



# Jayhawk Chapter MOAA Newsletter



This newsletter is published bimonthly by the Jayhawk Chapter of Kansas, Military Officers Association of America, as a service to all members. The Jayhawk emblem is used with the permission of the registered trademark owner, the University of Kansas. The newsletter is only as good as the material available, so each member is requested to forward news and other items of interest to the editors.

## September Program:

Dr. Robert St.Peter, President of the Kansas Health Institute, will address the role of the Kansas Health Institute in promoting the health of Kansans.

**4-STAR CHAPTER - 2005**  
**5-STAR CHAPTER -2004**  
**5-STAR CHAPTER - 2003**

**---**  
**WEBSITE AWARD - 2004**  
**NEWSLETTER AWARD - 2003**

## President's Corner

*by Bob Longino*

### "Give Me 10!"

MOAA kicked off a national "Give Me 10!" campaign on September 1<sup>st</sup>. Their objective is to recruit 4200 new members before the end of the year. In the past several years MOAA's membership has declined, even though the name change entitled more active duty officers to join the association. As the strongest "voice" for both retired and active duty military officers in Washington, it is in all of our best interest to support MOAA and this big membership campaign.

All MOAA chapters have been asked to recruit ten new members by the end of the year. This is a good deal for: MOAA – more members; new members – a two-year membership for the price of one; and for local chapters – as we get new members and a monetary incentive for recruiting new members. That is right! Local chapters get \$10 for every new member they recruit and an extra \$100 for reaching the goal of "10" new members. There are also additional incentives for surpassing the goal of "10." I will be discussing with our board about the possibility of putting together a membership task force to support this campaign and our chapter's continual membership activities.

I hope to have more information by our September 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. In the meanwhile, if you are aware of any former, retired, or currently serving active duty officers, discuss the benefits of joining MOAA and our chapter with them. Be the first to help us attain our goal!

Finally, I was notified by MOAA that our chapter received a 4-Star Award for 2004. That is down from our previous 5-Star Awards but still very favorable recognition from MOAA. We will be getting a 4-Star banner to hang on our chapter flag soon.

See you on the 20<sup>th</sup>!

Semper Fi,

*Bob Longino*

**Volume X, Issue 5**

**1 September 2005**

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Lt Col Robert Longino, USMC (Ret)  
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**\* Reservations should be sent to Jim Cooper by 17 September**

**IF YOU NEED A RIDE TO MEETINGS, PLEASE LET US KNOW ON YOUR RESERVATION FORM**



# JAYHAWK CHAPTER NEWS

## In Memorium

LTC John Henry Wigington passed away 7 July 2005 at his home. John received a Bachelor of Arts degree in geography from Oklahoma State University and did post-graduate work at Inter-American University of San German in Puerto Rico. He received his master's degree in counseling from the University of North Dakota and his doctorate in counseling and guidance from Kansas University.

John served in the Air Force from 1954 to 1975, including flying during the Vietnam War. He retired as a lieutenant colonel after three years as associate professor of Air Force ROTC at KU. He subsequently directed the psychometric testing center at KU until he retired in 1992.

He was a life member of the Military Officers Association of America and a member of American Association of Counseling and Development, Kansas

Association of Counseling and Development and American Educational Research Assn. He was a past president and board member of the University Bridge Club and member of the Lawrence Jayhawk Kiwanis Club. He received the Distinguished Secretary Kiwanis Award and was the Kiwanian of the Year in 1985.

He married Virginia "Gini" Conger on Aug. 31, 1952, in Pawhuska, Okla. She survives, of the home. Other survivors include a son, John Robert, Baldwin; two daughters, Leslie Wigington, Colorado Springs, Colo., and Lisa Miller, Rockton, Ill.; two brothers, his twin, Harper, Snellville, Ga., and Carl, Stigler, Okla.; one sister Mozelle Helflin, Stigler, Okla.; four grandchildren; and two step-grandchildren. The family suggested memorials to Heart of America Hospice or Oncology Center of Lawrence Memorial Hospital, sent in care of Rumsey-Yost Funeral Home.

