



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.

May Program:

Our program will be "Decline of the Village Pub in the Garden of England," presented by Tom Schmiedeler, Professor of Geography, Washburn University

☆☆☆☆☆ 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.

Greetings fellow MOAA members and welcome to April showers (snow showers as I am seeing out the office window). I have not experienced this in April in quite some time.

It is the season however for award ceremonies and commissioning. I know I have dealt with this in previous newsletters. It is the future of our profession and I can think of no better way to support the future than to support the organizations that produce the officers whom represent that future.

You all are invited to attend and anyone that wishes to participate please let myself, John or Jim know. We will try to find a place for you.

Commissioning this year is the 14th of May at the Kansas Union, followed the next day by our bimonthly meeting. Hope to see as many of you as possible at both. I know some of you may still be down about the Jayhawks premature, although glorious run to the National Championship; attending these events will bring back that spirit, motivation and faith in the future.

Mike and I had a great time visiting the Kansas Statehouse with fellow MOAA members from Leavenworth, Olathe, and Topeka. Had some good visits with legislators and learned that some of our issues were successful. For example the initiative to fund the Kansas Guard tuition assistance program was passed and signed by the governor. We will keep pushing the rest of our issues and if not this year then on into the next session.

And yes, rumors are true, I did get married last month. Dawn is still working with FEMA on flood disaster recovery in Louisiana and will be home soon. I will bring her to a meeting sometime when she is home.

Keep on serving and keep finding others who are still serving to join the organization, or rejoin the group as appropriate. Membership is our future.

God bless and see you all in May.



George

Volume XXIII, Issue 3

1 May 2018

Staff:

President:
COL George W. Pogge, USA (Ret)
1st Vice-President:
CAPT James S. Cooper, USN (Ret)
2nd 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 (06/18)
Newsletter Editors:
COL John & Shirley Halladay
Web Master:
COL George W. Pogge, USA (Ret)

Inside this issue:

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

* Reservations should be sent
to Jim Cooper by
9 May



JAYHAWK CHAPTER NEWS



FINAL DUES NOTICE

Chapter Dues (\$20.00) were due 01 January.
If dues are not paid by 01 May, you will be removed from the Directory.

CONDOLENCES

Lawrene Rader. A celebration of the life of Lawrene took place on Friday, April 20th at Plymouth Congregational Church.

Lawrene Danzey Rader, the only child of Lawrence and Gladys Danzey, was born on February 20, 1932 in Dothan, Alabama. She passed gently at Lawrence Memorial Hospital on February 5, 2018, surrounded by her three children, Lee Rader, Mark Rader (Sara) and Melissa Little (Kurt). Lawrene is also survived by six grandchildren: Matthew, Kayla, Anna, Maya, Jack and Finn. She was preceded in death by her parents, her first husband, George LeBlanc, following a Naval air accident, and her husband of thirty-three years, Jack Rader.

Determined to attend college, Lawrene attended Florida University, working to pay her own way. She was a longtime, faithful member of Plymouth Congregational Church serving in various capacities in her younger years, and a member of P.E.O Chapter EA. She enjoyed a robust, ongoing self-education of financial investing, keeping current with politics and "the news of the day," and traveling. But foremost, Lawrene was thoroughly invested in her family all of her life and we experienced that love in many tangible ways on a daily basis.

Lawrene will be buried next to Jack in a private family graveside service.

Memorial gifts may be made to Plymouth Congregational Church, Lawrence, or the Misericordia Home, Chicago, IL where her grandson with disabilities resides.

PERSONAL NEWS

From Dean Bevan: My "Grim Reaper" was performed in Times Square the weekend of 12-13-14 April and will be performed in Dallas in June.

From Andy Bauch: I spent mid-January to mid-April on a 90-day active duty tour with the 19 Air Wing located at Little Rock Air Force Base, Arkansas. The Little Rock Air Force Base is the largest C-130 base in the world, serving as a training hub for active duty, reserve, and national guard pilots training on the C-130 airframe.

During my time as an active duty Judge Advocate General (JAG), I was the Acting Deputy Staff Judge Advocate, serving in an office with six JAGs and six paralegals, handling a broad spectrum of issues from legal assistance for retirees to courts martials of serious criminal offenses. I was fortunate enough during my time to be able to mentor three young JAGs who were just starting their careers. I participated in audits of the drug testing program, spoke with ROTC cadets at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, conducted investigations into allegations of discrimination, and served as a judge in an administrative discharge board. The experience was capped off with what we call an "Article 6 Inspection", which involves JAG inspectors spending three days digging through files to determine if the legal office has been operating in compliance with the rules and regulations delegated by The Judge Advocate General (TJAG) of the Air Force.

In addition to legal work, operational readiness is once again becoming an important part of the mission. We spent several afternoons practicing with our chemical gear, qualifying on weapons, and working mock deployment lines to ensure that if the call comes, the Air Force will be able to get people out the door quickly and efficiently.

While it was a good experience, I'm excited be back home in Lawrence with Skyler and the boys, and back to prosecuting cases for the Douglas County District Attorney's Office.

**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.**

From Mike Devlin: Georgie and I traveled to Washington DC to attend the funeral of COL R. P. McLean and his wife, Dabney at Fort Meyer, VA. COL McLean was commanding the 3rd Battalion, 64th Armor in Schweinfurt, Germany when I joined that unit as a new 2nd Lieutenant. I had always considered COL McLean as a real mentor.

