



Jayhawk Chapter MOAA Newsletter



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May Program:

Our speaker will be Dr. Stephanie Davis
of the Topeka VA Suicide Prevention Office

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President's Comments. . .

I trust you're all enjoying our great Spring after the long Winter.

Every April MOAA representatives from the various state Councils "Storm the Hill" in Washington, DC, visiting with our elected representatives. This year our own RADM Ed Phillips, USN (Ret), the current Kansas State Council President, took part in this effort and met with the Kansas representatives and senators and their staffs. Watch for the afteraction reports in the MOAA magazine, our newsletter, and other official MOAA communication channels.

On Monday, May 20th the three ROTC units at KU will hold their joint commissioning ceremony at the Kansas Union ballroom. The finest young men and women will be starting exciting careers which are vital to our Nation. If you have the time, stop by and watch what is a truly inspirational ceremony.

I look forward to seeing you at our dinner meeting on Tuesday evening, May 21st, at the Lawrence Country Club. We'll hear from Dr. Stephanie Davis of the Topeka VA Suicide Prevention Office. Suicide Prevention is a major, front-line issue with both active duty military and veterans, so this is an extremely important issue for us to hear about and discuss.

Memorial Day is Monday, May 27th, and we'll again this year put out flags on the gravesites of veterans at city cemeteries. If you're interested in joining us please contact myself or George Pogge or Mike Miller.

Coop



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* Reservations should be sent
to Jim Cooper by
15 May 2019



JAYHAWK CHAPTER NEWS

CHAPTER DUES (\$20.00) were due in January. If you haven't paid already, IT IS URGENT THAT YOU send your check to CAPT (Ret) Jim Cooper, 5216 Brown Lane, Lawrence, KS 66049-5112 OTHERWISE YOU WILL NOT BE INCLUDED IN THE DIRECTORY

The Jayhawk Chapter Directory is scheduled for distribution at the upcoming May Chapter meeting. If you want a new/different picture or if any information has changed, PLEASE LET US KNOW immediately.

PERSONAL NEWS

From Charles Heller: We were asked to be the keynote presenters by the Medford Historical Society. (I spoke and Michelle handled the slides.) The subject was about my biography of a Medford businessman who was the major financial backer of John Brown of Harper's Ferry fame and the recruiter of the famous first Northern African-American Civil War regiment, the 54th Massachusetts (seen in the 1989 movie "Glory") and 10 other Black regiments, not to also mention his work on the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments to the US Constitution. You can see my Medford interview prior to my speaking engagement at www.medfordtv.org under "WatchMCM."

From Mike Kelly: Georgiana's mom, Dorothy Beverly, passed away at age 93 on March 27th. Dorothy lived a long life of purpose and devotion to her family. During WW II, while a student at KU, Dorothy worked in the summers at the Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant near DeSoto as part of the war effort. Her professional life was spent raising her family and as an occupational therapist for the Menninger Clinic and other agencies serving citizens with significant challenges. We miss her love and consistently good advice.

Otherwise, we are in the early planning for our summer vacation and landscape maintenance around our house.



Army News LTC Tracey Olson, USA

Greetings Jayhawk Chapter!

It's been a busy semester for the Jayhawk Army ROTC. Earlier in March, we conducted our Joint Field Training Exercise (FTX) with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln at Fort Riley, KS. Over the 3-day FTX, our Cadets rotated leadership positions as they conducted squad-level building to platoon-level operations training. During range operations, they fired M4 weapons. Our freshmen and sophomore Cadets negotiated the confidence course and rappel tower; and they had the opportunity to experience simulator training. Thanks to the



KSARNG aviation unit for flying our Cadets to Fort Riley for the Joint FTX.

We hosted the 25th Annual Ranger Buddy Challenge at Rim Rock Farms. This year, over 350 competitors from 42

different ROTC programs competed. I'm pleased to report that KU Army ROTC took home the "Best Battalion" Award; this would make it three years in a row!

Lastly, we celebrate our 100th Anniversary with a Military Ball on Friday, April 26 at 5:30pm at Abe and Jake's Landing in Lawrence, KS. Our guest speaker is MG John R. Evans, Jr., the Commanding General for US Army Cadet Command and Fort Knox, KY. We hope you can join us to celebrate this milestone.



Rock Chalk Jayhawk! ALL IN!

*LTC Tracey Olson
Professor of Military Science*



Navy News *Capt Trenton Lennard, USN*



Greeting From the Jayhawk Battalion!

This has been a busy spring for the NROTC Battalion. Our Midshipmen have been tested mentally and physically over the past few months as they continue to develop as leaders in the Naval Service. Less than a month stands between our 1/C Midshipmen and their coveted ENS/2LT gold bars. It is a great time to be associated with the Jayhawk Battalion and I stand in awe of the hard work of my active duty and civilian staff in support of these young men and women.

March began with a trip to the University of Colorado Drill Competition. After months of practice (in addition to their normal grueling schedules) the Jayhawk Battalion earned a third-place overall finish out of 11 units to include CU, UNL, Ohio State, OU, Texas and many more.