\*\*\*\*\*

**LTC David Darwin**, Deane E. Ackers Distinguished Professor of Civil, Environmental, and Architectural Engineering, was installed as Vice-President of the American Concrete Institute for a two-year term at the institute's spring convention in New York City. Darwin is in line to assume the Presidency in 2007 and will be only the fifth member of the academic community to hold the position since 1980. At the convention, Darwin also received the Joe W. Kelly Award "for his inspirational teaching of the behavior and design of concrete structures, and for his many contributions to advancing design practices through research, technical committee work, and technology transfer activities."

A member of the KU Faculty since 1974, Darwin is also the Director of the Structural Engineering and Materials Laboratory.

Founded in 1904, the American Concrete Institute (ACI) is a technical and educational society with 16,000 members in 115 countries and 97 chapters in 32 countries. ACI has produced more than 400 technical documents, reports, guides, specifications, and codes for the best use of concrete, including the building code for structural concrete that is used throughout the United States and many other countries as the standard for reinforced concrete construction.



**LtCol Ron Meyers**, a mushroom hunter from Lawrence, Kansas, searches for the fungus in Hixon Forest, July 21st, during a meeting of the North American Mycological Association at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

Photo by Peter Thomson

Ron made the front page of the La Crosse, WI newspaper. He was among 45 people who spent at least an hour in Hixon Forest, searching for mushrooms and other fungi. Other events included lectures by renowned mycologists, but the draw for many conference participants was the daily forays into area forests. For the full article, click on <http://www.lacrossetribune.com/articles/2005/07/22/news/01shroom.txt>

**CAPT Jim Henry**, traveled to Alexandria, Virginia in June and met with three MOAA National Board members and three MOAA staff members to assist in designing MOAA's new "Give Me 10" membership recruiting campaign. The program, which will be launched on 1 September, is aimed at signing up at least 4,200 new members by 31 December. Special financial incentives are being offered to chapters and to individual "recruiters". Chapters that participate will receive \$10.00 for each new member recruited, with a \$100.00 bonus after the chapter recruits 10 members. Individual recruiters will be entered into a national sweepstakes with a chance to win \$1,000. The recruiter will receive one chance to win this prize for each new member recruited.

**Fort Leavenworth Retiree Day:**

Fort Leavenworth's Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) will be held on 29 October this year. Registration will begin at 0800 hrs. The program will be presented in the East gym of Harney Sports Complex from 0800 to 1030 hrs. Representatives from various government agencies, service organization and Fort Leavenworth activities will operate counseling booths with significant information for retirees from 1030 to 1300 hrs.

Together, representatives from Munson Army Health Center and the Kansas Lions Mobile Screening Unit will conduct a Health Awareness Fair. Some of the services provided include: blood sugar checks, glaucoma screening, hearing checks and blood pressure checks.

This year, the Provost Marshal's Office will have representatives located at the Adjutant General (AG), Building 193, for vehicle registration. A representative from

Defense Finance and Accounting System will also be at the AG to answer questions or assist with problems. As usual, the AG ID Card and DEERS section will be open for any updates or changes you may need.

Parking for Retirees will be at the Commissary and Post Exchange parking lots. There will be a free shuttle bus available that will run every 20 minutes. A pick-up point will be designated in each parking lot and marked with "Pick-up Point" signs. The shuttle will start at the PX pick-up point, travel to the Commissary pick-up point, then back to Harney Gym. The bus will make a stop at the AG building upon request. Golf carts will also be available and will assist people from the parking lots to the gym.

**PROGRAM**

- 0800 Registration Coffee & donuts compliments of Armed Forces Bank
- 0830 Music by Patton Junior High School Band
- 0845 National Anthem
- 0850 Invocation
- 0855 Opening Remarks
- 0900 Welcome
- 0905 CDR Katherine O'Neil Tracy, Deputy Directory, Military Officers Association of America
- 0935 Mr. Tom Bebbington, Senior Account Manager, Program Promotion Department, Long Term Care Insurance Program
- 1005 COL William B. Davis, Commander, Munson Army Health Center
- 1015 Benediction
- 1020 Door Prizes
- 1030 - 1300 Health Awareness Fair sponsored by Munson Army Health Center



