



MOAA REPORTER

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

STEVEN COLE — SBCOLE@SBCGLOBAL.NET



Happy and Safe Holidays!

I will begin by asking each and every one of you to make plans to be at the February gathering. It is at this time, your chapter leadership will be giving a “state of the chapter,” local, state and national MOAA news, and (this is the important part) seeking your inputs, insights, and suggestions on where we, as a chapter, need to focus our efforts.

I cannot tell you how important your input is! This is your chapter. Our efforts are shaped by your involvement and purposes. We must know your thoughts and plans regarding local, state, and national issues and opportunities. Please make plans, send in your reservations and money, and come ready to express your desires of who, what, where, and how we should engage at the epi-centers of our concerns.

In looking back over 2016, the Top 10 MOAA Legislative Goals were:

- Ensure any TRICARE reform sustains top-quality care.
- Prevent disproportional TRICARE fee increases
- Sustain military pay comparability with the private sector
- Block erosion of compensation and commissary benefits
- Protect military retirements/COLAs
- Sustain wounded-warrior program and expand caregiver support
- End disabled/survivor financial penalties
- Fix Guard/Reserve retirement
- Improve spouse and family support
- Assure timely access to the VA and eliminate the VA claims backlog

As a chapter, we have supported and engaged our local and state legislators to make progress on this issues. But there is more to do and we need to redouble our efforts to achieve success in these national goals, as well as our local and state goals for our chapter members.

Please recommit yourself to becoming involved in your chapter's endeavors, activities, and supported operations. We are only as effective as your support and contributing actions. The Veterans Center of North Texas needs volunteers! Contact their office and help, please.

Promote membership into the chapter. Did you know that the first year's membership fee is \$0? Our best recruiting always comes from you, the members of the chapter. For our voice to become louder and stronger, we need to expand our ranks.

President's article continued on Page 3

MOAA-GDC receives 2015 Five-Star Level of Excellence Award



UPCOMING EVENTS:

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

The next Executive Committee Meeting will be January 21.

See Page 8 for more details

LUNCHEON MEETING

The next luncheon meeting will be February 28.
See page 4 for more details.

JOB FAIR — HURST CONFERENCE CENTER MARCH 2, 2017



See Page 8 for more details

PERSONAL AFFAIRS BY BEN COLE

THE TRICARE PHARMACY MAIL ORDER PROGRAM - ARE YOU USING IT?

I was chatting with one of our members the other day, and he told me that he was still driving over to NAS Fort Worth JRB to get his prescriptions and wondered if there was a better system. I suggested that he consider the TRICARE program. It then occurred to me that other members may also be interested in doing that. The TRICARE Mail Order System is available to all our members and eligible dependents, whether they are under the age of 65 or 65+ (TRICARE FOR LIFE). My wife and I have been using the latter for years and are very satisfied. The medications are delivered at no charge directly to your door right when you need them in plain, secure, weather-resistant package, and your co-pay amount (if any at all) is usually much lower. Drugs that need to stay cold are shipped with cold packs, and you will also receive free Specialty Care Management services, which complements the care your doctor provides.

Using the TRICARE Pharmacy Mail Order System may be a real advantage to you, if you are now using Military pharmacies or other sources for your prescription needs.

So, if you are interested in getting started, call 888-455-4342. Your advisor will even call your doctor(s) for you to set the plan in action. Times to call are from 0800 to 2300 (central time), Monday through Friday; and 0800 to 2000 on weekends and holidays. You can also make your contact ONLINE by logging in to Express-Scripts.com/TRICARE, but I recommend your first contact should be by telephone. You will be given all the information you need to get started in the system.

Once you are using the system, you can also contact some local retail pharmacies that are in the TRICARE network, for specialty drugs or quickly needed prescriptions. Some of those that we know now are Walmart, Target, Walgreens (eff. 1 Dec 2016) and some grocery stores.

If you need some additional information about this, contact me. I am in your MOAA-GDC directory. My cell phone is 972-897-6418, and my brand-new email address is ben19320428@att.net.

The screenshot shows the TRICARE Pharmacy Program website. At the top, there are logos for Express Scripts Federal Pharmacy Services and TRICARE. The main navigation bar includes links for Home, Your Benefits, News, Tools, Safety & Savings, Specialty Medication, FAQs, and Feedback. A sign-in form is visible on the right side, with fields for User Name and Password, and a SIGN IN button. Below the sign-in form, there is a section for "NOT REGISTERED?" with a "Create Your Account" button. The main content area features a banner titled "Your Choice of TRICARE Retail Pharmacies Changes Dec. 1, 2016" with a "Learn more" button. Below the banner, there are three columns of "IMPORTANT NOTICES": "Home Delivery at No Cost", "Fraud, Waste and Abuse", and "Try ePrescribing".