Also attending the funeral will be six other former officers and their wives of that Battalion. The Battalion had been drawn down for Vietnam when COL McLean had taken command and only seven officers (of 33 authorized) were present for duty. They were all Lieutenants and I was the eighth officer assigned. The group has remained in contact with each other for the past 52 years.



Army News LTC Tracey Olson, USA

Greetings Jayhawk Chapter!

University of Kansas Army ROTC Cadets were among over 400 cadets from across the United States testing the limits of their physical and mental strength on the 7th of April.

Two-person teams from 38 colleges and universities in 16 states competed at the 24th annual University of Kansas Army ROTC Ranger Buddy Competition at Rim Rock Farm, home of the Kansas Jayhawk Cross Country Teams. Cadets hailed from as far as North Dakota, Texas, and Georgia.

Male, female, and co-ed teams participated in a series of challenges requiring physical skills, individual movement techniques, first aid tasks, weapons tasks, knowledge of knots, military reporting formats, and more as they vied for the title of Best Ranger Buddy Team. KU Army ROTC finished in first place in the COED, second in the Female, first and third in the male division. Due to our strong finish in each division, KU Army ROTC was also awarded the Top Battalion, the school with the best overall finish in all divisions, receives the "Top Battalion" award.

We are proudly commissioning 20 Cadet's as 2nd Lieutenant's this year. The Army Ceremony will be at

the Campanile Bell Tower at 0800 followed by a Joint Commissioning Ceremony with the Marine Corps, Navy and Air Force at KU's Student Union at 1000. Both events are free and open to the public if you would like to attend.

Like normal, the summer for both Cadre and Cadet's is full. The program is sending 17 Cadet's to their Summer Training where their leadership skills are evaluated. The majority of the Cadre will also attend this training serving as support personnel or personnel grading the Cadet's leadership ability. We have three Cadet's attending Airborne, four Cadet's attending Air Assault, seven participating in CTLT (shadowing a Platoon Leader for 3 weeks), and two Cadet's participating in CULP where they will travel to Romania and Vietnam for 30 days. Finally, we have three nursing students participating in NSTP where they travel to a Military hospital and shadow a nurse for 30 days.

CPT Jonathon Heller
Asst. Professor of Military Science



Navy News CDR Joe Cooper, USN



Greetings from the Jayhawk Navy!

The 2018 Spring Semester is wrapping up, and battalion members are working hard as summer approaches. Students are starting to prepare for final projects, exams, commissioning, and summer training.

In March, KU NROTC traveled to Colorado to compete in the University of Colorado-Boulder Drill Meet. Kansas was the only school out of ten to compete in every event. Nearly 30 midshipmen participated in

one or more events, including the Rifle and Pistol Competition, Platoon Drill, Squad Drill, the Color Guard Competition, and the Endurance Race. MIDN 3/C Speckin, the Rifle and Pistol Team Leader, led Kansas to a first place victory in the Rifle Competition, and MIDN 2/C Brown was the Top Rifle Shot of all the teams. Color Guard, led by MIDN



Members of the Jayhawk Battalion pose at the University of Boulder-Colorado during the Drill Meet weekend.

3/C McAlexander, placed third. MIDN 2/C Garton commanded Squad Drill and placed first. At the end of the weekend, Kansas took an impressive second place overall finish. The Drill Meet was an amazing opportunity for students to travel to Colorado to meet and compete against midshipmen from across the country. The battalion is looking forward returning strong next year.

Also this semester, the Semper Fi Society conducted a 7-mile hike out at Rim Rock Farms. The Platoon stepped off at 0430 and hiked with 50-pound-packs and rifles. Hikes are one of the most important events at Officer Candidates School and The Basic School, so it is vital that Marine-option midshipmen learn how to hike properly. Hikes also give midshipmen a chance to take on leadership roles; Squad Leaders, the Platoon Sergeant, and the Platoon Commander get the

opportunity to plan and prepare for an evolution and also get to practice their accountability and motivation skills.

Over Spring Break, five midshipmen from the battalion attended the Women in Naval Service Symposium at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Over 150 midshipmen from all over the country attended. The group attended several different discussion boards with senior enlisted and officer personnel from different communities including Conventional and Nuclear Surface Warfare, Aviation, Submarine, Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Navy Reserve, and the Marine Corps.

We are fortunate here to have the only Obstacle Course in the Midwest region, and at the beginning of April, part of Nebraska's Naval ROTC Unit visited Lawrence to practice in preparation for OCS. At the end of the practice, Kansas and Nebraska held a relay race with their five fastest runners on the O-Course and Kansas won. The group ended the day with paintball and a BBQ.

On 25 April, we will be hosting our Spring Awards Ceremony at the Kansas Union, and on 14 May, five battalion members will be commissioning as Ensigns and Second Lieutenants. Three are commissioning in the Surface Warfare Community, one in Naval Aviation, and one in the Marine Corps. We appreciate MOAA's support and invite you to join us for these ceremonies.

Rock Chalk!

CDR Joe Cooper



Air Force News ***LtCol Bill Pastewait, USAF***

Hello from Detachment 280, the Flying Jayhawks!