*Army News*  
*LTC Jeff Maxcy*

**Greetings, Jayhawk Chapter!**

*The Jayhawk Battalion is ready for another outstanding year of ROTC, and the cadre and MS IV cadets have planned an exciting semester of training.*

*Throughout the summer, cadets were busy with training and summer school. Twenty cadets graduated from the Leadership Development and Assessment Course (LDAC) at Ft. Lewis. They performed extremely well and two earned the coveted Recondo badge which is extremely difficult to achieve. These cadets have been assigned staff positions and are responsible for training the younger cadets. An additional seven cadets graduated from the Leaders Training Course (LTC) at Ft. Knox and joined the Battalion as MS Ills.*

*Other cadets attended other outstanding Army training programs. One cadet attended the United Kingdom Officer Training Corps training and trained with his United Kingdom peers. Two cadets completed Airborne School and one cadet completed Air Assault School. Three other cadets participated in Robin Sage which is the last phase of training for Special Forces soldiers. Other cadets participated in the nurse summer training program, drill cadet leadership training program and cadet troop leadership training program.*

*After all that outstanding summer training, we now turn our attention to the fall 2005 semester. We began the semester by welcoming new cadets at new cadet orientation,*

and then welcomed all cadets at the first leadership laboratory of the semester. The cadets and cadre are looking forward to events scheduled over the next few months including Family Day on 17 September and the FTX from 30 September to 2 October.

Finally, we have been working to establish an alumni association and have scheduled the first event for 29

October. Check out our website at [www.ku.edu/~kurotc/](http://www.ku.edu/~kurotc/) for more information on the alumni association and our other upcoming events.

**JAYHAWKS LEAD THE WAY!**

*LTC Jeff Maxcy*



## Navy News CAPT Rich High, USN



### **Greetings from the Commanding Officer, KU NROTC,**

The University of Kansas fall semester began on 18 August and with it so began the first step toward future Naval careers for 17 new Midshipmen who have joined the Jayhawk battalion. KU NROTC completed Orientation and Indoctrination (O & I) week with our newest Midshipmen candidates at Camp Clark, Missouri, the weekend prior to school starting. Our goal for O & I is to not create a boot camp environment but to familiarize and train the incoming candidates on Navy policy, programs and scholastic requirements. Additionally, they get their first taste of physical training requirements and the importance of teamwork. I am very pleased to report the group did an outstanding job and demonstrated not only their motivation but also their commitment to this program and their country. As a result, the 17 newly designated Midshipmen represent one of the largest Freshman NROTC classes at KU in recent years.

Lastly, I will use this forum to announce my upcoming retirement. The Navy has confirmed my request to retire on 01 January 2006. As a result, I will be transferred to the

retired list effective that date. In February 1971, I reported to boot camp in San Diego and began a Naval career that has been filled with truly exciting assignments, unbelievable adventures, amazing opportunities and provided me with professional and personal rewards I could never have imagined on that first day of boot camp. So many wonderful people have helped Mary and me along the way and we will forever be in their debt.

We are planning a retirement ceremony during the latter part of October and will keep you all informed as plans become more certain. My executive officer, Commander Chris Orwoll, will serve as the interim commanding officer until the Navy can transfer another Captain into the billet early next summer.

**Sincerely,**

*Captain Rich High*



## Air Force News LtCol Sandra Leiker, USAF

### **AF ROTC Det 280**

Hello Jayhawk MOAA Chapter! This fall, the new freshman cadets are not the only folks new to Air Force ROTC at KU – they join me! Col Mike Lee, who has been the AFROTC Det 280 Commander here for the past three years, decided to retire from the Air Force after more than 30 years of patriotic service. It was an honor to attend his retirement ceremony – I was quite touched by his own remarks, as well as by the tremendous regard the cadets held for him. They put together a wonderful slideshow tribute - with pictures spanning his career and highlighting his love for both the service and his family. As you all must know, Col

Lee left big shoes for me to fill. On the other hand, he left a great ROTC program and a cadet corps 75 strong who are just bursting to start the fall semester.