PRESIDENT'S ARTICLE (CONTINUED) BY STEVEN COLE

Just a short reminder of how to prevent Identity (ID) Theft during the Holidays. **Use these tips to help keep your personal information safe this holiday season.**

Identity theft can and does happen to anyone at any point in the year. However, the number of identity theft cases tend to increase during the holiday season since more people are using their debit and credit cards without any extra security. To help reduce your risk of having to deal with identity theft this season, please keep these identity theft prevention tips in mind.

- Never give out your Social Security Number for any unnecessary reasons. Your SSN should only be given out for tax reasons, verified employment, or credit purposes. Before you provide the information to anyone, find out how it will be used and who will have access to it.
- Shred all documents that have any personal information on them. When writing checks, use a gel-ink pen that cannot be erased.
- Do not put outgoing mail in your personal mailbox. Instead, take it to the post office or put it in a collection box.
- Create secure and different passwords for all of your financial accounts. All passwords should be at least 18 characters long and include uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers, and symbols. I know 18 is a long password, but it is the securest form of protection.
- Only use one credit card to do all of your holiday shopping. It will be much easier to track your purchases and look for any fraudulent purchases if you use the same card all season long.
- If you are shopping online, ensure that all of your firewall and antivirus software is up to date. Having software that is up to date makes it much more difficult for hackers to access your information.
- Order a copy of your credit report at the end of the season. Look closely at the report and handle any discrepancies as soon as possible.

Please care for yourselves during the shopping season and let these security measures flow into your everyday life. Be safe.

YOUR CHOICE OF TRICARE RETAIL PHARMACIES CHANGES DEC. 1, 2016

Express Scripts added Walgreens to the TRICARE® retail pharmacy network on Dec. 1, 2016. CVS and CVS pharmacies in Target stores are no longer in the network.

IMPORTANT: If you are still filling prescriptions at a CVS pharmacy, you need to transfer all your prescriptions now to avoid paying the full retail price for your medication.

What You Need to Know

- CVS pharmacies are no longer included in the TRICARE retail pharmacy network as of Dec. 1. **If you continue filling your prescriptions at a CVS pharmacy, you will pay the full retail price* for your drugs.**
- If you still have a prescription at a CVS pharmacy, you need to transfer it now to another network pharmacy.
- It's easy to find another [TRICARE Network Pharmacy](#) near you. Walgreens is now included in the pharmacy locator, and CVS pharmacies have been removed.
- More than 58,000 pharmacies are in the TRICARE network, including other national chains, grocery chains and independent pharmacies.
- You can now fill your prescriptions at Walgreens.

* **Please note:** Beneficiaries can file a claim for a partial reimbursement of the cost of their medication when filling at a non-network pharmacy. For more information, visit tricare.mil/CoveredServices/Pharmacy/FillPrescriptions/NonNetwork.

Convenient Ways to Transfer Prescriptions

- Take your prescription drug bottles to the new pharmacy. The pharmacist there will contact your old pharmacy.
- Call your new pharmacy and have them get your prescription drug information from your old pharmacy.
- Ask your doctor to send your prescription drug information to your new pharmacy.
- Check to see if your prescription drugs, including any specialty drugs, are eligible for TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery by calling 855-778-1417.



PROGRAMS BY BEVERLY THOMPSON

February 28, 2016 Chapter Goals Meeting

Our next luncheon meeting presents an opportunity for every Greater Dallas Chapter member's voice to be heard regarding MOAA Greater Dallas Chapter's priorities.

As with every organization we have limited resources. Do we focus on national, state, regional or local issues? A combination or hit hard what our members are interested in and what affects them the most.

How do we maximize contacting our elected officials including face to face meetings to promote MOAA National goals and Texas state concerns and opportunities for our members and the military community at large?

We have two local possibilities that can use our support, North Texas Veterans Center and Texas VA benefits and concerns.

Please join your chapter leaders and express your opinions and suggestions.

The Park City Club 5956 Sherry Lane, 17th Floor Dallas, Texas 75225
Social 11:00 AM — Buffet Opens 11:15 AM Meeting 12:00 Noon

Please send your reservations early to ensure we can make an accurate and timely reservation count. Mail the reservation coupon to MOAA-GDC Programs, PO Box 515495, Dallas, TX 75251; email Dave Schafer moaschafer@att.net or reserve online at www.moagreaterdallas.org/onlinersvp.html. You may also call Dave at (214)577-4107.

MOAA-GDC accepts **PayPal** for paying for your luncheon at our website which allows you to pay by credit card.
<http://www.moagreaterdallas.org/onlinersvp.html>

April 25, 2016 Luncheon Meeting – Walter Coughlin

Walt was Special Agent for Kennedy, Johnson and Hubert Humphrey. He was in San Antonio preparing for the Kennedy's visit the day before the assassination in Dallas.

