



Jayhawk Chapter MOAA Newsletter



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November Program:

Our speaker will be COL Paul Riley, Director of the Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance, Ft. Leavenworth. His office provides the CJCS the ability to assess and build the capacity of foreign security forces in order for them to assume security roles for the U.S.

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President's Comments. . .



Greetings fellow Jayhawk Chapter members

We are well into the fall season and all the signs are telling us the end of the year is right around the corner. Halloween is right on top of us, Thanksgiving is right around the corner, and Christmas is coming up rapidly.

Another key event occurring this time of the year is open season for making health care decisions. Those of you on Tricare or Tricare for Life will have from 12 November to 12 December to make important decisions in reference to Dental and Vision Insurance. Those of you on Tricare as well will have important decisions on options within the plan as well. There is more information elsewhere in this newsletter as well as in the November issue of the MOAA magazine. Study your options and choose wisely, most important choose timely. If missed, the options will not be available again until this time next year.

Voting season is upon us again as well and it is time to get out and vote. There are many important decisions for Kansans on the ballot during this year's election and we want to make sure that every member's voice is heard. The way to start that process is to vote, then actively communicate with the elected officials to insure we garner maximum support for those veterans' programs that are important to us.

November 11th is also an important milestone. The 100th anniversary of the end of World War I. Lawrence is in its second year of celebrating Veterans Day. Should be an exciting event this year and I encourage all who can to get out and participate.

I will be celebrating Veterans' Day this year at Ft Bliss Texas with the 1st Armor Division working to improve their capabilities and will miss all of you at the meeting on 13 November as well as Veterans' Day. Yes, I did vote early! We do have an exciting program this month with COL Paul Riley as the guest speaker. He promises to stimulate both thought and discussion at the meeting and I am sure it will be entertaining.

Happy Halloween, Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas, Happy New Year to all of you and I will be with you again next year in January.

George

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1 November 2018

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* Reservations should be sent
to John Halladay by
8 November



JAYHAWK CHAPTER NEWS

PERSONAL NEWS

From Mike Miller: I headed north on September 12 to visit my sister Cyndi and her husband Dave in Harpers Ferry, Iowa (very NE corner of Iowa). We played golf in Guttenberg, Iowa and Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin; had a boat trip on the Mississippi; and just kicked back and relaxed.

From Andy Bauch: In August, I was named the Staff Judge Advocate (SJA) for the 139th Airlift Wing in Saint Joseph, Missouri. I'm excited to be leading our legal team serving 1,100 airmen, and look forward to the new challenges. I've also been selected for promotion to Lt Col and hope to pin on the new rank sometime this winter.

From Dean Bevan: My play, "If Gold Rust," was recently performed at the Midwest Playwrights' Conference in Kansas City. I have also just been cast as Franklin Roosevelt in "Annie," to be performed at Theatre Lawrence this December.

From Herschel Stroud: We have been taking short touristy trips in Kansas and Missouri. Liberal, Kansas with the Mid-America Airplane Museum was great. Dodge City and the Boot Hill Museum has been updated and is A+! We were snowed in (horizontal white out) at Dodge City, so went to the new Boot Hill Casino, and came away with \$5, Jacque, \$35. Yeah! Wichita has an Air Museum at the old Airport Terminal - Beech, Cessna, Ryan, etc...

Weston, Missouri - and a convention of Street Organ Grinders - no monkeys, but a really great local Museum. Also went to Wallace County, and the city of Wallace, Kansas. Sharon Springs is the County Seat. About 1,500 people in the entire county. During the Indian Plains Wars, about 1866, the Battle of Beecher's Island took place, just into Colorado. The Comanche's won. The Indian Chief, Roman Nose, was killed. Off, in the future, to Springfield and Jefferson City, Missouri. Lots of interesting things to see close by.

From Mike Kelly: I've been busy working on the Veterans Day Parade set for Sunday November 11th and it should be a great event. We will be enjoying the sound of freedom with a 10:45 a.m. flyover of a KC-135R tanker aircraft from the Kansas Air National Guard's 190th Air Refueling Wing, numerous current and vintage military vehicles, the KU Marching Band, and more! Those walking participants should be in-place near 7th and Massachusetts at 10:30 a.m. for the opening ceremony and opening remarks from Rev. Verdell Taylor. Specific instructions on where to mount the trailers for those riding in the parade will be forthcoming but will likely be near the downtown Post Office on Vermont Street.

I have located a wonderful historical resource related to World War II Prisoners of War. The McDermott Library at the USAF Academy has a special collection of primary source materials from the Stalag Luft III POW camp. Former USAF Academy Superintendent Lieutenant General Albert P. Clark was a POW there from 1942-1945. Many of the items are his own handwritten notes regarding his POW experience. The movie *The Great Escape* was set at Stalag Luft III. You may contact the archivist there if you are working on a historical project or are merely curious. They have imaged many of the items and are willing to share those images with researchers.

From Gary Bjorge: Nancy and I went to Las Vegas the middle of October. Visited several different national monuments on the way out; spent three nights there (including a performance by an Elvis Presley impersonator), and saw three national parks on the way back. We had a great time; the weather cooperated; saw some snow, but generally the weather was in the 80's.

REMINDER: As noted in Mike Kelly's message above, the Lawrence Veterans' Day Parade will be held on the actual date of the 100th anniversary of the World War I armistice, which is **Sunday, 11 November.**



"Leadership Needed: We are in dire need of volunteers to assume leadership positions in our chapter! Please consider helping out by assuming a position as a Board Member or an officer, starting this next January.