My own background is in Air Force Acquisition and Operational Testing. I am an 'Operations Analyst (OA)' by trade – I use math/statistics (yuk!) to distill information about an issue or system so that Air Force leaders can make informed decisions. The Air Force uses OAs primarily in the science and technology arena, but we can also deploy (say, to an Air Operations Center) to help leaders make effective operational/tactical decisions. I hope to use my insight and

experience with high-tech AF systems to inspire some of our bright engineering program cadets heading for AF science/engineering career fields.

As always happens when someone new rotates in . . . someone else moves on to tackle new challenges. In addition to Col Lee's departure, our ADD-itional Lieutenant Kyle Grieves, who was assigned to us temporarily while he awaited pilot training, left us Aug 12th to head for sunny Pensacola.

We wish him the best – he'll do us proud! Also, TSgt Vanessa Hammond, our superstar personnelist, leaves for Tinker AFB just before the Labor Day holiday. She's been here for four years – I know the cadets (and CADRE!) are really going to miss her.

The Cadet Wing has so much going on already this fall that I don't even know where to start! Many of the cadets just returned from exciting summer programs – some got to fly in T-38s and T-6s as part of flying orientation, others shadowed Air Force officers in various career specialties like intelligence and civil engineering. One jumped out of perfectly good

airplanes at Army Airborne training - HOOOAHH! As always, our sophomores (now juniors!) demonstrated their officership/leadership skills at Field Training Encampments at Maxwell, McConnell, and Tyndall AF bases. Summer camp is an intense, intellectually and physically demanding 4-week training experience where the 14 cadets were really asked to give their all! KU cadets shined among the many hundreds – bringing home expert marksman, honor flight, superior performance, and warrior spirit awards!

Up next – Parent's Weekend festivities (Sep 17th); Career Day (Oct 4th); Veteran's Day Retreat Ceremony/24-hour vigil (at KU Vietnam War Memorial), and Joint Military Ball with our sister service ROTC units. We truly value your support of the cadets and DET 280 activities – feel free to contact us at DET 280 any time and join the fun!

*Lt Col Sandra S. Leiker*

Commander, Air Force ROTC Det 280



## FROM THE KANSAS COUNCIL PRESIDENT

We held our Third Quarter Council meeting aboard Fort Leavenworth on August 6, 2005. The Santa Fe Trail Chapter was our host and provided us with great meeting facilities at the Armed Forces Insurance facility, who also provided us with computer hookups for which we are most appreciative. Lieutenant General Richard Keller, President of the Santa Fe Trail Chapter, welcomed all of us and introduced Colonel John Tower, Garrison Commander, who gave us a presentation on current and future happenings at Fort Leavenworth. Just as Fort Riley is expecting an increase in strength and infrastructure improvements, so to is Fort Leavenworth. We should all be excited about the military growth in the State of Kansas.

I am pleased to announce that our Kansas Council now has its own WEB site for all to visit. I encourage all to visit <http://www.kansasmoaa.org> and click your way around the site. You will notice the many links that are available to you and you can visit the web site of your own chapter by clicking on the Chapter name. It is through the hard work of CWO4 David Kennedy, USMC, Ret that our Council has this site and we send out a big Thank You to Dave. Dave is also seeking any comments about the site and should you see fit to do so you can contact him through the site.

Our Nominating Committee, chaired by MG Jack Strukel, submitted nominations to lead our Council for 2006. The slate of Officers submitted are:

- President: COL Robert V. Hadley, AUS-Ret (Wichita Chapter)
- Pres-Elect: CWO3 David L. Kennedy, USMC-Ret (Sunflower Chapter)
- 1<sup>st</sup> VP: LTG Richard F. Keller, USA-Ret (Santa Fe Trail Chapter)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> VP: COL Gary LaGrange, USA-Ret (Flint Hills Chapter)

Treasurer: Col Francis R. Fanning, USAF-Ret (Wichita Chapter)

The slate of Officers submitted is an outstanding group of leaders and we all look forward to an exciting year under their leadership.