For individual events, the rifle team took first place, the knowledge team took second, the platoon drill team took third, and the color guard took fourth. Additionally, MIDN Garton and MIDN McAlexander were recognized for their drill capabilities during an individual drill competition. The event gave the KU midshipmen a great opportunity to meet people from other universities and build camaraderie within the unit.



The squad drill team performs the "inspection arms" movement at the Univ. of Colorado-Boulder Drill Meet.

Last month a small group of Midshipmen traveled with the KU Marine Officer Instructor to the University of Michigan for the annual Women in Naval Service Symposium. With over 250 Midshipmen in attendance, female officers from every officer community spoke of their leadership experiences in the fleet and gave advice on optimal performance in the Navy and Marine Corps. The night concluded with a formal dinner and guest speaker Sarah "Diamond" Rhodes, the current air director at Amazon and a former F/A-18F Navy fighter pilot.



former F/A-18F Navy fighter pilot.

In an effort to broaden the horizons of our midshipmen, we brought in many guest lecturers during our Naval Science Labs over the semester. LTC Tom Grey, USA retired, joined us to talk about the Space Operations sector of the U.S. military. CDR Jeffery Lavery briefed the students about the Explosive Ordnance Disposal and special warfare communities and proctored an optional Physical Screening Test. LT Dan Ballance provided some insight to the Information Officer Corps. CDR Neil Krueger and LT Ian Bablewski visited from an aircraft carrier to talk about the nuclear option of the Surface Warfare community and LCDR "Simple Jack" Nelson visited with the aviation-interested students about the advancements in the helicopter communities in the Navy. Although we are a significant distance from the fleet, we are thankful for the high quality officers that travel to Lawrence to meet with our Midshipmen.

As we enter the final few weeks of classes, the Jayhawk Battalion is working hard to prepare for summer cruises and final exams. We will be sending underclass Midshipmen to both coasts and everywhere in between to take part in Sea Trials, Surface Cruises, Aviation Cruises, Expeditionary Cruises, Submarine Cruises, CORTRAMID and Marine OCS. We will also be commissioning nine new officers into the Naval Service on 20 MAY. Feel free to come by the KU Union and congratulate these future warriors.

I would like to publically thank two members of my staff who will be departing over the summer. The KU NROTC Marine Officer Instructor, Capt Mosqueda, will be PCSing to Camp Lejeune in June. She has proven herself an outstanding mentor and educator and will be missed by all the students and staff. I know she will do great things as she heads back to the Corps. Additionally, we will be saying farewell to CDR Cooper, our XO, as he retires from a career in the Naval Service. Joe made an indelible impact on this command and has positively contributed to the careers of countless future Naval Officers. We wish you Fair Winds and Following Seas.

Rock Chalk!

Capt Trenton Lennard

Happiness held is a seed – happiness shared is a flower.



Air Force News

LtCol Nichole Phelan, 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 8 new 2Lts into the United States Air Force. On Monday, 20 May, we will commission:

Cadet Logan Albers – Pilot
 Cadet Velia Colunga - Contracting
 Cadet Michael Coghlin – Pilot
 Cadet Garrison Freeman - Pilot
 Cadet Halle Haas – Intelligence
 Cadet Juan Martinez Isaza – Nuclear Operations
 Cadet Grant Mitton – Pilot
 Cadet Zachery Watkins - Nuclear Operations

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

Detachment update:

Cadets Chase Charles and Mary Tighe were selected to attend Field Training as Cadet Training Assistants

(CTAs). Both will support training at Maxwell-2 and Maxwell-3 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 20th, 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!

At the end of May, we will sadly say goodbye to our Director of Operations, Lt Col Andrew Robinson. He has made a lasting impression on Det 280 and we will definitely miss him. He is moving on to fly remote-piloted aircraft as a fulltime Active Guard/Reservist at Duke Field, Florida.

Thanks for all the fantastic support from MOAA this year. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Rock Chalk, Jayhawk!

Very Respectfully,

LtCol Nikki Phelan

Commander, Air Force ROTC Det 280

INFORMATION FOR DEPENDENT CHILDREN SCHOOL ASSISTANCE

Check VA 34

MILITARY MONDAYS AT KOHL'S

by Mike Kelly

Kohl's is introducing Military Mondays – a 15 percent in-store discount – to thank active and former military personnel, veterans and their families for their selflessness and service to our nation. The Kohl's discount is valid in-store every Monday – all year long – when customers show a valid Military ID, Military Dependent ID or Veteran ID at the point of purchase.

Kohl's military discount has been strongly advocated for by store leaders and Kohl's Veterans Business Resource Group (BRG) as an opportunity to reward our active and former military personnel, veterans and their families for their sacrifice.

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, 14 March 2019:

MOAA Outlines VA Priorities to Lawmakers at Joint Veteran's Affairs Hearing

[RELATED: [Health Care Improvements Veterans Can Expect in 2019 ... Is VA Up to the Challenge?](#)]

"Your concerns are my concerns, and the concerns of the House Veterans Affairs Committee," he said. "The message from you and your VSO cohorts is clear - Congress must keep a vigilant eye on the VA and pass legislation to care for our veterans."

MOAA will advocate for dependents up to age 26 to be eligible for health care coverage under the [Civilian Health and Medical Program of the VA](#) (CHAMPVA), Campos said. The change would mirror health insurance plans offered through the federal Affordable Care Act.