If you are interested, please contact Mike Devlin -- email: devlinm344@gmail.com; home phone (785) 749-1755 soonest.

Thanks -- Jim Cooper, First Vice President and Treasurer."

**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.**



Army News *LTC Tracey Olson, USA*

Greetings Jayhawk Chapter!

The Jayhawk Battalion had a successful training summer; we've been in the full swing since fall semester started. This academic year, we are excited to celebrate the program's 100th anniversary.

This summer, 16 Cadets successfully completed and graduated from Cadet Summer Training Advanced Camp at Fort Knox, Kentucky. The caliber of training included basic Soldier skills testing, three weeks in the field and ended with a 12-mile timed foot march at the end. One Cadet also participated in Basic Camp, also held at Fort Knox. Basic camp focused on developing sophomores in basic soldiering tasks in preparation for their junior year and evaluation next summer at Advanced Camp.

Training brought cadets to all corners of the world, studying Russian language at San Diego State University (Project GO), attending Airborne and Air Assault school, and participating in Cadet Troop Leader Training (CTLT) in the US and South Korea. Cadets enjoyed the opportunity to shadow 2LTs and experience the full role and responsibilities of a platoon leader.

Fall semester has been busy for the Jayhawk Battalion. Last semester, the program won the bid for the athletic events parking contract. Each game, our Cadets and Cadre facilitate manning requirements at on-campus parking lots during home football and basketball games. This helps the Cadets earn money and pay/reduce cost of training events like the Army 10-Miler, military formals and military enrichment events.

We held our field training exercise at the Fraternal Order of Police in Lawrence, KS in late September. We focused on basic rifle marksmanship and tactical exercises to both familiarize and prepare our Cadets for future training at Fort Knox, KY.



We sent eight Cadets to our nation's capital to participate in the Army's 10-Miler on the October 7th. The KU Army ROTC team placed 20th out of 96 military academy and ROTC teams, improving from last year's 23rd place finish. While in Washington, D.C., Cadets had the opportunity to visit Senator Moran's office and tour the United States Capitol Building, the White House and Arlington National Cemetery.

Our Ranger Challenge team competed at Seven Oaks Ski Resort in Boone, IA. The grueling 24-hour competition included flipping tires and carrying water cans, logs and

simulated casualties...all uphill (hence the selection of a ski resort); in between each event, the teams were required to conduct 5-mile road marches with full gear. In total, the Cadets walked/marched over 40 miles during the 24-hour competition. We're extremely proud of both teams; and, we're happy to report that our 5-person team placed 2nd in their category.



This past weekend, the Jayhawk Battalion hosted the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge (GAFPB) competition. The GAFPB is a prized foreign military badge, which is authorized for all German troops and may be awarded to allied Soldiers. It is one of the few approved foreign awards that can be worn on U.S. military uniforms. Awarding the badge to an allied Soldier requires the presence and approval of a German liaison officer. SGM Markus Hausleitner, assigned to U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, Fort Leavenworth, KS, presided over the ceremony. Participants needed to complete six individual events: an 11x10 meter sprint, timed chin-up, 1,000-meter run, 100-meter swim, marksmanship test using the M9 pistol and a ruck march with a 33-pound load.

Next month, as we prepare to honor our Veterans, we will hold the Veteran's Day Vigil -- a continued tradition held over Veteran's Day weekend. All KU ROTC programs will post guards at the Campanile, Vietnam, and Korean Memorial, starting at 6pm on November 10. Guards will be posted for 24 hours.

Please join us at Salute to Service football game (vs. Iowa State) on November 3 and basketball game on November 12. At the football game, Cadets will swear the oath after halftime to show their commitment and desire to serve our nation. At the basketball game, our cadre will descend from the Allen Fieldhouse scoreboard and deliver the basketball to the game officials.

Our December commissioning ceremony is scheduled for December 15 at the Military Science Building.

To stay informed about activities of the Jayhawk Battalion, like us on Facebook or follow us on Instagram at KU Army ROTC.

LTC Tracey Olson
Professor of Military Science



Navy News

Capt Trenton Lennard, USN



Greeting From the Jayhawk Battalion!

The fall semester is always busy and this year is no exception. Our Midshipmen have participated in vigils, color guards, recruiting events, and inspections, while maintaining outstanding grades with heavy course-loads. Through all the requirements levied against them, the Jayhawk Battalion continued to perform at a high level and continuously conducted themselves with pride and professionalism. I am very proud of every single one of them!

Notably, a few of our Midshipmen had the honor of participating in the Color Guard detail for the September 11th Memorial candle light vigil organized by the University of Kansas. This event gave not only the midshipmen but the entire campus and community the opportunity to commemorate this significant day. This annual ceremony ensures that the events of September 11, 2001, will never be forgotten and that those who sacrificed their lives will always be remembered.



Midshipman color guard for the September 11th candle light memorial in front of the Campanile.

Happy Birthday to all the Sailors in the Jayhawk chapter of MOAA. The battalion celebrated the Navy's 243rd birthday

on 13 October with a Service Dress Blues inspection and a cake cutting ceremony. The inspection promoted good order and discipline within the battalion. During the cake cutting ceremony, we followed the time-honored tradition of symbolically passing down wisdom from the oldest to the youngest Sailor. This event helps the battalion build comradery while holding to tradition and celebrating the long success of America's Navy.

Last week Navy Service Training Command announced service assignments for our 1/C Midshipmen. It was a stressful month for the nine seniors as they awaited the results of which warfare community they would be assigned. Overall, the Jayhawks were given either their first or second choice of designator. We will be sending five midshipmen to aviation, three to surface warfare, and one to submarine warfare. Congratulations to these future warriors!