Although some of our Chapters have taken the summer off and didn't have any formal meetings, we still had reports of new and exciting things accomplished over the summer months and their plans for the upcoming fall and winter months. It is such an honor to be associated with such dedicated Chapter leaders and we should all be looking forward to participating in our Chapter activities. I encourage everyone who is reading this article to take an active part in their Chapter meetings and other activities. Our next Council meeting will be hosted by the KAW Valley Chapter, Topeka, Kansas on November 5, 2005 and we all look forward to another exciting gathering.

I was very pleased and proud to announce at our Council meeting that four of our Kansas Chapters were selected to receive 2004 Level of Excellence Awards from MOAA National. The awards were:

- Category III (75-199 Members)
  - Five Star Chapter Sunflower Chapter
  - Four Star Chapters Jayhawk Chapter
  - Flint Hills Chapter

- Category IV (Less than 75 Members)
  - Five Star Chapter Santa Fe Trail Chapter

Our congratulations go out to all these Chapters for their excellent work.

*Harry Malnicof*

Major USMC (Ret)  
President, Kansas Council

## MOAA LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

### MOAA's Legislative Update for Friday, July 1, 2005:

#### Issue 1: VA Medical Shortfall Could Reach \$2.6 Billion.

Congress is scrambling to fix a shameful shortfall in VA health care funding. Unfortunately, the House and Senate unanimously voted this week to do different things. MOAA's Web site will let you give them a little constituent guidance.

#### Issue 2: Coalition Testifies on Transition Programs.

MOAA Deputy Director Bob Norton (USA-Ret.) testified Wednesday on behalf of the Military Coalition before a House panel looking into transition assistance programs for Guard and Reserve members.

#### Issue 3: DoD Panel Seeks ED Drug Co-pay Hike.

Beneficiary advocates took issue this week with a DoD pharmacy panel's recommendation to more than double the co-pays on the most frequently prescribed ED medications. For the complete story (we can't list the brand names without having our subscribers' spam filters block it as if it were an on-line pharmacy ad) please visit: [http://moaaonline.org/ct/D7z\\_irK10mch/](http://moaaonline.org/ct/D7z_irK10mch/)

#### Issue 4: Fly the Flag!

Have a safe holiday weekend.

### MOAA's Legislative Update for Friday, July 8, 2005:

#### Issue 1: Congress Returns to Fireworks on SBP, Concurrent Receipt, Health Care.

Returning after the July 4th recess, the Senate is expected to take up a variety of amendments of interest to the military community when it considers the FY2006 Defense Authorization Act.

#### Issue 2: MOAA Adds New Talent

Col. Mike Hayden, USAF-Ret., joined the MOAA legislative team this week upon completion of a 25-year military career in air and space operations, personnel, recruiting, training, and education. As our newest deputy director for government relations, he will add his wide knowledge and broad experience to MOAA's legislative expertise, focusing on active duty and retiree compensation issues.

Hayden's most recent duty assignments were in the Pentagon, as chief of the Military Personnel Policy Division, HQ USAF, and as chief, Personnel Services Division for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In the latter position, he worked with MOAA in winning Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) coverage for survivors of servicemembers killed on active duty. He also has commanded an Air Force recruiting squadron and compiled 2,800 flying hours as a B-52 navigator/weapons systems officer. MOAA is pleased and fortunate to welcome him to the government relations team.

He replaces Col. Mike Jordan, USAF-Ret., deputy director since 2000, who has been promoted to serve as MOAA's new director of Contract Services and Marketing.

Over the last several years, Jordan played a key role in winning concurrent receipt for disabled retirees, enhanced military pay raises, homeowner capital gains tax relief, upgraded relocation allowances, and voting rights protections for the active duty force, among many other accomplishments. Now, MOAA will take even greater advantage of his leadership and planning skills in his important new position.

### MOAA's Legislative Update for Friday, July 15, 2005:

#### Issue 1: MOAA Pledges Support for Sen. Nelson's SBP Amendment.

MOAA's President VADM Norb Ryan, Jr., met with Sen. Bill Nelson (D-FL) to pledge support for his planned SBP amendment.

#### Issue 2: MOAA Letters Confirm Support for Key Senate Bill Amendments.

Letters are going to Sens. Harry Reid (D-NV), Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and Hillary Clinton (D-NY) thanking them for their efforts to push relief for disabled retirees and expanded Guard/Reserve health care.