MOAA is also pushing for the VA to [meet the needs of women veterans](#), including expanded health care and disability benefits. Women make up about 10 percent of the veteran population - a figure that is expected to grow over the next decade.

MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 21 March 2019:

President's Budget Provides Another Year of Funding Increases for VA

Medical Care

\$220 billion for the entire department, a 9.5 percent increase over 2019.

\$84 billion for medical care, a 7.5 percent increase over 2019, and \$91.8 billion in advance appropriations for medical programs in 2021 to ensure continuity of care for over 9.3 million enrolled veterans. This includes funding for:

Mental health and inpatient, residential, and outpatient care.

Women's health care.

Programs to prevent and reduce homelessness.

Note: According to the administration, the proposed budget "fully funds all requirements for veterans' health care services and provides additional funding to implement the MISSION Act providing veterans greater choice and access to medical care."

[RELATED: [2020 Budget Proposal Has Largest Troop Pay Raise in a Decade](#)]

The FY 2020 budget is designed to strengthen benefits claims processing; deliver a new, simpler, and more timely appeals process that gives veterans choices and control; and invest in information technology and construction projects.

It also contains some proposals impacting veterans' benefits that require monitoring and further investigation, such as:

Reintroducing COLA round-downs for disability benefits.

Capping post-9/11 GI bill benefits for flight training in public schools.

Standardizing and enhancing VA compensation and pension benefit programs.

MOAA Supports Senate Bill to Expand Housing rights for Military Families

Military families living in homes with reports of rodents, mold, and other health issues could soon be empowered to withhold paying their housing stipend to their property manager, thanks to proposed legislation backed by MOAA.

The [Ensuring Safe Housing for Our Military Act](#) would address healthy, safety, and environmental hazards at these privately managed homes on military installations.

[RELATED: [News Reports Reveal Lead Paint, Mold, and Bad Air in Military Housing](#)]

MOAA has heard from and worked with several military families who have complained about rodent infestations and mold, and attended a hearing last month where families shared their stories with lawmakers.

"We want all our servicemembers and their families to feel safe in their homes," Atkins wrote to the senators.

MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 28 March 2019:

President's Budget Confirms Plans for Drastic Reduction in Military Medical Positions

But first the good news, which was anticipated: There will be no new changes to the existing TRICARE fee structure. There was no indication of any desire to lower the already steep fee increases of the previous year; any fee increases seem to be off the table, for now. Additionally, the proposed budget seems to provide adequate funds for health care requirements, the new electronic health record, medical research efforts, and health care requirements for contingency operations.

Arlington Changes Funeral Escort Eligibility Rules in Effort to Limit Burial Wait Time

Arlington National Cemetery released new rules for funeral escorts for 2019, a change proposed by the ANC's advisory committee to address lengthy wait times for burials.

The new rules allow officers at O-4 or higher, warrant officers in the two highest warrant grades (CW4 and CW5), and E-9 enlisted members to receive full honors with an escort. Servicemembers who are killed in action or who have received the Medal of Honor, regardless of rank, are also eligible.

The change went into effect in mid-January after several months of careful consideration and input from the service chiefs, service secretaries, and the secretary of defense. Previously, any servicemember who attained the rank of E-9 and above could request this benefit.

According to the commission, the concept behind this change was to "align the most resource intensive level of honors with those who demonstrated a higher level of commitment to service and sacrifice."

(MOAA Premium and Life Members can receive [Your Guide to Military Burials](#), which includes updated ANC rules and much more information. Download the guide [here](#).)

Delivering honors with an escort involves more than 70 personnel, including a casket team, firing party, bugler, flag handlers, escort element (which varies by rank), and a military band. The logistical challenges limit ANC to carrying out eight such services per day.

Servicemembers who are ineligible for an escort (officers O-1 to O-3, warrant officers WO1 to CW-3, and enlisted members below E-9) still can request military honors, which include a casket team, firing party, bugler, and flag handlers. This service requires 17 personnel and is performed up to 22 times per day, Monday to Friday, at Arlington.

For more information on Arlington funeral honors, the cemetery has released this [fact sheet](#).

While officials at the cemetery predict this change eventually will alleviate some of the wait times, the increasing demand for burial in recent months still presents a challenge. Last month, ANC received over 55 burial requests in a single day. The total for February was more than 700.

While ANC holds status as a historic part of our national heritage, burial at any of the other national cemeteries around the U.S. is no less distinguished, and is available to every eligible veteran. According to Public Law 106-65, honors consist of two or more uniformed military persons presenting the U.S. burial flag along with the playing of Taps. To learn more about military funeral honors, visit this [website](#).

MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 04 April 2019:

Why Military Pay Remains a Servicemember and MOAA Priority

Servicemembers are in line for their largest raise in 10 years, but as with all budget items, there are no guarantees.

President Donald Trump's budget proposal calls for a 3.1 percent increase in military basic pay. The figure matches the Employment Cost Index (ECI) from October 2018, the established benchmark lawmakers should use to set the raise servicemembers receive on Jan. 1, 2020.

With the budget request and the ECI in agreement, servicemembers and their families can breathe easy, right? Not exactly.