Before we break for Thanksgiving, we look forward to many upcoming service events; the Chancellor's Cup KU ROTC competition, Joint Service Ball, Salute to Service football game, and Veteran's Day remembrances. We are staying busy.

Thank you for your continued support of the Jayhawk Battalion!

Rock Chalk!

Capt Trenton Lennard



Air Force News

LtCol Nichole Phelan, USAF

Hello from Detachment 280, the Flying Jayhawks!

Twenty-five cadets and cadre participated in the Air Force Marathon at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio again this year. This is the third year in a row the detachment has sent a team. Fourteen cadets finished the full marathon and ten cadets finished the half marathon. We were extremely proud of the cadets for completing the race which many said was the hardest thing they've ever done. We are planning to run the race next year as well.

The Detachment color guard conducted the opening color guard ceremony and POW table at the Army's Command and General Staff College Air Force Heritage Ball in September. Air Force Vice Chief of Staff, General Stephen Wilson, hosted the event celebrating Air Force 71st birthday.

We hosted a Career Day on Thursday, 27 September. There was a strong turnout of Air Force officers from the Army's Command and General Staff College. The cadets had an opportunity to speak with officers representing 14 different career fields. The event concluded with a BBQ that allowed cadets to socialize with officers in a more informal environment. The cadets conducted a field leadership exercise with Kansas State University AFROTC Detachment 270 at the Fraternal Order of Police training area. This replicated an Air Expeditionary Force-type deployment and focused on the cultural challenges that Air Force officers face when working in foreign country. The cadets practiced key leader engagements, advising, urban operations and force protection objectives. Our thanks to the KU Naval and Army

ROTC programs for supporting us with equipment which made the training more realistic.

Coming Up:

The Joint Service Ball will be held on Friday, 26 October, at the DoubleTree Hotel convention center in Lawrence. This is a great event that focuses on the joint relationship between the services and enables the programs to recognize their graduating seniors.

Veterans Day activities are on the horizon. The cadets will continue supporting the 24-hour vigil of military monuments on campus from 11 – 12 November. The Veterans Day Run will begin at KU's Memorial Stadium on 11 November at 0900 and the Lawrence Veterans Day parade is at 1100. The cadets will also be in attendance at the Salute to Service Football Game on Saturday, 3 November as well.

Senior cadets are anxiously awaiting their career field selections and expect to receive that announcement in November.

We look forward to a strong finish to the Fall Semester and upcoming scholarship boards for our sophomore cadets.

Rock, Chalk!

Very Respectfully,

LtCol Nikki Phelan

Commander, Air Force ROTC Det 280

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, 30 August 2018:

Changes in the Annual Defense Bill You Haven't Heard Yet

There is more to the annual defense bill than pay increases and health care changes. Just because a policy change doesn't directly affect personal finance doesn't mean it should be ignored. There are always interesting nuances to the National Defense Authorization Act, and MOAA keeps track.

These provisions tend to affect more specific segments of the military community than the big name issues that make up the preponderance of our headlines. Nonetheless, they highlight the complexity and all-encompassing nature of the NDAA every year.

Here are a few interesting items in the recently signed law that you might not have caught yet.

1. Damaged protective equipment can now be kept as mementos. (Section 623)

Servicemembers love preserving symbols of their time in the military. This provision allows secretaries of military departments to award separating veterans with personal protective equipment (PPE) that was damaged during deployment. Of course, the PPE must be demilitarized prior to the award. PPE includes things such as eye and face protection, hard hats, special purpose shoes, and gloves, among other items.

2. New awards may be given to military dogs and their handlers. (Section 582)

Military dogs and their handlers are now eligible to receive one or more medals in recognition of valor or meritorious achievement. The secretary of each military department is authorized to create a new medal if desired, but may also use one currently in existence. Presentations will be made to the handlers on behalf of the working dogs.

3. Security clearance reviews ordered for personnel who commit sex assault, fraud. (Section 542)

Security clearances were a hot topic this year. This provision requires that the defense secretary expeditiously reinvestigate security clearance backgrounds for individuals convicted of sexual assault, sexual harassment, fraud, or other crimes.

Targeted individuals are flag officers and senior executive service personnel who have since separated from DoD.

MOAA Gets the Answers to TRICARE's Most Frequently Asked Questions

Recently, MOAA joined Patrick Grady, the head of the TRICARE program, to hold a second Facebook Live Town Hall event at the Defense Health Agency (DHA). The town hall's focus was on upcoming changes to TRICARE health plans and organizational changes to DHA. The whole event can be viewed below.

The recent town hall generated a lively online discussion. Here are the top questions on the minds of beneficiaries:

The new dental and vision plans - who, what, where, and when?

Retirees and their family members are eligible to enroll in one of the FEDVIP dental and/or vision plans. Members of the retired reserve, non-active Medal of Honor recipients, and survivors also are eligible to enroll in FEDVIP. For the first time, most active duty family members will be eligible for vision coverage through FEDVIP. If eligible, they may enroll in a plan for self-only, self-plus-one, or self and family coverage. To be eligible for vision coverage, the individual must be enrolled in a TRICARE health plan; this includes TRICARE for Life (TFL).