It's been a great year for the Flying Jayhawks! As we close out the semester we are preparing to commission six new 2Lts into the United States Air Force. On Monday, 14 May, we will commission:

- Cadet Elena Adame – Cyberspace Operations
- Cadet Kenneth Beck – Combat Systems Officer
- Cadet Connor Sipe - Pilot
- Cadet Anna Suellentrop - Nurse
- Cadet Eries Thompson – Space Operations
- Cadet Jung Yae – Cyberspace Operations

As these seniors prepare for graduation and commissioning we submitted cadets to compete for an enrollment allocation (EA). The EA grants a student a slot to Field Training and a chance for entry into the Professional Officer Course. We were extremely pleased to have 17 cadets selected to attend Field

Training this summer. This is the most that we'll have sent in the past three years. This 13-day program consists of an "in-garrison" session and "deployed" session at Maxwell Air Force Base, Montgomery, Alabama. Successful completion allows them to contract into the Professional Officer Course and moves them one step closer to commissioning.

The highlight of the semester so far is scholarship awards! Cadets Andrew Brabant, Chase Charles and Cameron McGrath from the University of Kansas and Cadets Peter Hockel, Lucas Hoffman and Catherine Tighe from Benedictine College were recipients of a Type-II Air Force ROTC scholarship. This competitive scholarship covers \$18,000 in tuition per year and includes books and stipend payments.

Detachment update:

Cadets Logan Albers and Catherine Pallesen were selected to attend Field Training as Cadet Training Assistants (CTAs). Both will support training at Maxwell-1 and Maxwell-2 sessions. A great accomplishment for the detachment to have two cadets attending as CTAs!

Coming Up:

Commissioning will take place at 1000 on Monday, May 14th, in the KU Memorial Union.

Sophomore cadets and Cadre are off to Field Training! Our commissionees are off to be 2Lts in the United States Air Force!

Thanks for all the fantastic support from MOAA this year and during my time as the Detachment 280 Commander. My replacement, LtCol Nicole Phelan will arrive in July and take over the program. I have been extremely grateful to have MOAA to support our program and our cadets. Thank you for everything and your support is always greatly appreciated.

Rock Chalk!

Very Respectfully,

LtCol Bill Pastewait

Commander, Air Force ROTC Det 280

NEW SHINGLES VACCINE

Shingrix, the new shingles vaccine, is now available. Medicare will not cover the shots (two are required, two months apart); however TriCare for Life will cover the shots if given in your doctor's office or at a participating TRICARE network pharmacy. (See TFL website www.tricare.mil.)

It is also available at no charge at the Munson Army Hospital Immunization Clinic at Fort Leavenworth. Clinic hours are 0745-1600 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday; 0830-1600 on Thursday. Call 785-684-6344 for information..

Even those of you who did get the previous shingles vaccine (Zostavax) should get this one – Zostavax was about 30% effective, while Shingrix is approximately 96% effective.

MOAA NEWSLETTER ADVOCACY

This is a summary of the many items MOAA produces each week on legislative activities. Those who have e-mail receive the full MOAA Newsletter each week upon completing application..

MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 01 March 2018:

TRICARE Contracting Changes Creating Turbulence for Military Beneficiaries

By Capt. Kathryn M. Beasley, USN (Ret), director of health affairs, MOAA Government Relations

Recent reforms of the Military Health System included plans to reduce TRICARE regions from three to two. The objective was to reduce federal spending while decreasing administrative hassles for military beneficiaries, who tend to move between regions frequently. This part has worked out well.

What has not worked so well for beneficiaries have been numerous issues caused by the change in TRICARE contractors Jan. 1. Contractor changes between regions happen every five to seven years, and although most beneficiaries expect a few glitches, they typically are well planned and anticipated. This transition has been anything but smooth sailing.

MOAA has received an earful from members describing billing and claims problems, referral and authorization issues, dropped enrollments, poor customer experience, lack of provider networks resulting in higher cost shares, and many other concerns. We met with TRICARE officials this week to discuss these problems, find out if the Defense Health Agency was aware of them and, if so, learn what they are doing to solve them.

We were happy to find the DHA is very aware of these issues and is taking action to hold the new contractors accountable. Both managed care support contractors, Humana Government Business and Health Net Federal

Services, have experienced early challenges with customer call centers, websites, etc.

Humana is compliant with all major requirements except provider directory accuracy. Unfortunately, Health Net - which has TRICARE's West region - remains noncompliant with several major requirements and has been placed on a corrective action plan to fix key issues, including:

Customer Service - failure to meet multiple contract standards, call center standards, etc.

Referral and Utilization Management - more than 70,000 backlogged referrals

Provider network adequacy - failure to meet targets (85% coverage is required) in multiple Prime Service Areas and Select networks; this includes both primary care and specialty providers shortages, with some areas having no network providers

Provider directory accuracy - multiple issues

Medical management - multiple issues with web-based systems

Needless to say, these are serious issues affecting beneficiaries right now. To address them, the [DHA has put out guidance](#), effective immediately through March 18, allowing Health Net to waive its usual authorization process for TRICARE Prime referrals in the West Region as well as addressing specialty care referrals, enrollment applications, and call center wait times.

MOAA is monitoring these mitigation strategies and contract performance deficiencies closely; we will continue to report beneficiary experiences to officials at the DHA. We appreciate the oversight efforts by the DHA and would like to

see the needle move in the right direction on these issues as quickly as possible. These issues have resulted in more out-of-pocket costs for many beneficiaries, which is totally unacceptable.

MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 08 March 2018:

MOAA to Talk 2018 Goals at Congressional VA Hearing

In January, MOAA outlined its [top 10 goals for 2018](#). Next week, at a joint hearing of the Senate and House Veterans' Affairs Committees, MOAA will highlight Goals 6, 9, and 10.