[TAKE ACTION: Ask Your Legislators to Protect Military Pay and Benefits]

MOAA has long made the protection of military pay and benefits a top priority. The issue will be one of three core advocacy elements to this year's Storming the Hill event, where MOAA members from across the nation will make their top issues known to representatives in Washington, D.C. Here are some of the reasons why:

CBO concerns: Pay caps -- holding the basic military pay raise below the ECI -- aren't off the budget radar. December's Congressional Budget Office [report on ways to reduce the federal deficit](#) includes a suggestion to "cap basic pay raises for military service members at 0.5 percentage points below the increase in the ECI for five years starting in 2020 and then return them to the ECI benchmark in 2025." Lawmakers looking to free up funds, or DoD officials seeking to shuffle their budgets, could see the CBO report as cover for a move that could prove costly to servicemembers and their families.

Health of the force: Fair compensation is an element of readiness -- underpaying servicemembers will lead to the loss of well-qualified, well-trained men and women, and that means a less-secure nation. As services struggle with recruiting goals, and as retention experts try to figure out what the new Blended Retirement System will mean to retaining the best talent, the last thing the military can afford is a decrease in overall benefits for its members.

Beyond basic pay: Even if the 3.1 percent raise goes into effect, servicemembers still could see reductions in other benefits, including their retirement contributions and

housing allowances, and their purchasing power at commissaries and military exchanges. Their families also could face increases in TRICARE fees. An impressive top-line figure is a good start, but it's not enough to ensure military families receive all of the benefits earned by service.

For these reasons and others, MOAA is not content simply to hope that good economic indicators and preliminary budget proposals will combine to protect military compensation. Too much is at stake to remain on the sidelines; MOAA will continue to work with the White House, the DoD, and with lawmakers to solidify a 3.1 percent pay raise in FY 2020 and protect other benefits from becoming budget targets.

Widows Tax Places Unjust Burden on Survivors

Under current law, survivors of deceased servicemembers must forfeit part or all of their purchased Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuity when they are awarded the VA's Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC). The loss of any portion of the SBP annuity is known as the widows tax. For approximately 66,000 military survivors, the "widows tax" makes SBP the only insurance product in the country that you pay into but can legally be prohibited from collecting.

SBP is a voluntary, member-purchased annuity provided by DoD, allowing a continuation of a portion of military retired pay upon the death of the servicemember. According to DoD, the intended purpose of SBP is to "insure that the surviving dependents of military personnel who die in retirement or after becoming eligible for retirement will continue to have a reasonable level of income." After 9/11, coverage was expanded to include surviving dependents of active duty personnel deaths as well.

[RELATED: Visit MOAA's Legislative Action Center]

DIC is a VA-paid monetary benefit for eligible survivors whose sponsors died of a service-connected injury or disease. These separate benefits are paid for separate reasons and should not be construed as redundant compensation.

Surviving spouses of active duty or retired servicemembers who died of a service-connected cause are forced to forfeit \$1 of their military SBP annuity for each \$1 received in DIC. This offset wipes out most or all of the SBP check for a majority of survivors, totaling approximately \$12,000 annually, including those whose servicemembers purchased the plan through deductions from their retired pay.

Over the years, Congress has helped a small minority of survivors by:

- raising the lump-sum death gratuity for servicemembers who died after 2001,
- ending the offset for survivors who remarry after age 57, and
- authorizing in FY 2008 the Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA), a modest rebate to SBP-DIC recipients subjected to the widows tax.

However, the lump-sum increases in the death gratuity did not help the 95 percent of survivors whose spouses died of service-caused conditions before 2001. Further, while SSIA serves as evidence of congressional interest and support, it only provides relief for about 25 percent of the widows tax.

[RELATED: TV Station Shines New Light on Fight to End Widows Tax]

In 2007, Congress established a commission to review the appropriateness of veterans and survivor benefits. That commission agreed with MOAA and other veterans organizations that when military service causes a member's death, VA indemnity compensation should be paid in addition to the SBP annuity, not subtracted from it. The commission recommended Congress eliminate the widows tax.

No other federal annuity is structured with this offset; DIC is not deducted from federal survivor annuities for military veterans in civil service jobs. The time is overdue for Congress to repeal the SBP-DIC offset.

What About the Cost?

Congress estimates the cost of repealing the widows tax to be approximately \$5 billion. If Congress cannot achieve full repeal all at once, there is a way they can still improve the lives of thousands of affected survivors.

When SSIA was established in FY 2008, it started as a very small allowance to survivors. As the program was renewed and extended, the allowance increased to its current amount.

Starting in FY 2019, future increases in SSIA will be indexed to COLA. And while it's commendable Congress has fixed about 25 percent of the total offset, more can be done.

Congress should continue to incrementally increase SSIA above COLA adjustments to help mitigate the overall effect of the widows tax. For instance, even small, \$50 increases to the allowance can take big chunks out of the offset.

If Congress were to authorize standard increases of \$50 in SSIA payments over the next five years, they could eliminate half of the total burden of the widows tax.

This would be a low-cost way for Congress to make a good faith effort toward eliminating a tax on military survivors.

