



MOAA REPORTER

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

STEVEN COLE — SBCOLE@SBCGLOBAL.NET



Happy New Year!

A big thank you to all who organized and attended the 2016 Holiday party at the Brook Hollow Country Club. The venue was good and the comradery was GREAT! We really have a storied, humbled, and knowledgeable group of members in MOAA. Great patriots, each and every one.

CAPT Lavallee returned from MOAA National HQ with the Chapter's 5-Star award banner. As a Chapter we now have a streak of achieving 5-Star status, and while it is not as long of a streak as Navy beating Army (Congratulations to Army's Black Knights! Well-played game. To the victors the spoils!), we do have streak of winning this coveted award. Well done! Let's continue!

I would like to again encourage each of you to place as your priorities for your involvement with the Greater Dallas MOAA Chapter in each of the following: 1) make plans to be at the February lunch/business meeting, 2) recruit members, and 3) pick an area of the Chapter's involvement and commit to be involved and support our good work.

The February meeting will be dedicated to having every voice be heard and prioritizing how we invest our time and effort. While we are duty bound to engage with MOAA National Priorities, we are engaged at the state and local level and we need your help to make these programs go.

The first year of membership is free. The lifeblood of our organization are our members. New members are available to you, the circles you move in, the folks you know, and the contacts you have kept over the years. They are out there. We know them. Recruit them, please!

We have many good efforts on-going in the greater Dallas area. Whether it be JROTC, legislative, the North Texas Veteran's Center, etc.; find your passion and provide much needed support and time. Your time is the most precious commodity you have. Use it for good things.

Treat all you come in contact with *omotenashi*. Omotenashi is the Japanese word for treating people the way you'd want to be treated. Our relationships and our name are about all we have in life.

MOAA-GDC receives 2016 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

HEY, LISTEN UP, YOU SENIORS AGED 65 YEARS AND OLDER! AND YOU YOUNGER GUYS AS WELL!

Have you already received your pneumonia vaccination? The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends Prevnar 13 Vaccine (this stands for "Pneumococcal 13-valent Conjugate Vaccine", which is abbreviated "PCV13") for routine use to help protect adults aged 65 years and older against pneumococcal disease, the kind you can get by being around persons and places where the bacteria are present. Scary, eh! The CDC says if you have not received a pneumococcal vaccine, you should receive a dose of PCV13 first, followed by a dose of PPSV23. But, if you have not previously received PCV13 but you have received one or more doses of PPSV23, then you should receive a dose of PCV13. AND you should discuss all this with your doctor before taking any action.

Now, how about the cost? I chatted with a couple of doctors who said the cost might be around \$60 or \$70 per shot. BUT here is an actual quote from Medicare.gov: "Medicare Part B covers a pneumococcal shot to prevent pneumococcal infections. Part B also cover a different second shot 11 months after the exam where you got the first shot. Talk with your doctor or other health provider to see if you need the shot. It further states, "In 2015 (if you are covered by Medicare) you pay nothing for pneumococcal shots if your doctor or other qualified health care provider accepts assignment."

So, as always, the decisions are yours, both about getting the shots and to determining the costs thereof and who pays. It is certainly worth your time and effort, as well as your health, to consider this!

AND DON'T FORGET THOSE FLU SHOTS!

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

The holiday spirit was alive and well in news about what happened in December. An anonymous person dropped a \$1,000 winning lottery ticket into a Salvation Army kettle in Erie, PA. It's heartwarming to hear about things like this. For someone to do something for others and not even take any credit for it. That is an inspiration to all of us, isn't it?

SAGE SURVIVOR BY NANCY RUTHFORD SODEMAN

Twenty-four years ago, (1992) a computer cross-match system was set up to expose misuse and dishonesty in the Veteran Administration's pension system. The VA, the Internal Revenue Service and Social Security were involved in the process in Washington. They uncovered \$339 million. Congress considered H.R. 5008 which was to have awarded military widows and orphans this money within Dependency and Indemnity Compensation.

However, the House ways and Means Committee adopted an amendment to another bill, H.R. 776 that gave tax breaks and incentives to domestic oil producers using the \$339 million first intended for the widows and orphans. This National Energy bill (H.R. 776) was passed on October 5, 1992 and was signed by President Bush on October 24, 1992.

The American Legion lobbied the Senate to protect that money meant at first for DIC allotments for military widows and orphans; but many other veteran service organizations neglected to stand by the American Legion in their efforts. Now twenty-four years later few politicians are veterans and many veterans are dead or dying.

Those of us who remain, must more than ever, write letters to the editors of newspapers, send telegrams to senators and representatives in Washington to make sure that the rights and entitlements of our veterans are not ignored or violated. Widows, in particular, must recognize that they must fend for themselves and families as valiantly as the suffragettes did in getting the vote for women. This is no time for complacency. As Sir Francis Bacon said, "Serve yourself and you will be well served."

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Watch video previews and highlights from our symposia; you can even catch the MOAA commercial airing on the Military channel!

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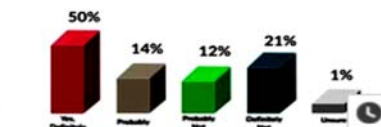
MOAA is leading the way in advocating for our servicemembers on Capitol Hill. Watch testimony and editorial videos from MOAA leadership on issues facing the military today.



Why MOAA?

TheMOAAChannel
8,136 views • 3 months ago

Is it appropriate for retired senior officers to publicly state their support or non-support of political candidates?



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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.