The current TRICARE Retiree Dental Plan (TRDP) will end Dec. 31, 2018. TRDP members currently using Delta Dental may enroll during the 2018 federal benefits open season (Nov. 12 to Dec. 10) in their choice of FEDVIP dental plans. **TRDP enrollees must take action to enroll in a FEDVIP plan to receive dental benefits starting Jan. 1, 2019. When TRDP ends, there will be no automatic enrollment in FEDVIP.**

For the latest information, we recommend visiting TRICARE.benefeds.com. Please check back frequently; information such as the established 2019 costs will be updated as it becomes available sometime this fall. Beneficiaries also can sign up to receive alerts when new information is added to the site.

With all of the changes to the TRICARE program, will TFL be affected?

No. Generally, none of the changes to the TRICARE program will affect those beneficiaries enrolled in TRICARE for Life.

Senate Approves Defense Spending Bill, But Will It Get Derailed?

Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) said in a statement, "as ever, our obligation to this all-volunteer force is to provide adequate training, weaponry, and skills so that Americans always prevail on the battlefield."

[RELATED READING: [President Trump signs NDAA into law at Fort Drum](#)]

The Senate bill, which approved \$674.9 billion in discretionary defense spending, will now be reconciled with the House version of the FY2019 defense spending legislation in conference when the House returns in September.

The House passed their defense spending bill, on June 28, by a vote of 359-49, approving \$674.6 billion in discretionary spending for defense.

MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 06 September 2018:

Midterm Elections Could Bring a Big Shift in Power: Analysis

Elections hold a certain electricity for MOAA. Both midterm and general elections pose strategic challenges and opportunities. While the nation loses experienced lawmakers, many of whom understand the unique commitment and challenges that come with military service, our association finds new champions for our legislative concerns.

Regardless of partisan power, one thing is certain: There will be big changes in store for the military and veteran communities. Those changes could mean new health care fees, changes to pay raises, or overhauls to other earned benefits.

The potential shift in power also means MOAA - and its members - must be ready to continue educating legislators and staff, to maintain a base of support, so we can answer when an opportunity to advance our legislative agenda knocks.

MOAA's government relations team is here to monitor our allies and opposition on Capitol Hill. We recognize being a veteran doesn't automatically make a legislator an ally. Some of our biggest antagonists over the years have been veterans; conversely, some of the biggest supporters of MOAA's issues have never worn a uniform. MOAA does not take any legislative relationship for granted. We know starting and nurturing relationships on all sides requires diligence, vigilance, and teamwork from you.

With that in mind, let's take a look at what we know right now.

Potential for Change

Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC)

The death of Sen. John McCain, chair of SASC, will be felt profoundly. He served on SASC for 31 years. MOAA honored McCain with its Col. Arthur T. Marix Award in 2004.

John Kyl, a former senator, has been chosen to fill McCain's seat. Kyl served in the House from 1987 to 1995 and in the Senate from 1995 to 2013. While in the House, he served on the Armed Services Committee.

Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee (SVAC)

Three senators on SVAC face tough reelections: Ranking Member Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.), Sen. Dean Heller (R-Nev.), and Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.). Tester was instrumental in crafting legislation allowing veterans to receive VA-funded health care in the private sector,

expanding caregiver support programs, and reforming the VA appeals process - all of which MOAA supports.

Veterans

The Senate will lose two veterans in addition to McCain: Former Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) has left and now serves as U.S. Attorney General, and Thad Cochran (R-Miss.) resigned in April, citing health concerns. The three senators take with them a combined 96 years of policy expertise.

The House

Although their party controls the majority of all three branches of government, at least eight GOP chairs of the House's 20 committees will retire this cycle, including House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wisc.). Six of the eight departing GOP committee leaders would be forced out of their roles in 2019 even if they weren't retiring because the House Republican caucus has rules limiting committee leaders' terms to give younger members a chance to ascend the leadership ranks. Losing a committee gavel means giving up a lot of power, which might be one reason 75 percent of these leaders are retiring.

Potential for Change

House Armed Services Committee (HASC)

HASC will lose at least twelve members as they retire, seek other office, lost reelection, or resigned from office. If Democrats flip the House in November, Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Texas), current chair of HASC, would hand off his role. Thornberry has been one of MOAA's strongest supporters in trying to eliminate the widows tax on military survivors. He was awarded the Col. Arthur T. Marix Congressional Leadership Award in 2016.

Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.), currently the ranking member on the committee, would be the presumptive chair.

The Military Personnel Subcommittee, which oversees military pay and health care, will lose three of its five Democratic members to retirement; Republican Martha McSally, a 2018 MOAA Arthur T. Marix Award winner, is running for Senate.

House Veterans Affairs' Committee (HVAC)

There will be at least three new members of the HVAC: Ranking Member Tim Walz (D-Minn.) is leaving Congress to run for governor, Rep. Beto O'Rourke (D-Texas) is running for Senate, and Rep. Elizabeth Esty (D-Conn.) is retiring.

Walz, the highest-ranking enlisted member to serve in Congress, was instrumental in passing the Forever GI Bill. He was the 2014 recipient of MOAA's Col. Arthur T. Marix Congressional Leadership Award.

Veterans

In total, 18 veterans will have left the House in 2018: nine are retiring, five have resigned, and four are running for other office. Of the five members who resigned, three left to take jobs in the administration, and two left Congress amid allegations of misconduct.

The departures mark a continuing trend of fewer veterans in Congress. While military service should not be a prerequisite for elected office, MOAA has seen that having a working knowledge of the sacrifices of service often leads to more productive dialogue and better outcomes.

"It makes us more careful about going to war," said Rep. Seth Moulton (D-Mass.), via email. "And that's supported by the statistics. It's also supported by my own experience in Congress. If you look at the debate over the authorization for the use of military force in Syria, it's consistently veterans on the Armed Services Committee who speak up and say, 'This is the responsibility of Congress. We need to have this

debate before we decide to send or continue sending our young men and women into harm's way."