The Slow Erosion of Your TRICARE Benefit

Congress has fairly consistently supported the principle that military retirees - by virtue of their service - should be recognized with some level of health care premium support. However, that level of support has always been vague, leaving it ripe for erosion.

Further, as a result of several years of TRICARE fee increases, today's working-age TRICARE retiree cost shares are closely aligned with the average civilian's cost shares and in proportion to civilian employers' cost of coverage.

We must resist the urge to compare military retiree health care cost shares with civilians'. The cost disparities between civilians and veterans cannot truly be compared; those who served have already paid their share of their health care premiums through decades of service and sacrifice - the true costs of which are significant.

"While I realize I don't have much to complain about - \$30 here and \$30 there - [when it's] combined with increased prescription costs and the annual fee, [it] eventually [adds] up to real money," says Capt. Craig Herrick, USN (Ret), of Mechanicsburg, Pa. "I appreciate the value of this earned benefit, and I'm concerned by the slow erosion."

Basic Costs

"In light of the original premise of TRICARE For Life - premiums already paid by service, 22 years, in my case - why am I being charged at all for Medicare Part B?" asks Cmdr. William Breed, USN (Ret), of Hyde Park, N.Y. "My wife and I have lived frugally and amassed a healthy nest

egg; I can't help but think we are being penalized for planning our future."

[RELATED: [What President Trump's Budget Says About TRICARE](#)]

Additionally, the newest generation of servicemembers retiring or considering retirement in the next few years have served the duration of their careers during post-9/11 wartime conflicts.

While all generations of servicemembers, veterans, and retirees have endured tremendous sacrifices for the nation, service in Iraq and Afghanistan during the past 20 years has unquestionably affected servicemembers and their family members in ways not yet fully understood.

Here are some of the true costs this most recent cohort already has paid:

1. Deployments. In its [annual Military Family Lifestyle Survey](#), Blue Star Families has consistently found servicemembers and spouses rank the amount of time away from family as their top issue of concern, followed by concern regarding military pay and benefits.

2. Transition. A recent survey by the Pew Research Center focusing on the transition from the military into civilian life found veterans who served after 9/11 have experienced difficulties readjusting to civilian life.

The model Pew used predicts a veteran who served in the post-9/11 era is 15 percentage points less likely than veterans of other eras to have an easy time readjusting to life after the military (62 percent versus 77 percent).

Additionally, two other factors have significantly shaped the reentry experiences of post-9/11 veterans but appear to have had little impact on those who served in previous eras: Post-9/11 veterans who were married while they served had a significantly more difficult time readjusting than did married veterans of past eras or single people, regardless of when they served.

[RELATED: [MOAA's TRICARE White Paper \(share the link\)](#)]

3. Physical health. It's not often recognized that those who have served for any amount of time in uniform, much less a full career in service, have a difference in their physical health status from civilians who have never served. MOAA, in partnership with the United Health Foundation, examined these differences across a number of domains using data from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention surveys from 2011-16.

The most recent iteration, [America's Health Rankings Health of Those Who Have Served Report](#), was published in 2018. Overall, individuals who have served reported their general health was better than reported by their civilian counterparts. However, despite reporting better health, those who have served actually present higher rates of chronic disease than civilians, and few improvements have been made on many important markers of good health.

Many chronic disease rates for those who have served indicate significant differences, especially among veterans over age 50, whose rates are even more disparate from their civilian counterparts

4. Mental health. The report also noted, "Both men and women who have served have higher rates of depression, anxiety, and frequent mental distress than civilian men and women." Since the first time MOAA and United Health Foundation examined these numbers, in 2011-12, the rate of depression among those who have served has increased as much as 32 percent among those ages 26-34, and 9 percent overall.

During this time, little improvement has been observed in rates of anxiety and frequent mental distress among those who have served.

[RELATED: [MOAA Survey: Satisfaction with TRICARE Costs Keeps Falling](#)]

A Need to Change

“The two major complaints that I hear from providers [are] that the referral submission procedures seem to change on a daily basis and that TRICARE pays less than Medicare. The latter issue is such that many providers are losing so much money that they are either reducing services provided or dropping from TRICARE,” says Maj. James B. Carr, USA (Ret), of Valdosta, Ga.

Through the years, adjustments have been made to TRICARE in terms of managed care contractor changes, TRICARE regional office configurations, and where TRICARE Prime would be offered. However, as a result of the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), TRICARE has experienced its greatest reforms since its inception.

The model has now changed for beneficiaries. For example, TRICARE beneficiaries are required to declare their TRICARE health care option during mandated open-enrollment periods, as is commonly done in civilian health plans.

Importantly, major structural changes have occurred in the military health system simultaneously with TRICARE benefit changes.

TRICARE contract oversight, as well as control of military treatment facilities, now will be completely executed under DHA's authorities, as was legislatively mandated in the 2017 NDAA.

DHA believes it can better prepare for future budget strategies by consolidating enterprise-wide functions such as pharmacy and information technology. The objective is to reduce duplication and create greater savings and efficiencies across the system.

The beginnings of those savings, which include increases in pharmacy and TRICARE cost shares paid by beneficiaries, are being realized by DoD. As of FY 2017, they have remained ahead of schedule.