WHAT: Senate and House Veterans' Affairs Committees Meeting

WHEN: Wednesday, March 14

TIME: TBD

WHERE: TBD

WATCH LIVE: [Click here](#)

RECAP: Available in The MOAA Newsletter

WHO: MOAA, Air Force Sergeants Association, Blinded Veterans Association, Fleet Reserve Association, Gold Star Wives of America, Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America, Military Order of the Purple Heart, National Association of the State Directors of Veterans Affairs, and The Retired Enlisted Association

MOAA's top priorities during the Congressional testimony will be the following:

Health Care Reform

Caregivers

Women Veterans

Suicide Prevention and Traumatic Injuries

Deployment-Related Illnesses and Toxic Exposures

Post-9/11 GI Bill

Military Spouse Residency

VSOs and Senate Addressing Guard and Reserve Challenges

By Lt. Col. Aniela Szymanski, USMCR, director of Guard and Reserve affairs, MOAA Government Relations

MOAA and other members of The Military Coalition met recently with the Senate Armed Services Committee professional staff to discuss legislative priorities for the National Guard and Reserve.

While nobody disputes National Guard and Reserve forces are now fully an operational component of the U.S. armed forces, bringing the myriad laws that govern the Guard and Reserve into alignment with that reality has been a piecemeal process. MOAA and other organizations within The Military Coalition have led efforts to close the gaps that exist between the benefits received by active duty servicemembers and Guard and Reserve members.

The committee staff also had excellent suggestions for ways MOAA and other organizations can further assist in addressing the demands placed on the services and Congress. For example, it was suggested military service organizations meet with organizations representing airline pilots to further understand the demands on the industry and profession and the associated impact on military service.

MOAA intends to pursue these and other industry partner discussions to formulate workable solutions going forward. The committee staff also asked for military service organizations to remain engaged in DoD's duty status reform efforts to ensure appropriate progress and results. MOAA has stayed informed and engaged on this and other DoD initiatives to provide insights and perspectives that might otherwise not be considered.

If you have Guard and Reserve matters you believe MOAA should address with Congress, email them to legis@moaa.org.

Service Secretaries Request State Support for Military Families

Recently, the service secretaries sent a letter to the National Governors Association addressing a number of military family issues. The letter came as governors from all 50 states made one of their regular trips to Washington, D.C., to talk about state priorities and interaction with federal policies and programs.

The secretaries spoke of the long-endured challenges our members and military families face around the globe - challenges that cannot be solved by the services or the federal government alone. Specifically, the secretaries request states find ways to accommodate military children in their extracurricular activities and accept their less-than-standard academic transcripts. They highlight licensing barriers in military spouse employment and ask for mitigation of those barriers.

DoD rightly stood up 14 years ago a [Defense State Liaison Office](#), which educates states about possible legislation to support those serving and their families. Ultimately, however, these issues cannot be resolved simply with legislation. Our local communities must engage to support the uniqueness of living a military life "on demand" - where changing schools, jobs, houses, and friends can come at the request of the federal government whenever it commands, despite the inconvenience or struggles it induces. Freedom is not free.

We know what the ultimate price of freedom is, but on a not so devastating day, freedom costs a military child an opportunity to play basketball on the new school's team because the military moved them too late in the school year. Freedom might also cost a military spouse their job and incur hundreds of dollars in new rounds of professional testing, application fees, and processing, because they will not be employable at the new duty station without proving they have the credentials - again.

These costs, however, decrease when governments provide flexibility not normally in their vernacular. This is not required because military families are "special," but rather these are required because we should, when possible, try to minimize the cost of freedom, while maximizing its benefits for all of us. An all-volunteer force requires that servicemembers and their families not carry the burden of those costs alone.

The federal government, as we have said before, would be overstepping on state sovereignty to legislate these issues in the U.S. Congress or via executive order. MOAA applauds this step, of service secretaries saying, "Reciprocity on licensure and the quality of education matter." We look forward to tracking the impact of this engagement on military families.

MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 15 March 2018:

MOAA Presses Congress to Pass Veterans Health Care Reform

MOAA urged lawmakers to strike a bipartisan deal to replace VA Choice and consolidate existing community-care programs during a Wednesday joint House-Senate hearing on Capitol Hill.

A year has passed [without an agreement](#) in Congress to replace the VA Choice program, which allows some veterans to seek care closer to home. Competing bills addressing reform have languished on the Hill - one in the House and one in the Senate - and veterans are ready to see resolution, said Cmdr. René Campos, USN (Ret), MOAA's senior director of Government Relations for veterans and wounded warrior care.

Reforming health care. Congress has never been closer to reconciling the differences in the community care bills: the [Caring for our Veterans Act of 2017](#) in the Senate and the [VA Care in the Community Act](#) in the House.

MOAA and most other VSOs support the Senate version of the bill, which includes provisions to expand VA support and services for full-time caregivers and builds on VA Secretary David Shulkin's [Community Access for Rewarding Experiences](#) (CARE) proposal.

"We urge the committees to strike a bipartisan, bicameral agreement on legislation to enact community-care reform and ensure full funding for Veterans Health Administration resources," Campos said.

Expanding caregiver support. MOAA would like to see caregiver benefits extended to veterans who served prior to 9/11.

"On blue-water Navy and caregiver [benefits], we got the message loud and clear and we are working on it," the committee chairman said. Blue-water Navy refers to the 90,000 servicemembers [exposed to Agent Orange](#) while operating off the coast of Vietnam.

Women's health needs. Roles for women in uniform continue to evolve, and Campos said the VA and Defense Department must prepare to serve their health needs.