Washington Insiders Warn of Another Looming Continuing Resolution: MOAA Members Please Act Now

[RELATED READING: [Senate approves Defense Spending Bill, But Will It Get Derailed](#)]

Defense leaders have been very vocal over the past several years - our services have suffered in terms of readiness, training, and troop support because of successive continuing resolutions passed by Congress instead of full defense spending bills. It is time to appropriate the funds to match the bi-partisan, bicameral defense authorizations signed into law.

Survey: 90 Percent of Vets Support Tightening Arlington National Cemetery Burial Eligibility

Roughly 23 years remain until Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) runs out of space for new burials. Thus, hundreds of thousands believe eligibility rules for burial at the cemetery should be tighter. The results of a several-month-long survey suggest two key themes for public perspective on the capacity issue at ANC:

- * The cemetery should remain open for new burials for another century, and beyond.
- * Only those who have given the ultimate sacrifice or earned a particular award of high honor should have the right to be buried there.

The survey was open to anyone who wished to take it, military and civilian alike. It was advertised on the ANC webpage, sent out to all .mil email addresses, and distributed by military and veterans' groups like MOAA.

MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 13 September 2018: Blue Water Navy Veterans Face Setback From the VA

A recent letter from Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert Wilkie to the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee marked the latest VA effort to scuttle proposed legislation that would extend benefits available to Blue Water Navy veterans of the Vietnam War.

RELATED READING:

Wilkie requested that senators put a hold on the legislation until an ongoing VA study comparing the health of Vietnam War veterans with those of a similar age who did not deploy, [Stars and Stripes reported](#). That report is set to be published in late 2019.

Is Sentiment Shifting on Arlington National Cemetery Eligibility?

For years now, the capacity issue at Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) has been a hot topic. MOAA members voiced their opinions a couple of years ago, and have consistently shown a desire to keep burial eligibility as close to its current standards as possible.

But [the latest survey conducted by the Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery](#) casts doubt on MOAA's initial conclusions. Let's take a closer look at where MOAA members stand compared with the broader population, as indicated by the survey results.

Both surveys were open to the general public, and most respondents to both surveys were retirees. The results yielded some interesting takeaways:

If you follow MOAA, you've likely kept up with the ANC capacity discussion as it has developed. Our push to keep retirees eligible in some fashion is showing some success, but eligibility is going to change due largely to the fiscal 2019 National Defense Authorization Act.

With only a few opportunities remaining to convey MOAA's members' interest in the remaining plots at ANC, your opinion matters. Email us at legis@moaa.org with your latest thoughts on the subject in light of the similarities and differences in opinions shown by the survey results.

VA Begins New Community Care Program

Those of us who use the VA health care system know all too well how challenging it can be to schedule that care, but when it comes to getting care outside the VA in the local community, the process can be downright confusing and frustrating.

In an effort to streamline and improve access to health care, MOAA and other veteran organizations, Congress, VA, and the White House, rallied behind the [VA MISSION Act](#) to get the bill signed into law, making it easier for veterans to get care when and where they need it-whether within the walls of the VA health system or in their community.

VA is in the beginning stages of rolling out [information to veterans](#) on how they can access community care, as well as a [newsletter](#) providers and others can subscribe to in order to stay current on the new VA community care program as it is implemented.

MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 20 September 2018: Congress Clears Way to Fund Largest VA Spending Bill in History

These last few weeks Congress has feverishly worked to pass a number of spending bills to ensure the federal government is funded when the new fiscal year starts Oct. 1. Among a series of spending measures sent to President Trump last week was the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) appropriations. The VA will receive its full budget for FY 2019 and partial advance funding for FY 2020 to assure continuity of veterans' health and disability, education, survivors, memorial and other benefit payments between fiscal years.

The appropriations bill is the VA's largest spending bill in history, providing more than \$197 billion for health and benefits programs-over \$86 billion in discretionary (mostly medical-related programs) and over \$110 billion in mandatory benefit payments.

The veterans spending bill was part of a larger package of bills providing funding to three other federal agencies, defense for military construction, water and energy, and the legislative branch. The minibus appropriations package represents the first time in over 10 years Congress has sent more than one spending bill to the president before the end of the fiscal year.

VSOs Push Back Against Blue Water Navy Comments

[READ THE LETTER: [The Military Coalition's Message to Senate Veterans' Affairs](#)]

Wilkie's letter "is inaccurate and misstates key facts," the Coalition wrote. "You deserve to be fully informed and the Veterans deserve to be heard on this important matter."

Among Wilkie's claims was a comment this measure would create a backlog and jeopardize gains made to control the VA's workload.

"This argument is akin to the Secretary positing that taking care of elderly, disabled veterans would be too much work, so it would be helpful to VA if Congress would instead continue to deny these veterans the benefits," the letter reads. "This rationale is an illegitimate basis upon which to oppose this, or any, veteran benefit legislation."

The Military Coalition also took issue with Wilkie's claims that "disabled veterans would be negatively and disproportionately impacted by modified funding fees for VA-guaranteed home loans."

"This is partly false and totally misleading because it fails to make clear that all disabled veterans (not only those who

are rated 'permanent and total') are exempt from fees for loans below the "jumbo loan" limit, currently ranging between \$453,100 and \$679,650 depending upon the geographic area," the Coalition stated. "VA failed to clarify the types of VA Home Loans provided, which would more accurately inform the impact. ... Congress should not accept VA's speculative and unsupported assertion."

