA in place is a day of uncertainty and unnecessary stress for those veterans relying on the VA for their health care," says Campos.

MOAA believes the constant state of crisis and budget uncertainty further erodes the trust and confidence veterans have in the VA and the government they defended.

### Myths Seen Distorting Military's Image with Nation's Youth

Seventeen years of war, TV spots depicting the struggles of wounded warriors, and curbs on military advertising budgets have left the armed forces with an image problem that could take years to repair, said a senior defense official.

Unsettling myths about the military are rising among recruit-age youth and "influencers" - parents, teachers, clergy and coaches - in part because increasingly they have no personal or family ties to the armed forces, said Lernes "Bear" Hebert, acting deputy assistant secretary of defense for military personnel policy.

"While there is great support for military service men and women, we do find that misperceptions about service have taken a toll on propensity to serve," Hebert said. "And because we're not out there offering a contrary message, we're seeing a decline that is most troubling."

"The risks are very real, and service is unlike anything else you will do in the civilian world," Hebert said. "But by far the vast majority of servicemembers leave the military perfectly healthy and move on to very rewarding and fulfilling lives."

And one of the oddest myths about military life, particularly in this age of social media and instant communication, involves personal contacts. The proportion of youth who believe that, while in service, a member is able to stay in touch with family and friends fell from 58 percent down to 23 percent. The apparent fear, said Hebert, is that "either you're going to be sequestered somewhere or you're going to be deployed with no way to contact your family or friends."

On average, the services need 264,000 new recruits each year, taken from a pool of about 400,000 youth surveys estimate have a propensity to serve.

To address negative misperceptions or general disinterest in the military among others, DoD will ask Congress this year to fund a mass marketing campaign to educate youth and their influencers on the attractions of service life. Though he could not discuss the size of the marketing effort until the budget is unveiled, Hebert forecast a "pretty significant campaign."

"We fully appreciate that people don't get media the same way they did five years ago," he said. Therefore, the campaign "will be split between addressing influencers and [media] they frequent, as well as getting into social media and online to approach youth in a more meaningful way."

A second initiative, called "This is Your Military," won't require budget dollars. Starting in February, military commands and personnel will be encouraged to reach out to local communities to try to broaden understanding of service life.

Each month the focus of this outreach will change. In February, the theme is that servicemembers are "people just like you," Hebert said. In March, the focus will be educating communities and youth on the variety of job skills found in the military. In April, the breadth of education benefits will be highlighted.



# JAYHAWK CHAPTER MOAA



A membership meeting will be held **Tuesday, 13 March 2018**  
at Lawrence Country Club

**Dinner cost** is \$24.00/meal.

**The Program:** Our guest speaker will be Coach Ray Bechard, the KU Volleyball coach.  
(KU's volleyball program has recently achieved national prominence under Coach Bechard).

**Social Hour: 1800 hours      Dinner: 1840 hours**

**The Menu:** Grilled Chicken Breast with Irish Whiskey and Caramelized Onion Cream,  
Rosemary Whipped Potatoes, Sauteed Seasonal Vegetables, Rustic Dinner Rolls,  
Chef's Choice Salad, Chef's Choice Dessert

Send your reservation and check payable to Jayhawk Chapter MOAA  
to arrive no later than Wednesday, **08 March** to:  
CAPT Jim Cooper, **5216 Brown Lane, Lawrence, KS 66049-5112**

*Dinner reservations are confirmed on Monday before the dinner.  
Cancellations, if necessary, should be made prior to Monday noon;  
otherwise, the Lawrence Country Club will charge us for those meals.*

If you have any questions, you may contact Jim Cooper at 842-7037 or John Halladay at 843-6184

---

cut here

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

The cost is \$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, 5216 Brown Lane, Lawrence, KS 66049-5112**

MOAA WEBSITE: [www.moaa.org](http://www.moaa.org)  
KANSAS COUNCIL WEBSITE: [www.kansasmooa.net](http://www.kansasmooa.net)  
JAYHAWK CHAPTER WEBSITE:  
[www.jayhawkmoaa.org](http://www.jayhawkmoaa.org)

*If you can receive this by e-mail, please let us know. Printing and postage costs the Chapter close to \$3 for each copy we have to mail.*

**Tentative 2018 Meeting Schedule:**

Tuesday 13 March  
Tuesday 15 May

Tuesday 17 July  
Tuesday 18 September  
Tuesday 13 November

**2018 Kansas Council of Chapters Dates/Locations:**

24 March	Jayhawk - Lawrence (with NGAKS Convention at Double Tree)
11 August	Kaw Valley - Topeka
3 November	Sunflower - Overland Park



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

***IN GOD WE TRUST***