Walt also was Special Agent in charge of the Democratic and Republican conventions in Miami Beach in 1972. He received an Outstanding Service Award for his work.

I had the privilege of hearing him speak at a Docent Assembly at the George Bush Library and one of the stories he told was of traveling with Kennedy in a South American town and there was to be a meeting at the Embassy...as they approached the building with a circular drive he had an intuition and told the driver to go around back ... just then shots rang out from snipers in the trees on the decoy car and all inside were killed.

2016 Luncheon Meetings and Trip to the George W. Bush Presidential Library



Below: Lt. Col. Allen West, US Army (Ret) and MOAA-GDC President Bill



Above: MOAA-GDC President CAPT Steven Cole, USNR (Retired); Speaker Col. Miguel Howe, USA, (Retired) and MOAA-GDC President-Elect Col William Dwiggin, USMC



Above: CAPT Steven Cole, USN—MOAA-GDC with our luncheon speaker, Lt. Col. James "Maggie" Megellas.

Below: Lunch in the classroom at the George W. Bush Presidential Library and



2017 Officers being sworn at October meeting.

Left to Right: Steven Cole, President; William Dwiggin, President Elect; Dave Schafer, Treasurer; Beverly Thompson, VP Programs; and Chuck Kelley, Secretary.

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY DECEMBER 2016 BY JIM BROWN



Congress agrees on a bigger military pay raise, more troops

Military Times reported on 29 November that Congress' annual defense spending bill proposes to give the armed forces a 2.1 percent pay raise starting in January and significant manpower increases in the Army, Air Force and Marine Corps. The Pentagon requested 1.6 percent. If it stands, 2017 will be the first time in six years that the military pay raise tops 2 percent.

The compromise measure also includes a massive overhaul of the military health care system. The housing allowance is largely unchanged. Totaling nearly \$619 billion, the bill represents Congress' final offer to the president.

President Obama has requested \$3.2 billion less, and wants to draw down Army and Marine Corps end strength to cut long-term personnel costs. He has threatened a veto unless Congress approves corresponding increases in nonmilitary programs. If the president vetoes the bill, he will also have to kill several other measures that would benefit the military workforce.

The health care changes would transfer control of most military medical facilities to the Defense Health Agency and put in place new fees for enrollment in Tricare. But those fees would affect only new enlistees. All current troops and retirees in the system would not see any increases.

The authorization bill also mandates a reduction in flag and general officers in years to come, trimming about 12 percent of the total now, and includes dramatic changes in defense acquisition processes. Congressional staff touted the final product as one of the most significant pieces of reform legislation in years, touching on a variety of agencies and issues.

A Senate-led plan to award Basic Allowance for Housing stipends based on individual troops' rent costs, instead of flat-rates based on zip codes, was removed as was a provision to charge military families health care enrollment fees.

The authorization bill sets defense policy and spending priorities for current fiscal year, but does not actually assign the money for those initiatives. The appropriations process, which distributes the money, has been stalled on Capitol Hill for months. Appropriations officials have already said they will adjust some budget items to provide for some increases above fiscal 2016 levels, including the military pay raise. That will go into effect on Jan. 1. In September, as part of a temporary spending bill extending government funding until December, lawmakers did approve a full-year budget for the Department of Veterans Affairs and military construction projects, making those accounts the only ones with budget certainty through September 2017.

Over the next few days, lawmakers will need to finalize plans for a continuing resolution (CR) to extend federal spending at fiscal 2016 levels into March. Republican leaders in both chambers have said that will allow incoming President Donald Trump to set his own budget priorities for federal programs, but Pentagon leaders and MOAA have criticized the delay as unnecessary and imprudent.

First, an extended CR means funding is limited to the FY16 levels and programs. No new contracts could be let, for example, which is a nightmare for those involved in procurement, among others.

Second, it means the new Congress will have to finalize funding for the current year (FY17) at the same time their first priority is supposed to be building the normal appropriations bills for FY18.

Third, and potentially the most significant for members of the military community, it raises at least some risk the FY 2017 Defense Authorization Bill process may be curtailed in some way. The delay leaves Congress and the incoming Trump administration with an already busy schedule for next spring, with the fiscal 2018 budget, debt ceiling extension and sequestration repeal already on the schedule.

SEND A MESSAGE TO CONGRESS!



MOAA would prefer quick action on the military pay raise, TRICARE reform, TRICARE fees, force levels, and survivor benefits. You can help by sending your legislators a MOAA-suggested message, urging them to make sure Congress passes a final FY 2017 Defense Authorization Bill before the lame duck session adjourns. Please go to the following website to send a prepared message.

<http://capwiz.com/moaa/issues/alert/?alertid=74336626>

MOAA will be thankful for your help.

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY DECEMBER 2016 - CONTINUED

Long overdue recognition for Vietnam Vets

Military Times also reported that on the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War, a national initiative aims to make sure veterans from that era are never forgotten.