“Ever since our contractor switched, we have had an incredibly difficult time getting payments processed on referrals - multiple calls and resubmissions, and payments coming six months late. Makes me wonder how many people give up fighting for our benefits and just pay to avoid being turned into collections,” says Chief Warrant Officer 2 Brian K. Slaybaugh, USA (Ret), of Gettysburg, Pa.

MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 11 April 2019:

Bills Would Expand Health Care for Adult Children of Veterans

Two legislators introduced bills April 4 to expand health care coverage to children of disabled veterans.

Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) and Rep. Julia Brownley (D-Calif.) [introduced S. 1034 and H.R. 2094](#), both versions of the CHAMPVA Children's Care Protection Act of 2019. This legislation would allow adult children to remain under the Civilian Health and Medical Program for the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA) until age 26. **[TAKE ACTION: [Ask Your Legislators to Support S. 1034 and H.R. 2094 \(CTA LINK\)](#)]**

CHAMPVA is a fee-for-service program managed by the VA that provides reimbursement for medical care for a selected group of eligible dependents and survivors of veterans rated permanently and totally disabled by their military service. Unlike TRICARE and private insurance plans, children using CHAMPVA are no longer eligible for coverage when they turn 18 years old (or 23 years old for full-time students).

“I extend our deepest appreciation to Senator Brown and Representative Brownley for their leadership in sponsoring the CHAMPVA Children's Care Protection Act of 2019,” said MOAA President and CEO Lt. Gen. Dana T. Atkins, USAF (Ret).

[Read [MOAA's Letter of Support](#)]

Expanding CHAMPVA for children of eligible veterans has been a top legislative priority for MOAA and The Military Coalition since the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) became law in 2010. The ACA required children up until age 26 to be covered on their parent's health insurance.

To comply with the law, DoD rolled out its TRICARE Young Adult Program in 2011. However, similar coverage has yet to be extended to CHAMPVA.

[Read [The Military Coalition's Letter of Support](#)]

“When men and women in uniform serve our country, their loved ones serve as well,” Brown said. “That's why it's especially important for the children of veterans who depend on CHAMPVA to stay on their parents' insurance while they go on to college or start their careers. They should be able to keep their health care, just as children whose parents have private insurance can today.”

Brownley called the move “a moral imperative,” adding: “One of the most popular and widely known benefits of the Affordable Care Act is allowing kids to stay on their parent's health insurance until age 26, and it is absolutely unacceptable that children of those who have sacrificed the most for our country do not have the same protections afforded to other families.”

MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 18 April 2019:

The Truth About Your TRICARE Costs

Congress has long accepted an obligation to provide health care to military retirees who earned this care through their decades of service and sacrifice. However, rising budget tensions seem to magnetically draw this earned benefit onto the chopping block repeatedly, bolstered by a misleading narrative that DoD personnel and health care costs are spiraling out of control. Adding to the confusion is another false narrative that military retirees pay little to nothing for their health care.

MOAA has done the research and provided context to the increases in personnel and health care costs (which, combined, remain approximately 33 percent of the DoD budget) as well as a deeper look into what military retirees pay for their health care. Further complicating these current discussions, MOAA research contends, are the immeasurable health care uncertainties awaiting our post-9/11 servicemembers and their families.

[READ THE WHITE PAPER: [The Truth About TRICARE Beneficiary Cost Shares](#)]

After over 17 years of deployments and war, there are retiree health care needs for which we must account, and for which we must not subject to further premium costs or expose to the [erosion of this benefit](#).

Reviewing the history of TRICARE program changes - DoD underwent its first major change in 1956 when it began including dependent coverage - one might sense the federal government intends to deter beneficiaries from fully using their earned benefit. Any such impediments or challenges to the benefit tarnish a once ironclad recruiting and retention tool.

Read the [full white paper](#).

Help MOAA Continue the Fight to Improve Privatized Military Housing

MOAA has played a leading role in addressing health and safety hazards in military family housing. After collecting stories from families, investigating the issues and validating concerns, and sharing information with DoD and Congress, efforts are ramping up to improve these homes. But any progress warrants continued watching, so stay tuned for updates.

MOAA-Supported Legislation

The [Ensuring Safe Housing for Our Military Act](#) (S. 703/H.R. 1792) ensures proper credentialing and management plans, removes deposits and fees for housing, and allows for tenants to withhold their housing allowance in the event of a dispute. Further, the bill directs the establishment of a new work order system and directs an investigation into retaliation claims while providing legal guidance and resources to families.

[TAKE ACTION: [Ask Your Lawmakers to Cosponsor S. 703/H.R. 1792](#)]

MOAA continues to work with other congressional offices to address additional gaps in oversight and to ensure total eradication of health and safety hazards.

Tenant Bill of Rights

Senior leaders of all the services are drafting and editing a unified tenant bill of rights, which will codify the rights and requirements for tenants, private partners, and military housing officials so they may all better understand expectations and responsibilities of all parties associated with military privatized housing.

This document will be an important resource and will be bolstered by performance metrics to be determined by DoD and the installation commanders. DoD is reviewing the performance metrics now in place to evaluate success of private partners; officials will determine if the right things are being measured, and how. These performance metrics are especially important to the companies, as their incentive fees and bonuses are based on metric outcomes.