#### Issue 3: MOAA Signs Agreements in Support of Guard and Reserve.

MOAA's President signed agreements this week with the head of the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR).

#### Issue 4: Nexium, Teveten Co-pays Rise.

Beginning this Sunday, Nexium(r), Teveten(r), and Teveten HCT(r) will require \$22 co-pays.

### MOAA's Legislative Update for Friday, July 22, 2005:

#### Issue 1: Senate Considering Retiree, Survivor Issues Now.

The Senate began action on the FY2006 Defense Authorization Bill this week, and approved permanent TRICARE coverage for Selected Reservists. Amendments to help disabled retirees, older SBP-enrolled retirees and SBP survivors are still pending. We need a renewed flood of calls and e-mails to senators now to support these amendments. See details below.

#### Issue 2: DACMC Considers Pay, Retirement, Health Care Changes.

A Defense Department-appointed panel of economists and management consultants heard briefings Wednesday on possible ways to make military compensation programs track more closely with civilian practices.

#### Issue 3: Discouraging Enlistment Hurts National Defense.

The Pentagon's senior personnel leaders told Congress this week that many coaches, teachers and other "influencers" are discouraging young people from serving in the military. Regardless of individual views of the war in Iraq, MOAA believes we can't sustain a strong national defense without supporting military recruiting efforts.

Issue 4: Health Care Lobbyists Are Changing Seats

Sadly for MOAA, Sue Schwartz, DBA, RN, deputy director of Government Relations since 2000, left the staff this past Wednesday, to join her husband (an active duty Marine Corps officer) in his new assignment at MCAS, Cherry Point, N.C.

As MOAA's lobbyist for health care issues, Schwartz played a key role in winning TRICARE For Life (TFL), TRICARE Senior Pharmacy coverage, and increased Medicare and TRICARE reimbursements for providers. She has protected members' interests as a member of the President's Commission on DoD/VA Health Care and the Beneficiary Advisory Panel for DoD's pharmacy program. She was a primary author of MOAA's acclaimed TFL pamphlet for members and providers, as well as a new uniform formulary pamphlet you'll be seeing this fall.

Schwartz will put her considerable energy and skills into helping Marines and their families at Cherry Point, but MOAA will continue to benefit from her insights, as she has been hired by HealthNet to be that TRICARE contractor's beneficiary liaison to The Military Coalition.

Col. Jim Young, USAF-Ret., will fill Schwartz's position in mid-August, upon completion of a 27-year military career as a distinguished pharmacist, hospital commander, and senior health care staff officer. Young's most recent duty assignment has been as director, DoD Pharmacy Programs in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Previously, he served as chief pharmacist for the Air Force and as chief of the Air Force Biomedical Science Corps. At the operational level, he commanded the Medical Group at Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz., and later was selected to command the David Grant Medical Center at Travis AFB, Calif., where he also served as DoD's lead agent for TRICARE Region 10.

He brings a wealth of professional expertise, perspective, and leadership experience, and MOAA is pleased and fortunate to be able to welcome him to the government relations team.

**MOAA's Legislative Update for Friday, July 29, 2005:**Issue 1: Key Senate Amendments In Limbo.

- \* Reserve Compensation. Sen. Patrick Leahy's (D-VT) amendment would authorize a full housing allowance for Guard/Reserve members activated for more than 30 days (vs. 140 days currently). Senators John Kerry (D-MA) and Richard Durbin (D-IL) have offered amendments aimed at encouraging continued civilian employer payment of salary differentials for employees who suffer pay reductions when mobilized to active duty with the Guard/Reserve.
- \* VA Health Care. Sen. Debbie Stabenow's (D-MI) amendment would require mandatory veterans' health care funding, adjusted each year for inflation and population changes.

Issue 2: VA Has Cash Coming

When Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson acknowledged to Congress a few weeks ago that the VA would come up \$1.5 billion short on its health care budget this year, and that the budget submitted for 2006 is \$2 billion

short of what the VA really needs to care for returning veterans, it set angry House and Senate leaders scrambling to make up the shortfall.