MOAA recently teamed with United Health Foundation [to study](#) some of the health challenges facing female veterans. They found that women who served in the military were [more likely to suffer](#) from mental illness, cardiovascular disease, and other problems compared to female civilians.

Sen. Bill Cassidy, a Republican physician representing Louisiana, said he agrees. "Women have the privilege as men do to serve in some of these roles that were once just for men," he said. "Our VA should respond to that."

As part of this effort, Campos said MOAA recommends Congress pass the [Deborah Sampson Act](#), which calls on the VA to carry out a three-year pilot program to assess peer-to-peer assistance for women leaving the military - especially for those who suffered sexual trauma or are at risk of becoming homeless.

Researching toxic exposures. Campos said Pentagon and VA officials must continue working together to study servicemembers' exposure to toxic materials in order to determine whether it's responsible for illnesses.

"It's unreasonable to require veterans to provide the scientific and medical evidence for their claim when that expertise resides within the government itself," Campos said.

MOAA would like to see investment in federal resource on servicemembers' exposure to hazardous toxins so health care benefits can be provided when appropriate.

MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 22 March 2018:

A Waiting Game for Pre-9/11 Veterans' Caregivers

Six months into FY 2018 and the Senate and House Veterans' Affairs committees and the VA continue to struggle to find a compromise to expand comprehensive caregiver support services for veterans of all eras.

The issue has been around since passage of the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-163), which allows comprehensive support and services for caregivers of veterans severely injured or disabled in the line of duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001.

MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 29 March 2018:

Veterans' Health Care Reform Gets Cut From 2018 Budget Deal

A contentious battle played out between the House and Senate last week as some lawmakers pressed to get veterans' and caregivers' health care reform provisions into the massive omnibus spending bill, which was on a fast track to get to the president's desk to prevent another government shutdown.

The 2,232-page bill eventually was signed Friday afternoon. However, it was missing a massive piece of reform legislation that MOAA, other veterans service organizations

(VSOs), and many lawmakers and administration officials were hoping to get signed into law.

However, by Wednesday, the hope of including the measure in the omnibus had pretty much died. Several lawmakers feared the bill was being rushed through too quickly; some viewed the measure as a step forward in putting the VA on a glide path to privatization.

House Democrats were concerned the compromised bill would reduce Congress' oversight authority over the VA, would go too far in expanding care in the community, and divert attention from fixing and strengthening foundational services critically needed in the department's struggling health system.

Ranking member Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.), who supported the compromised bill along with committee chairs Sen. Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.) and congressman Phil Roe (R-Tenn.) as well as the White House and VSO groups, had his own reservations about how the VA plans to use its funds for private care. He was concerned not enough funding would be going into VA infrastructure and health programs, thus leading to more veterans being pushed out into private care.

Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.), a champion for female veterans' health care as well as caregiver legislation, also voiced concern about moving more money into private care programs. She told Shulkin, "It looks like you are diverting funds from VA - a system that desperately needs it."

Shulkin told lawmakers he had no intention of diverting money from the VA or privatizing it. "We're trying to balance improving the VA and, at the same time, offering choice to vets," he said. "Ultimately, it's your choice."

MOAA and its VSO partners are confident legislation will be enacted this year if lawmakers continue to work together - in a bipartisan way, with all stakeholders - to find common solutions.

The spending bill did ultimately include some good news for veterans and their families. For example, the FY 2018 total budget for the VA is \$185.4 billion - 5 percent more than FY 2017 levels and 1 percent more than the president requested. It will fund:

- opioid abuse treatment and prevention;
- mental health programs, including mental health screenings and additional services for veterans with other-than-honorable discharges before leaving service, and suicide prevention outreach;
- research on gender-appropriate prosthetics and toxic exposure;
- development and implementation of the new electronic health record;
- efforts to reduce disability claims processing backlog;
- major and minor construction improvements; and,
- some portion of the FY 2019 appropriations for medical and benefit programs.

So what can MOAA members expect in the coming weeks and months?

Congress and the administration face competing priorities, some of which require immediate attention - like passing authorization and funding bills to keep federal agencies operating when the new fiscal year begins Oct. 1.

These Three Bills Could Improve Military Spouse Employment This Year

Over the past decade, Congress has continually focused on veteran and military spouse employment. Despite well-intended efforts, military spouse unemployment rates and underemployment rates remain unacceptably high.

The passage of three pieces of legislation introduced this year could be the change needed to improve military spouse employment outcomes. Each falls under a different committee jurisdiction and facilitates a different aspect of support for military spouse employment.

The Military Spouse Employment Act of 2018 ([S. 2379](#), [H.R. 5125](#)) - an omnibus-type bill with multiple components focused on increased reporting, outreach, and access to child care.

The Jobs and Childcare for Military Families Act of 2018 ([S. 2457](#)) - a tax bill extending the Work Opportunity Tax Credit to employers hiring military spouses and the creation of a Dependent Care Account for servicemembers.

The Support our Military Spouses Act ([S. 2541](#)) - This bill is the companion to the already passed H.R. 282 Military Residency Choice Act, which falls under the Veterans' Affairs committees. Under current law, spouses can only be protected from changing residency every PCS across state lines if they share the same state of residency as their servicemember.

These bills are innovative and comprehensive. Together they serve a collective push in the right direction for easing multiple challenges military spouses face in maintaining a career.