Health Registry

All of the services have reported integration of their public health teams and offices of their surgeons general in addressing the health impacts of substandard housing.

Army Surgeon General Lt. Gen. Nadja West has started soliciting data from families who have lived in unsafe housing condition in order to create [a registry of health and safety hazards](#) reported in Army housing.

MOAA urges other services to follow suit by establishing their registry database for substandard housing.

What More Needs to Be Done?

MOAA continues to advocate to ensure:

More enforcement mechanisms are created to hold private partners accountable.

No family endures financial hardship from health and safety hazards in military housing.

Health issues caused by substandard housing are addressed, mitigated, and tracked.

Management best practices, rights and proper funding are translated to government-owned family housing and unaccompanied servicemembers barracks.

In addition to [writing your member of Congress](#), please send us your housing experiences, good or bad, at legis@moaa.org. Stay up to date with upcoming legislation on military housing by subscribing to the [MOAA newsletter](#).

MOAA Members Storm Capitol Hill and Make a Difference

The sun shone brightly with barely a cloud in sight on April 10, but a storm was brewing members from the

Military Officers Association of America canvassed Capitol Hill and called on Congress to protect benefits our servicemembers, veterans and military spouses have earned.

More than 170 MOAA members from across the country got to work for our annual Storming the Hill event in Washington, D.C. This year, we met with members of Congress and their staffs in support of:

[A 3.1 percent pay raise for the troops.](#)

[A total repeal of the "widows tax."](#)

[And stabilizing TRICARE.](#)

Read more about these issues and Storming at www.moaa.org/storming2019.

MOAA's North Dakota team - Lt. Col. Christopher Lindberg, USA (Ret) and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Greg Acs - focused on TRICARE and the pay raise during a meeting with Sen. John Hoeven's office.

"There's a lot of things I want to get done," said Lindberg, who served as an Army infantry officer for more than 20 years. It's the second year Lindberg has traveled from Fargo to meet with legislators.

"There was a promise given to me 20 years ago that I would be taken care of, that I would have health insurance," he said. "In the last few years, Tricare fees have gone up a lot. (Servicemembers) have been blown up. They've been shot at. They're not getting much more of a benefit than civilians. All we're asking for is stop the increases. Just stabilize it."

Beth Conklin, a member of the MOAA Spouse Advisory Council, stormed for the first time and met with members of the Colorado delegation. Her husband is an infantry officer in the Army and preparing for his first battalion command. She's lobbied the Hill before, on spouse employment issues, but storming with MOAA was a new experience. "Coming in with a group is so much more impactful," she said. "You have a force behind what you storm for."

This was the fourth storming for Lt. Col. Shelly Kalkowski, USAF (Ret). She was armed with the facts (for example, did you know Colorado is the 10th most populous state for troops and DoD personnel?). She was also determined to get 100 percent support from Colorado's two senators and seven Congressmen for a repeal of the widows tax. There are only two remaining from Colorado who have not co-sponsored, and Kalkowski made sure to get face-to-face chats with each of them to ask their support.

Coast Guard Lt. J.G. Rachel Johnson, a member of the MOAA Currently Serving Advisory Council, stormed for her first time. She said it was "extremely rewarding" to represent the needs of junior officers serving today.

"To get this perspective at this point in my career is invaluable," said Johnson, who is also a prior-enlisted Marine.

MOAA President and CEO Gen. Dana Atkins, USAF (Ret), said the members brought a high level of expertise and knowledge on all three storming topics. But they weren't the only ones.

"When we're going in the offices, I'm extremely impressed by the understanding of Congressional leaders and their staffs on the issues," Atkins said.

Rep. Pete Stauber (R-Minn.), husband of Air National Guard veteran Jodi Stauber, pledged his support to all three of MOAA's storming initiatives.

Stauber said feedback from MOAA members helps his office shape legislation in support of veterans' needs. Stauber has already signed on as co-sponsor for legislation that would end the widows tax.

"You will have no bigger fighter than me," Stauber said. "The men and women who serve in the military, they deserve everything they've earned."

Retired Brig. Gen. Tim Kennedy, who served 37 years with the Army National Guard, was accompanied by his wife Sue as they visited Stauber and nine other federal lawmakers from Minnesota during the annual Storming the Hill event. He was pleased with Stauber's continued support of veterans and their families.

During each of his visits, Kennedy discussed MOAA's push to end the widows tax. He said at least three lawmakers pledged to sign on as co-sponsors, including freshman Congresswoman Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.) .

"What I hope to achieve is that we move the needle on SBP-DIC [the widows tax]," Kennedy said. "And we did that."

MOAA Chairman Adm. Walter Doran, USN (Ret), noted that Storming the Hill has become a vital tradition for the association.

"It's important that we do this because we represent the best interest of our members, across the country. We are a trusted source," Doran said.

But it's just one part of our advocacy strategy to improve the lives of our members and all currently serving troops, retirees, veterans and their families.

MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 25 April 2019:

Take Action: Ask Your Senator to Back Bill That Improves Survivor Benefits

Survivors receiving pay from the Department of Veterans Affairs would see an increase in benefits under a new bill introduced by Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.)