The letter also indicates Wilkie's \$5.5 billion cost estimate for the legislation is dramatically high. The coalition said Congress should rely on the Congressional Budget Office, which can obtain the estimated number of people eligible for the benefit.

"It is undisputed that these veterans are suffering and have suffered for decades, with significant strain and sacrifice by their caregivers," according to the letter. "There is no more time to waste."

MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 27 September 2018:

The Outlook for TRICARE Fees in 2019

This week, MOAA got a glimpse at what beneficiaries might expect from next year's out-of-pocket TRICARE costs. This is important information as you prepare for open season enrollment, coming up Nov. 12 through Dec. 10, 2018.

The good news is, the majority of existing TRICARE Prime and Select fees will not go up; the very few that do will be adjusted based on the retiree COLA ([projected to be 2.8 percent](#) as of August 2018). TRICARE for Life is not at all affected.

[Related: [Open Season for New TRICARE Dental Coverage Is Around the Corner](#)]

The not-so-good news is, the current fee structure largely will remain in place. For example, TRICARE group A retirees will continue to pay \$41 for specialty appointments and \$29 for primary care appointments. These rates will be formally established in October.

Most beneficiaries will recall the TRICARE fee structure changed Jan. 1, 2018, to require much higher cost shares. MOAA will maintain pressure on the Defense Health Agency to recognize the impact these fee increases have had on beneficiaries - especially those who require specialty care such as physical therapy or mental health care.

Other TRICARE 2019 Rates have been released and are effective Jan. 1, 2019, with the exception of the Continued Health Care Benefit Program (CHCBP), which starts Oct. 1, 2018:

TRICARE Young Adult (TYA) Monthly Premiums:

TYA Prime: \$358 (was \$324)

TYA Select: \$214 (was \$225)

TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) Monthly Premiums:

TRS member-Only: \$42.83 (was \$46.09)

TRS member and family: \$218 (was \$221.38)

TRICARE Retired Reserve (TRR) Monthly Premiums:

TRR member-only: \$451.51 (was \$431.35)

TRR member and family: \$1,083.40 (was \$1,038.31)

CHCBP Quarterly Premiums:

Individual coverage: \$1,453 (was \$1,425)

Family coverage: \$3,273 (was \$3,210)

Blue Water Navy Supporters Target VA Secretary's Hard Line

Wilkie noted again that the [latest review of available scientific evidence by the Institute of Medicine \(IOM\), from 2011](#), concluded exposure of shipboard personnel to defoliants sprayed over Vietnam "cannot reasonably be determined."

MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 04 October 2018:

TRICARE Recoups \$280 Million So Far From Compound Drug Scams

TRICARE, the health insurance program for military personnel and retirees and their families, recognized by 2015

that it had become the target of corrupt pharmacists, doctors, and marketers peddling wildly overpriced compound drugs, mostly ointments and creams touted to ease joint pain or fade scars.

By the time TRICARE officials imposed a new method to flag and deny coverage of compound drug prescriptions favored by scammers, the military pharmacy program had been bilked out of an estimated \$1.5 billion.

President Trump Signs Defense Spending Bill That Includes 2.6 Percent Military Pay Raise

President Donald Trump signed spending legislation Friday afternoon that will fund the Defense Department through FY 2019 and prevent a government shutdown.

The bill includes nearly \$675 billion in military spending and will pay for a FY 2019 military pay raise of 2.6 percent, one of several MOAA priorities met by the new law; others include language that would [provide death gratuities](#) to the families of fallen servicemembers in the event of a future federal shutdown, and would provide \$34.4 billion for defense health requirements.

The raise is the largest servicemembers have received since 2010.

The president signed separate legislation Sept. 21 [that funded the VA](#), along with other federal agencies.

Three Takeaways from Wilkie's First 'State of VA' Session

Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert Wilkie affirmed his promise to transform the department and improve access to care in his first State of VA Community Town Hall event since taking over at the VA in July.

Wilkie, who spoke for about 30 minutes during Thursday afternoon's online presentation, touted ways the VA is building capacity and partnership and advancing access to health care. He appeared alongside department managers who responded to questions from veterans.

Three of the major issues covered by Wilkie and the top-level managers during the three-hour online session:

VA MISSION Act

The VA MISSION Act, with the accompanying appropriations recently signed into law, make up [the largest spending bill in the department's history](#), and will streamline veteran options to receive private-sector care, Wilkie said.

"This will fundamentally transform the VA system ... give veterans and their providers more choice," Wilkie said. "This helps us serve veterans better and helps veterans get the right care at the right time."

It will also expand comprehensive caregiver services and provide money to modernize medical facilities.

Dr. Richard Stone, executive in charge of the Veterans Health Administration, touted the act's authority to expand [caregiver benefits](#) to veterans of all eras, not just post-9/11 veterans.

GI Bill

Paul Lawrence, VA's undersecretary for benefits, acknowledged there are still issues with housing stipends paid under the GI Bill, but said they should be resolved within the next few months.

Customer Service

Throughout his June nomination hearing, Wilkie promised to reform the VA - starting with customer service. During Thursday's session, he said the VA has already taken steps to improve customer service, including on-the-spot training, reworking phone greetings, and reviewing results from surveys.

"We create a positive and consistent emotional experience that is the heart of what we do," Wilkie said.

MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 11 October 2018: **VA Implements Mandatory Overtime to Reduce Huge GI Bill Delay**

This article by Jim Absher originally appeared on *Military.com*, the premier resource for the military and veteran community.

The VA is experiencing a larger than usual backlog of claims for veterans and dependents who are going back to school and using the GI Bill to pay for their education.