President Trump Signs \$1.3 Trillion Spending Bill – Here's What's In It for Troops

Hours after threatening to veto a \$1.3 trillion spending bill, President Donald Trump signed the measure to fund the government through September, narrowly preventing this year's third shutdown.

The president signed the omnibus spending bill Friday afternoon after members of the House and Senate passed it on Thursday. The massive spending bill funds the government through the end of this fiscal year following several stopgap measures that capped spending at 2017 levels.

The hits:

MOAA applauds inclusion of these key measures in the spending bill:

- A 2.4 percent pay raise for servicemembers, which they've been receiving since Jan. 1. (Learn more about the military pay-raise gap [here](#).)

- \$700 billion for the military - the largest year-on-year funding increase for DoD in 15 years. That includes \$144 billion for weapons and equipment upgrades.

- A lift on defense spending caps, one of five things MOAA wanted President Trump to address in his first State of the Union speech.

- Spending flexibility that will allow military leaders to use some funds appropriated this year in fiscal 2019.

- A \$234 million funding increase for NOAA.

- Mental-health services for "bad paper" veterans that includes screenings before they leave the military. Metal-health support will also be provided to those who: served 100+ days on active duty, experienced sexual trauma, or served as drone operators.

- A 1.9 percent pay raise for federal civilians.

The misses:

Here are some of the things that were left out:

- Much-needed VA reform was not included. Several reform proposals were included in the drafts that lawmakers dropped earlier this week. Proposed reforms included increased funding for private-sector care and the MOAA-supported expansion of caregiver support.

There's still a long way to go to restore regular fiscal order. This spending bill was passed halfway through the fiscal year. It took five continuing resolutions and two government shutdowns to get here.

There's also, as the president noted when he signed the bill, a need for greater transparency. Lawmakers scrambled this week to get votes on a 2,000-plus-page bill before the

government ran out of funding. This violates a 2010 promise by Republicans for greater government transparency.

Another fiscal showdown is likely to occur this fall, and Congress now has just six months to complete work on its fiscal 2019 budget. Lawmakers expect to begin work on DoD's 2019 budget in early May.

MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 05 April 2018:

Help MOAA Advocate for the Military During Our 2018 Storming the Hill Event

This year's issues:

Shortly after the president's FY 2019 budget proposal was released in February, MOAA's BoD selected two issues from a list of MOAA's current advocacy goals and objectives as the focus of this year's event. The two issues this year are 1) End reduced pay for Chapter 61 retirees and 2) Maintain military pay and benefits, necessary to recruit and retain an all-volunteer force. Here's what you need to know about the history of these two objectives:

Ending reduced pay for Chapter 61 retirees. A Chapter 61 retiree is anyone medically retired from military service with a disability of 30 percent or greater. The majority of these retirees - and our advocacy focus - are those who completed less than 20 years of service. The term "Chapter 61" comes from the corresponding chapter in Title 10 U.S. Code that covers disability retirements. There are approximately 210,000 Chapter 61 retirees, more than 90 percent of whom were enlisted.

Maintaining military pay and benefits necessary to recruit and retain an all-volunteer force (AVF). MOAA supports maintaining the military pay and benefits that are essential to recruiting and retaining the high-quality AVF necessary to meet the nation's security and warfighting requirements now and in the future. The president's proposed 2.6-percent pay raise in his FY 2019 budget proposal, as aligned with the Employment Cost Index (ECI), is the largest in nine years as compared to previous raises, which were below ECI in three of the last nine years.

You can take action by contacting your representatives directly at the links below.

[End Reduced Pay for Chapter 61 Retirees.](#) Chapter 61 retirees are servicemembers who were unable to complete 20 years of service through no fault of their own and should have their retirement and disability pays computed equal to those who retire with 20 or more years of service.

[Maintain military pay and benefits necessary to recruit and retain an all-volunteer force.](#) Maintaining military pay and benefits is necessary to recruit and retain an all-volunteer force (AVF).

As TRICARE Fees Increase, MOAA Calls on Leaders to Address Shortfalls

MOAA sees and hears from the beneficiary community the angst and frustration resulting from many of these changes. Our recent Facebook Live Town Hall captured the groundswell of dissatisfaction, as we addressed these issues with the director of the TRICARE Health Program. [View the whole interview and join in the conversation.](#)

Many of the structural changes to the TRICARE program have been compounded with the change in TRICARE's purchased care contractors in the West and East regions..

MOAA and others in the beneficiary community are applying pressure on the Defense Health Agency (DHA) to produce improvements and quickly. They include:

Customer service: Initial call volumes quickly exceeded call center capacities. Additionally, training of new center associates required to learn about the program and its changes have slowed calls.

Referrals and authorizations: These have accumulated an immediate backlog, which required a waiver by the DHA to extend into April (West Region).

Adequate provider networks: This continues to be a problem mainly in areas outside of major military installations and with the new TRICARE Select option.

Claims processing: There have been delays in payments to providers, resulting in some beneficiaries covering the costs. Additionally, accuracy of beneficiary claims statements have been an issue.

Technology and data support: Issues have occurred across a variety of claims, enrollment platforms, and functions, resulting in decreased performance capabilities and accuracy.

Enrollment: Beneficiaries are highly encouraged to update their electronic transfer payments, for example, by credit card to ensure their TRICARE Prime enrollment is up-to-date. It is recommended beneficiaries review recent statements to verify their enrollment transaction went through.

These disruptions do not in any way serve to enhance the beneficiaries' experience with their TRICARE health benefit. MOAA continues to work closely with TRICARE program officials, and with those at Health Net and Humana, to identify and rectify these and many other issues that are brought to our attention by our membership.