Tester's bill, the [Dependency and Indemnity Compensation Improvement Act](#), would increase the amount of DIC paid to surviving spouses and align the benefit with other federal programs. The proposal, which could net survivors an extra \$5,400 a year, has been a long-time goal of both MOAA and The Military Coalition.

[TAKE ACTION: [Ask Your Senator to Support S. 1047](#)]

Currently, DIC is paid at a monthly rate of \$1,319, with additional allowances in certain circumstances. That works out to 40 percent of what a veteran with a 100 percent service-connected disability rating receives from the VA.

However, federal survivor programs provide up to 55 percent of a civil servant's pay, computed as if the employee retired on disability at the date of death.

DIC is a tax-free monetary benefit paid to a surviving spouse and dependent children when a servicemember dies of a service-connected cause. This includes death while on active duty or death later due to an injury or disease contracted while the servicemember was on active duty.

The Senate Veterans Affairs Committee plans to work on the bill later this year.

Act now to send your senators a [MOAA-suggested message](#) on this bill.

Military, Vets' Groups Want Scrutiny of Commissary-Exchange Merger Proposal

Military and veterans' organizations have asked Congress to increase oversight of a Pentagon proposal to merge the commissary and exchange systems, asking for a review by government auditors and congressional hearings.

The Military Coalition, a group of 27 organizations that represent 5.5 million active-duty personnel, veterans and

family members, asked House and Senate Armed Services committees leaders in March to pay attention to the proposal, which would consolidate the three exchange systems and some Defense Commissary Agency functions.

Earlier this year, a task force drafted a business case analysis supporting that the [Army](#) and [Air Force](#) Exchange System, [Navy](#) Exchange and [Marine Corps](#) Exchange consolidate to streamline store operations.

[RELATED: [Commissary Changes Coming? What the Budget Could Mean for Your Shopping Benefit](#)]

It also recommended that certain store functions of commissaries could be managed by the same organization, with certain grocery functions remaining separate.

The report concluded that the merger would cost \$500 million in implementation, but would save an estimated \$700 million to \$1.3 billion in the first five years.

Under the plan, the commissary and exchange stores would look the same to the consumer, but back office and other functions would be joined under a single umbrella organization.

[MORE FROM MILITARY.COM: [Task Force Backs Controversial Merger of Base Store Systems](#)]

Military Coalition members said they aren't opposed to the idea but urged caution in implementing changes to what they described as a "fragile military community ecosystem that may impact other important programs."

"We are very concerned that proposals to merge the various elements of the defense resale system may pose a threat to its continued viability and request further study and oversight by Congress," stated The Military Coalition letter, signed by the organizations' chiefs.

The group wants the Government Accountability Office to review the proposal and called for hearings so that interested parties could "express their concerns."

The Defense Department can merge the exchange systems without congressional approval. To combine them with portions of the commissary system, however, would require new legislation.

The task force's business case has been approved by Lisa Hershman, DoD's acting chief management officer but must also be approved by Acting Deputy Secretary of Defense David Norquist and, if the commissary provisions are included, Congress.

By law, even if Norquist approves the exchange consolidation, the Pentagon cannot implement a merger until Oct. 1.

The military services have had mixed reviews over the proposal. The Army and Air Force concurred with the task force findings. The Navy, which initially balked at the plan, reluctantly concurred, adding that its leadership thinks the task force overstated the estimated amount of savings and length of time for the consolidation.

The military and veterans groups said that if the services' concerns are accurate, the system "may be unable to provide the services (low cost groceries and support for MWR programs) relied on by service members, their families and survivors."

In developing its business case analysis, the task force aimed to find efficiencies in the system while preserving profits generated by exchanges to continue supporting Morale, Welfare and Recreational activities. Members also sought to protect commissary savings, which are estimated to be nearly 24% for shoppers compared with commercial supermarkets.



JAYHAWK CHAPTER MOAA



A membership meeting will be held **Tuesday, 21 May 2019**
at Lawrence Country Club

Dinner cost is \$24.00/meal.

The Program: Our speaker will be Dr. Stephanie Davis of the Topeka VA Suicide Prevention Office

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

The Menu: Chef's choice salad, Pork tenderloin with spring vegetables,
Rustic rolls with olive oil and Parmesan, Chef's choice dessert

Send your reservation and check payable to Jayhawk Chapter MOAA
to arrive no later than Wednesday, **15 May 2019, 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).

Annual Chapter Dues (\$20.00) \$ _____

Clayton L. Comfort Award program contribution \$ _____
(Separate check made out to "KU Endowment")

TOTAL: \$ _____

Name _____ Telephone _____

IF YOU NEED A RIDE TO MEETINGS, PLEASE LET US KNOW HERE _____
AND GIVE US YOUR TELEPHONE NUMBER _____

**TEAR OFF AND RETURN THIS FORM WITH A CHECK PAYABLE TO:
JAYHAWK CHAPTER MOAA**

CAPT Jim Cooper, 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 2019 Meeting Schedule:

Tuesday	21 May	Tuesday 17	September
Tuesday	16 July	Tuesday 19	November

2019 Kansas Council of Chapters Dates/Locations:

10 August	Jayhawk Chapter
26 October	Santa Fe Trail Chapter



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

NEVER STOP SERVING!

IN GOD WE TRUST