Most colleges began in August or September, but many veterans have yet to receive any payment of their housing allowance or their book stipend. Many veterans are reporting hardships with two months of housing payments being overdue, while landlords clamor for late payments.

Veterans are also reporting that schools are becoming increasingly impatient in waiting for tuition to be paid, and sending them past-due notices for the unpaid tuition.

GI Bill Backlog Is Larger Than Usual

As of Sept. 28, there were over 226,000 veterans and their family members awaiting payments and decisions on their claims. This represents a 56.5 percent increase in pending workload as compared to this time last year.

Mandatory Overtime for VA Workers

To solve the problem, VA says that all GI Bill processors at their three Regional Processing Offices will begin mandatory overtime through Nov. 30. Each employee will be required to work a minimum of 20 hours of overtime per month.

[Other articles by Military.com:](#)

[Sailors Who Can't Deploy Will Face Administrative Separation](#)

[Commissary Launches First Part of Website Upgrade](#)
[VA Secretary Tours Veterans Clinics Hit by Hurricane Florence](#)

MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 18 October 2018: **Military Pay Raise**

By law, the annual military pay raise is tied to the increase in private sector wage growth. For 2020, it's projected to be the [largest in a decade](#). The actual number will be announced at the end of October. To help pay for repairs, Congress or the administration may request a cap in military pay.

MOAA fought for years to eliminate a 13.5 percent wage gap. Reinstating pay caps could renew a practice that inevitably leads to a recruiting and retention problem for the services, something the military certainly doesn't need as the Army missed its recruitment numbers for the first time since 2005.

MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 25 October 2018: **MOAA President Outlines 3 Key Recommendations for the Future of Arlington Cemetery**

Preserving promised burial eligibility for military retirees should be key to the future of Arlington National Cemetery, MOAA's president and CEO wrote to a committee charged with advising on the site's strategic plan.

MOAA was one of a group of veterans organizations whose input was requested by committee officials. The 2019 National Defense Authorization Act requires the secretary of the Army to establish revised eligibility criteria - rules that must allow the cemetery to remain active "well into the future" - by Sept. 30, 2019.

[RELATED: Is Sentiment Shifting on Arlington National Cemetery Eligibility?]

The letter outlines MOAA's request that these rules maintain eligibility for the current retiree population, with an exception for "reserving a set number of plots for specific honorees, such as those killed in action or those who receive a Medal of Honor."

"[T]he expectation and earned right to be laid to rest at Arlington for the currently eligible population should not be exchanged for an active duty servicemember who dies from a noncombat-related incident many decades in the future," Atkins wrote.

Read excerpts from the full letter below, and email MOAA at legis@moaa.org with your thoughts.

October 19, 2018

Dear Advisory Committee Members,

On behalf of the 350,000 members of MOAA, thank you for the work you are doing on behalf of our military and veterans and their families. The deliberative and collaborative process by which you have studied the time and space constraints at Arlington National Cemetery is sincerely appreciated.

Much of the capacity talks have revolved around "preserving the promise" of Arlington National Cemetery. To us, preserving the promise of the cemetery is resolving to allow those in the currently eligible population with expectations of burial at Arlington to execute their end-of-life plans. In our view, no promise exists that the cemetery will remain open for new burials forever. Nor is there a promise that future servicemembers, even retirees, will have the option for burial there. "Preserving the promise" also means preserving the dignified setting, aesthetics, and history of the cemetery. While many other national cemeteries across the nation serve a similar purpose in honoring those who served, Arlington has a special connotation.

MOAA has several recommendations:

- * Avoid restricting eligibility for the military retiree population, other than reserving a set number of plots for specific honorees, such as those killed in action or those who receive a Medal of Honor;
- * Urge Congress to appropriate funds for acquisition and development of adjacent land, including completion of the Southern Expansion project currently underway; and
- * Seek funds for the study and eventual acquisition of noncontiguous land to be used as an Arlington annex.

Further, if at the end of your deliberations, eligibility restrictions are deemed desirable or necessary, MOAA suggests there should at a minimum be a reinstatement of a reservation system to allow those who already have plans a chance to have their wishes honored.

Congress might be focused on the eligibility side of the equation, but expansion should not be dismissed. We believe expansion of the cemetery grounds, contiguously or not, is a viable path forward and is the preferred method of extending the life of the cemetery.

I welcome any opportunities to further contribute to your deliberations.

Sincerely,
Dana T. Atkins
President and CEO

Time's Almost Up: How Stateside Servicemembers, Families Can (Still) Vote Absentee

Planning to mail in an absentee ballot for the 2018 election? It's time to stop planning and start doing.

While deadlines vary by state, Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) officials recommend that all stateside servicemembers and their families have their ballots in the mail by Friday to ensure their votes are counted. If you

requested a ballot from your home jurisdiction and never received it, [visit the FVAP website](#) to download a copy of the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB).

FVAP also maintains [ballot deadline information for each state](#). Most states require ballots to arrive by Election Day to be counted, though some require the ballot to be postmarked by that date and arrive within a set number of days after the election.

[RELATED: [Military Spouses Face Absentee Voting Obstacles](#)]

“The MOAA Military Voting Survey was one of several [MOAA Foundation](#) programs helping military and veteran families of all ranks maintain a quality of life they’ve earned through their service,” said Col. Mike Turner, USAF (Ret), MOAA Vice President of Development.

The foundation, which depends on donations from MOAA members, will begin its annual campaign on Giving Tuesday (Nov. 27). Learn more, or donate, [here](#).