Shulkin Accomplished a Lot in a Year. Here's What the Next VA Secretary Must Finish

Dr. David Shulkin officially has left the VA, with some impressive successes from his time as secretary. Though this departure might be construed a number of ways, his many accomplishments over the past year and during his prior role as undersecretary for VA health affairs serve as a foundation for the next VA secretary to build upon. Here are some highlights:

Enactment of legislation to reform the VA claims appeals process.

Expansion of the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

Expansion of mental health care for veterans.

VA community care, or CHOICE. This legislation still has not been enacted and will have to be the new secretary's top priority, as the CHOICE program is set to run out of money in May.

Expansion of the VA's caregiver program to pre-9/11 veterans.

Toxic exposures.

MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 12 April 2018:

Guardsmen on the Border Will Succeed, But at What Cost?

The National Guard Bureau and Department of Homeland Security are working out details about the role thousands of Guardsmen will play on the U.S.-Mexico border following President Trump's announcement that they'll provide support services there until a wall is built.

Trump is the third president to send U.S. military personnel to the Southwest border - President Obama sent them in 2010 and President Bush from 2006 to 2008. But Guardsmen are being tasked for this mission after years of overseas deployments in support of Iraq and Afghanistan. That's marked the highest activation of the National Guard since World War II at the same time they carry out vital missions at home in support of disaster relief missions like hurricanes and floods.

There is no doubt Guardsmen from California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas will do an outstanding job, the impact this additional mission will have on other aspects of their lives should be considered by the Administration and by Congress. Many maintain civilian careers, and their local communities depend on them being able to do so.

Finding the right balance of operational time and non-operational time is vital to ensuring recruiting and retention do not suffer because individuals simply can't balance a civilian career with the demands of the Guard. This point was made in a [2012 Government Accountability Office report](#) about Operations Jump Start and Phalanx. I think it is just as true today.

Homeland Security officials said, while they have some initial recommendations about how the National Guard may assist on the border, they'll take into consideration the inputs from governors and border agents on the ground. It's still unclear whether only Guardsmen from border states will be activated, or if it will affect units from across the country.

This authority allows governors - with approval from the president or defense secretary - to order a National Guard member to duty for operational homeland-defense activities. The federal government then foots that bill. This status is sometimes referred to as National Guard Active Duty.

Despite this exception, Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen has asked Congress to "work with her" to change laws that hamstring National Guard troops against drug interdiction and conducting apprehensions, characterizing them as "unintended loopholes."

Trump administration officials say that, for now, they intend to use Guardsmen for support activities only, as they were used during Operations Jump Start and Phalanx under Bush and Obama. That could include air support, medical care for detainees, and fleet maintenance (mechanics) in order to free up border patrol agents to enforce the laws.

It appears the legal authority to perform these border missions already exists in the exceptions to the Posse Comitatus Act, so it will be interesting to see what changes the head of Homeland Security proposes Congress make. Previous decisions to bar Guardsmen from making arrests or performing drug interdiction were made by the Defense Department, and could be changed without an act of Congress. Secretary Nielsen may be hinting that she will be asking Congress for additional exemptions to the Posse Comitatus Act under other mission authorities.

While activated under Title 32, Guardsmen will be eligible for legal protections provided by the Uniformed Servicemembers Employment and Reemployment Rights Act and the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. Those on active duty for 30 days or more also qualify for TRICARE and Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance. It is possible that, depending upon the length and nature of this mission, however, that Congress will need to consider additional legislation to ensure Guardsmen are not unduly impacted in their civilian careers or that their families are not without resources to sustain their needs during these times.

Veterans Affairs Legislation Stalls Amid Leadership Uncertainty

After several veterans reform issues [were dropped from the massive \\$1.3 trillion omnibus spending package](#) signed into law in March, it appears progress on any veterans legislation has stalled until a new VA secretary is confirmed. That could have a major impact on several important issues, most notably including the VA's role in private sector health care.

Sharpening the American Military's Competitive Edge

The state of our nation's defense and the challenges for those who serve were the subject of discussion at a recent round-table event hosted by Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis. Present were several senior defense officials and key staff members, along with approximately 25 military and veteran service organizations. The exchange of ideas and concerns lasted just over three hours. The focus, understandably,

centered on those serving in uniform — the ones who bear the brunt of the missions.

This idea was stated in the [NDS Summary](#) and also served as the theme of discussion for those at the round-table event. Worth noting from the summary are the three distinct lines of effort:

Rebuilding military readiness as we build a more lethal joint force.

Strengthening alliances as we attract new partners.

Reforming DoD's business practices for greater performance and affordability.

MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 19 April 2018: Will Enrollment Fees for TRICARE for Life Be Next?

MOAA strongly objects to the introduction of any new fee for TFL beneficiaries.

Let your legislators hear your voice and [send the suggested call to action](#) to them today!

Many military beneficiaries are getting frustrated over unexpected and disproportional increases in their TRICARE service fees. The fee changes [have been implemented](#) across just about every fee category. However, TRICARE for Life (TFL) beneficiaries, a perennial target, are currently unscathed by the budget knife.

But just because DoD did not include any specific fees for TFL in its budget submission this year does not mean Congress will not try to slip some new fees into the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) during the markup process.