The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration, which was authorized by Congress in 2008, is conducting events and activities across the country this year to honor those who served in a deeply divisive war that left a generation of warfighters without the proper recognition they deserved. (*Note: As of this date, I could not find any award event scheduled for the Dallas area on the Commemoration website.*)

One part of the initiative is to honor vets who served between Nov. 1, 1955, and May 15, 1975, with a commemorative Vietnam Veteran lapel pin.

Retired Army Gen. Barry McCaffrey recently received one of those pins during a brief ceremony in the Military Times office outside Washington, D.C.

McCaffrey, a highly decorated Vietnam veteran, said the pin honoring his fellow veterans reinforces the importance of supporting America's men and women in uniform, regardless of politics.

"You may have different political views, but you can honor the soldier who fought without necessarily endorsing the outcome of the conflict," the four-star general told Army Times. That's happened over time, he said, and Vietnam was a turning point that led to almost overwhelming support for today's generation of service members. It's also why the pin has tremendous significance.

McCaffrey, who retired in 1996 after 32 years of service, was the most highly decorated Army general serving at the time of his retirement. He earned two Distinguished Service Crosses, which are second only to the Medal of Honor, and two Silver Stars, the nation's third-highest award for valor. He also is a two-time Purple Heart recipient. McCaffrey served four combat tours with the 82nd Airborne Division, the Vietnamese Airborne Division, the 1st Cavalry Division and the 24th Mechanized Infantry Division.

McCaffrey also served as the director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy under President Bill Clinton from 1996 to 2001.

SAGE SURVIVOR BY NANCY RUTHFORD SODEMAN

We have made a mockery of democracy by not doing our part. We citizens can do something to make sure we do not remain stuck in a quagmire. Our military veterans are slowly losing promises made to them and so also to their widows and dependents. However, we can make our voices heard. That means we need to be articulate and logical and honest in approaching our legislators. We can do our part by thinking through strategies to get the attention of our politicians to change their attitudes and policies that affect us.

Beforehand we are wise to prepare, think carefully what we need to accomplish. Then we need to write down and practice what we plan to get across to the legislator. We can send emails, letters to our legislators, letters to the editor of newspapers and make calls to the local offices of those for whom we vote. We can start first with our local, then state and finally our United States legislators.

During campaigns, we can get involved by going to the town hall meetings they set up and ask questions and propose ideas in line with the platforms they have indicated. This needs to be done with sincerity, however. We can get friends who have the same agenda to join us at the meetings. Or if we can fill up a room with people with like mind and invite the politician to our own home. This will show support and determination.

During campaigns, we can volunteer to take polls, make calls, clip significant news articles and find other ways to be of service. Remember a democracy is a government in which political power resides in **all the people**. It is for the people and by the people. We all must do our part. Let's start now.



FEBRUARY 28, 2017



Reservation for the February 28, 2017 Tuesday Luncheon Meeting
The Park City Club 5956 Sherry Lane, 17th Floor Dallas, Texas 75225 Phone: (214) 373-0756
Social 11:00 AM — Buffet Opens 11:15 AM Meeting 12:00 Noon
 _____ Person's at \$25.00 each Check enclosed \$ _____
 payable to "MOAA - Greater Dallas Chapter"
Mail Reservation to: Dave Schafer
MOAA-GDC Programs, PO Box 515495, Dallas, TX 75251

 (Spouse/Guest)

Please print name's below exactly as you wish you name badge's to read:

Need a ride? _____ If yes, your ZIP code _____ Give a ride? _____ If yes, your ZIP code _____

CHAPTER OFFICERS—EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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CAREER TRANSITION – JOB FAIRS

BY JOEL BATALSKY, MOAA-GDC CAREER TRANSITION OFFICER

Hurst Conference Center

March 2, 2017 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM

1601 Campus Drive Hurst, TX 76054

<https://events.recruitmilitary.com/events/dallas-all-veterans-job-fair-march-2-2017#registration>

Hurst Conference Center Information

The Job Fair will take place in the Grand Ballroom. Please enter the facility through the main entry.

[Get driving directions to Hurst Conference Center](#)

Parking Information

The Hurst Conference Center offers FREE parking spaces in the Parking Deck and Lower Level Parking (underground). There are 90 additional spaces close to the building, located on Campus Drive and Thousand Oaks. Additional FREE parking can be found at Tarrant County College at 828 Harwood Drive.



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The following is the meeting schedule for the Executive Committee of the Greater Dallas Chapter of the MOAA.

Meetings are held from 9 am to 11 am at the Point Building, C.C. Young Retirement Community, 4847 West Lather Drive, Dallas, TX 75214:

2017

21 January, 18 March, 20 May, 15 July, 16 September, and 18 November

All Chapter members are welcome to attend any Executive Committee meeting.