Student Veterans Win, Too, as Court Unchains Obama Loan Protection

Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of student veterans, despite having robust GI Bill education benefits, contend they were deceived into racking up federal loan debt through abusive practices of certain for-profit colleges.

On Tuesday, these students, along with thousands of non-veterans, gained an easier path to loan forgiveness from a federal court ruling in Washington, D.C.

U.S. District Judge Randolph D. Moss dismissed legal arguments from an association of for-profit colleges, which succeeded for more than a year to block Obama administration rules to bring financial relief to defrauded student borrowers and to strengthen federal protections against deceptive school practices.

The Trump administration’s Department of Education also had fought the Obama reforms until a month ago when the same judge rejected legal arguments from Education Secretary Betsy DeVos and Trump administration attorneys.

[RELATED: [MOAA Educational Assistance](#)]

In that case, two student-borrowers and a coalition of 19 states and the District of Columbia filed separate lawsuits to invalidate the department’s stay order on Obama loan rules, which had been set to take effect in July 2017. Judge Moss called the Trump team’s effort to protect for-profit schools and avoid billions of dollars in loan forgiveness for borrowers “arbitrary and capricious.”

Together, the dual rulings force DeVos, who is still critical of the Obama rules, to implement them even as her department prepares more stringent regulations. Given the statutory schedule for rulemaking, the DeVos rules can’t take effect before July 2020, the department confirmed. That creates a window for borrowers with loan debt tied to fraudulent or deceptive schools to apply for relief under more liberal rules in effect from the Oct. 16 court decision.

The department likely must update information on filing borrower defense claims. [Here’s what’s available now](#).

Obama officials released their final regulations in November 2016. They were to take effect the following July, but the California Association of Postsecondary Schools filed a lawsuit to block them. A supportive DeVos quickly announced that she would block the Obama rules and prepare new ones to reflect concerns of for-profit schools and to protect taxpayers from automatic forgiveness of billions of dollars in federal student loans associated with failed for-profit colleges.

[RELATED: [Finding Scholarships as a College Student](#)]

“Certainly, many of those veterans will be eligible,” he said. “How many have applied [already], I don’t know.”

The new Education Department rules provide additional protections. One key feature of the Obama rules will allow certain borrower defense applicants not only to have loan balances forgiven but be reimbursed for loan amounts already paid. That might be relevant for someone like former Marine Sgt. Jonathan Ngowaki, who enrolled in DeVry University in 2010 seeking a business degree. Ngowaki said he assumed his Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit would cover all costs, so he resisted a push from DeVry’s financial aid office to complete a financial aid application. Finally, he relented when told it was a requirement for enrollment.

By his third semester he got a lender notice, and realized he was \$15,000 in debt with direct federal student loans. The money made life easier, but he didn’t need it for education costs, Ngowaki said, and ordered the loan arrangement stopped.

Ngowaki’s theory is that DeVry wasn’t confident, as the Post-9/11 GI Bill began, whether student payments would arrive on schedule. Perhaps to ensure steady cash flow, it pushed student veterans into federal loans. DeVry in time helped Ngowaki with some debt, he said, but most of the \$15,000 he repaid himself.

Whether and how the new regulations might deliver more loan relief to a veteran like Ngowaki is still unclear, Ochinko said.

Many student veterans end up needing loans because they haven’t served long enough on active duty to qualify for full Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits. The loans become bad investments if for-profit schools close or don’t provide promised degrees or transferable credits or if employers don’t view the degrees as desirable.

One attorney for student plaintiffs who helped unleash the Obama rules, Adam R. Pulver, said an Obama change resisted by for-profit schools bans them from requiring students to accept arbitration in settling all complaints.

“It’s been pretty much exclusive to for-profit schools that to enroll you have to sign an agreement to arbitrate all disputes,” and the agreements often state students “can’t file a class action lawsuit,” said Ochinko. “The problems of for-profit schools would have come to light a lot sooner, had people been able to sue.”

Another key feature of the Obama rules would require for-profit schools facing financial risk to show a letter of credit and to make cash deposits with the Education Department as they set off various financial responsibility alarms, so taxpayers are not as deeply exposed by loan claims when for-profit schools fail.

***IF YOU WANT TO FEEL RICH,
JUST COUNT ALL OF THE THINGS MONEY CAN’T BUY!***



JAYHAWK CHAPTER MOAA



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

Dinner cost is \$24.00/meal.

The Program: Our speaker will be COL Paul Riley, Director of the Joint Center for
International Security Force Assistance, Ft. Leavenworth

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

The Menu: Rustic rolls; Salad – baby arugula with sliced peppadew peppers, feta, Kalamata olives
tossed in chimichurri vinaigrette; Entrée – rustic red sauce with sliced Italian sausage over
Cavatappi pasta with two bread sticks & shredded Parmesan; Dessert – tiramisu
There will be a vegetarian option available.

Send your reservation and check payable to Jayhawk Chapter MOAA
to arrive no later than Wednesday, **07 November 2018 to:**
COL John Halladay, 2403 Manchester Road, Lawrence, KS 66049-1646
(this applies only to the November meeting)

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 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
c/o COL John Halladay, 2403 Manchester Road, Lawrence, KS 66049-1646

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 2019 Meeting Schedule:

Tuesday	15 January	Tuesday 16	July
Tuesday	19 March	Tuesday 17	September
Tuesday	21 May	Tuesday 19	November

2019 Kansas Council of Chapters Dates/Locations:

23 February	Wichita Chapter
27 April	Flint Hills Chapter (Kansas National Guard annual meeting)
10 August	Jayhawk Chapter
26 October	Santa Fe Trail Chapter



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