As recently as last fall, Congress raised pharmacy fees for everyone. Those increases reduced the amount of the Survivor Benefit Plan/Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (SBP/DIC) offset for military widows. Essentially, the dramatic increase in pharmacy copayments is funding the reduction of SBP/DIC, also known as the widows tax. Compound these increases with DoD's end run of all the [other TRICARE fee increases](#), and well, you get the picture: Beneficiaries are funding and offsetting their own earned benefits. And you can bet Congress will again look for money anywhere they can get it.

This is why MOAA is on guard to prevent any attempt to establish a new enrollment fee for TFL. TFL beneficiaries already pay more for their health care coverage than any other uniformed service beneficiaries. And now they are paying much more for their medications, too, and will continue to do so with the planned increases in the out-years.

Congress was thoughtful in its [establishment of TFL](#), enacted in 2001, deeming it a commitment of a grateful nation. Before TFL, TRICARE beneficiaries immediately lost their TRICARE coverage when they became Medicare eligible at age 65 (including those who were Medicare-eligible due to disability). This positioned them at the same level of coverage as U.S. citizens who had never served the full 20-plus year careers in the uniformed services. However, Congress recognized health care coverage was an important benefit earned through decades of service and sacrifice - and one that should be sustained over the lifetime of the servicemember and their family.

The reality continues to be that personnel costs are not rising to be more than a third of DoD's budget. This has been consistent for the past several decades. And more specifically, TFL's costs have actually decreased or flattened.

Congress Is Still Split Over VA Reform and Veterans Choice

Ask any veteran if they would like to have more choices for accessing health care, and they likely would say yes. Who wouldn't? I sometimes struggle to get an appointment at the VA or through my TRICARE provider and would welcome the

opportunity at times to go elsewhere for care when I have an immediate need.

While Senate leadership was able to reach an agreement on provisions in a draft bill - called the Caring for our Veterans Act - the effort failed to get included in the massive 2018 omnibus spending package signed by the president March 23. The \$50 billion draft bill would have allowed more flexibility for the VA in determining veterans' eligibility for private-sector care and included provisions to expand VA comprehensive caregiver support to veterans prior to Sept. 11, 2001, and to assess VA facilities and infrastructure needs and assets. Still, some Republicans and the administration didn't see the bill going far enough in giving veterans greater choice to get care in the community.

MOAA and other veterans' groups have worked tirelessly with VA and congressional leaders to protect, strengthen, and reform the VA health care system over the past several years. Efforts to reform the medical system and integrate community-care programs into a broader network of care requires vigilance in striking the right balance of public and private care while ensuring the VA maintains the ability to be the primary resource for delivering veterans' health care. No veteran should be left with the impression the VA isn't responsible for providing them the health care they require.

While MOAA is supportive of reform efforts, there also must be legislative solutions and funding to support and preserve foundational and specialty services inherently under the purview of the VA.

The good news is the VA reform and veterans' choice debate is not over. The chairs of both the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs committees are committed to tackling health care, caregiver, and infrastructure system reforms.

Diagnosed With Leukemia, This Officer Was One Year From Retirement

MOAA members will be participating in the association's annual Storming the Hill event April 18. One of the issues we'll bring to members of Congress is the fight for recognition for [Chapter 61 retirees](#). This is part of a series in which those medically retired servicemembers discuss their experiences.

Lt. Gary Robertson, USN (Ret), had served nearly 19 years in the Navy, first as an enlisted sailor then as an officer, when he collapsed in the passageway of an aircraft carrier in October 1998.

"I was diagnosed with a type of leukemia for which the only known cause was exposure to ionizing radiation," Robertson says. "I had served multiple tours on nuclear submarines."

He was advised to have a bone marrow transplant. "They would not do it on active duty," Robertson says. "If I waited to retire at 20 years, there was a very strong possibility that it would progress to the next stage, at which point my chances of survival went down to 20 percent. I retired at 19 years and six days with a 100 percent service-connected disability."

Being a Chapter 61 retiree with cancer has changed Robertson's life. "I've had a lot of side effects from leukemia," he says. "I've had both hips replaced. I have 50-percent lung capacity. I ended up with 50-percent bone capacity. I have chronic dry mouth and narrowing of my arteries."

Robertson adds, "My well-deserved retirement now funds my 100-percent disability. Had I done 20 years, I would get both. But I probably would not be here today."

MOAA supports ending the deduction of service-earned retirement pay to offset VA disability compensation for those servicemembers whose service-connected, non-combat related disability retirement under Chapter 61, 10 U.S.C. precluded them from serving at least 20 years. [Click here](#) to take action.



JAYHAWK CHAPTER MOAA



A membership meeting will be held **Tuesday, 15 May 2018**
at Lawrence Country Club

Dinner cost is \$24.00/meal.

The Program: Our program will be "Decline of the Village Pub in the Garden of England,"
presented by Tom Schmiedeler, Professor of Geography, Washburn University

Social Hour: 1800 hours Dinner: 1840 hours

The Menu: Chef's choice salad, rustic rolls with olive oil & Parmesan,
beer-brined pork loin with apple jack brandy sauce, rosemary whipped potatoes,
seasonal vegetables, Chef's choice dessert
Butternut squash ravioli for vegetarians

Send your reservation and check payable to Jayhawk Chapter MOAA
to arrive no later than Wednesday, **9 May** 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
KANSAS COUNCIL WEBSITE: www.kansasmooa.net
JAYHAWK CHAPTER WEBSITE:
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 15 May
Tuesday 17 July

Tuesday 18 September
Tuesday 13 November

2018 Kansas Council of Chapters Dates/Locations:

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