April 25, 2016 Luncheon Meeting – Walter Coughlin



Our speaker for April is Walter Coughlin (in the forefront in the photo).

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.

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY JANUARY 2017 BY JIM BROWN



Obama signs defense bill that authorizes pay raise, more troops

On 23 December 2016, President Obama signed the annual defense authorization act, reluctantly approving a 2.1 percent pay raise for troops next year as authorized by law. He had requested a 1.7 percent increase. The bill also provides for an overhaul of the military medical care system. It includes defense spending priorities and guidelines for fiscal 2017, but does not allot money for those items.

That comes with the annual appropriations bill, which Congress does not expect to finalize until the spring. Short-term budget extensions passed by Congress in early December will cover most of the gaps in military spending until then.

Congress also included plans to significantly boost the number of service members. Army end strength is set at 476,000 soldiers, about 16,000 more than the White House had requested for fiscal 2017. The Marine Corps will rise to 185,000 troops, an increase of about 3,000 over requested levels. The Air Force will go to 321,000 airmen, around 4,000 more than Obama wanted. The Navy would remain at 324,000 sailors.

The \$619 billion bill is about \$3.2 billion more than Obama's request, a complaint that prompted veto threats from the White House in recent months. But the measure passed both the House and Senate with veto-proof margins and significant Democratic support.

The authorization bill includes a restructuring of Tricare, with new fees and costs for troops who enter the service in 2018. It also extends care hours at military clinics across the country, consolidates management for those facilities and expands partnerships with private-care physicians.

Lawmakers also used the policy bill to enact a number of acquisition reform plans but rejected proposals to overhaul how housing stipends are calculated. The legislation also includes a prohibition on base closing efforts favored by the Pentagon and language restricting the closing of detention facilities at Naval Base Guantanamo Bay in Cuba.

President-elect Donald Trump has already promised to boost military spending, including more personnel and equipment. He has also promised that the country will "take care of the military" better than under President Barack Obama.

New Veterans' bill limits veteran gains; reserve retirees win veteran status

Signed into law Dec. 16, the major veterans' bill passed in the 114th Congress, the Jeff Miller and Richard Blumenthal Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2016 (H.R. 6416), orders more studies of VA issues and modifies current programs, but fails to make truly significant and costly program improvements.

Due to disagreements over priorities and funding, Congress did **not** (1) authorize a proposed \$3 billion plan to give older generations of severely injured veterans the same caregiver benefits enacted six years ago, for post-9/11 injured veterans; (2) modernize the VA's appeals process for veteran claims, and (3) impose stiff new accountability requirements on incompetent or misbehaving VA employees. The Veterans Choice program still lacks prompt payment standards and streamlined requirements for community medical care providers to enter into service agreements with the VA.

From the perspective of major veteran service organizations, the roadblock to critical reforms of benefits and services are budget controls on the veteran committees. MOAA, VFW and other vet groups have vigorously lobbied to end sequestration in order to realign budget caps to meet needs. Until caps are removed, Congress can only approve major new benefits by making cuts to existing programs.

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY JANUARY 2017 - CONTINUED

The Senate Committee's Veterans First Act, which a bipartisan majority approved in May, proposed to expand the VA caregiver benefit to families of older generations of severely injured veterans from conflicts as far back as World War II. The price tag was \$3 billion, which the committee sought to cover by raising interest rates on veterans reusing their home-loan benefit, rounding down disability compensation payments, and dampening the housing allowance stipend for the Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit. Lawmakers know those are hard tradeoffs for veteran groups to accept. Another Senate initiative - to consolidate outside provider payments to improve access to community health care - would cost \$34 billion over 10 years, an impossible expense to absorb with existing budget caps.

On the House side, federal employee unions vehemently opposed and senators rejected a proposal to punish wrongdoers among the VA workforce by linking reform of the VA claims appeal process to tougher employee accountability rules. However, there was general support for a provision that gives honorary "veteran" status to many Reserve and National Guard retirees who had never completed a qualifying period of active duty service under Title 10 to meet the legal definition of "veteran" and receive a DD-214. No added benefits will flow from the recognition.

Other provisions take steps to narrowly improve access to health care, disability, and education benefits and assistance to the homeless. Sen. Johnny Isakson (R-GA), chairman of the Senate committee, called H.R. 6416 a "down payment on the debt" owed to veterans.

Other highlights of H.R. 6416 will:

- ◆ Require the VA to enter into an agreement with the National Academy of Medicine to conduct an assessment on scientific research relating to the descendants of individuals exposed to toxins including Agent Orange.
- ◆ Relax a rule that VA staff physicians can't work more than 80 hours in any two-week period, which has handcuffed the department in using its full-time doctors more efficiently.
- ◆ Direct the VA to provide, in lieu of a headstone or marker, a medallion to be affixed to a privately purchased headstone or marker of an individual, signifying their status as a veteran, if they served in the armed forces on or after April 6, 1917.
- ◆ Require the VA to arrange for an independent assessment of the exams it gives individuals seeking disability compensation for traumatic brain injury.
- ◆ Authorize contract physicians to conduct compensation and pension examinations at any location in any state as long as exams are within the scope of the authorized duties under the contract.
- ◆ Expand the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims from seven judges to nine through 2020 to help address a backlog of claim appeals.



Repeal Sequestration

Unless current law is changed, sequestration will return next year and automatically trigger deep cuts to the Defense Department. These severe cuts will exhaust our resources and capabilities in immeasurable ways—the toll on our military and their families will likewise be incalculable.



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 _____

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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.