On July 26, House and Senate conferees hastily agreed to add \$1.5 billion in supplemental FY2005 funds to the FY2006 Interior Appropriations bill (H.R.2361). The full House passed that legislation yesterday, and Senate action is expected today (July 29) so it can be sent to the president for immediate signature into law.

As for next year's shortfall, the House and Senate Appropriations and Veterans Affairs Committee leaders are still working that issue, but have pledged to ensure VA health care is fully funded.

After years of dismissing the claims of veterans' organizations' claims of chronic VA under-funding, Congress finally seems embarrassed enough to stop overlooking this shameful problem.

**MOAA's Legislative Update for Friday, August 19, 2005:**Issue 1: SBP Fixes At Risk

Last week MOAA reported that Sen. John Warner, Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, has filed an amendment to the FY2006 Defense Authorization Bill that would defer action on MOAA's top legislative goal for 2005 - fixing two significant inequities concerning the military Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP).

Current law reduces SBP for survivors of members whose death was caused by military service. In those cases, the survivor is entitled to an annuity from the VA (currently \$993 a month for a spouse), and the SBP payment is reduced by that amount. Often, this wipes out most or all of the SBP annuity. MOAA believes that, if military service causes the member's death, the VA indemnity payment should be added to SBP, not substituted for it.

The other SBP inequity affects older retirees enrolled in SBP. Congress passed a law in 1998 authorizing paid-up SBP coverage for retirees who have attained age 70 and paid SBP premiums for 30 years. This would allow such retirees stop paying premiums while retaining coverage for their spouses. But Congress delayed the effective date of that law until October 1, 2008 - which means thousands of Greatest Generation retirees who enrolled in SBP in 1972 will have to pay premiums for 36 years - and end up paying about one-third more SBP premiums than similar members who retired after 1978.

Sen. Warner's amendment, if accepted, would negate a previous amendment proposed by Sen. Bill Nelson (D-FL) to end these last two major SBP inequities as of October 1, 2005. The Warner amendment would delete Sen. Nelson's proposals entirely and substitute language calling for a study of the VA/SBP issue. By deleting any reference to paid-up SBP, the Warner amendment would effectively kill any fix for that issue, too.

MOAA believes strongly that survivors and older retirees need action on Sen. Nelson's amendment now, not just delays and studies.

We need the help of MOAA Council and Chapter leaders, individual members, and others to contact your senators and urge them to:

- (a) stand firm in supporting Sen. Nelson's SBP amendment (SA #762) to the Defense Authorization Bill (S. 1042), and
- (b) oppose any alternative amendments by Sen. Warner or others that would dilute, defer, or drop action on these important issues.

Use any (or all) of the following three ways to convey this message:

- \* Make a personal visit to your two senators' local offices while they're home for the August recess (you can find addresses and phone numbers for state offices on MOAA's Web site at [http://moaaonline.org/ct/7dz\\_irK1lmvS//](http://moaaonline.org/ct/7dz_irK1lmvS//)). This is particularly important for council and chapter leaders who represent the thousands of MOAA members in most states.
- \* Send your senators a MOAA-prepared e-mail by clicking on the "Fix SBP Now" alert on MOAA's Web site at [http://moaaonline.org/ct/77z\\_irK1lmvL//](http://moaaonline.org/ct/77z_irK1lmvL//) (note: Virginia residents will see separate, personalized messages for Sen. Warner and Sen. Allen).
- \* Call your senators' Washington offices by using MOAA's toll-free hot line to Capitol Hill (1-877-762-8762). Just ask the Capitol operator to connect you to your senators' offices.

#### Issue 2: 2006 COLA May Be Largest in 14 Years

Earlier this week, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that inflation broke out of its summer doldrums with a half-point jump in July. So far this fiscal year, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) has risen 3.2%.

The 2006 COLA will be determined by dividing the three-month average CPI for July, August and September 2005 by the average CPI for the same three months of 2004.

Even if inflation is flat for the remaining two months, that would make the 2006 cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) the largest retirees have seen since the 3.5% 2001 COLA, and the second-largest since the 3.7% COLA in 1992.

While some may like the bigger retired pay increase, that only means that living expenses already have gone up more rapidly than usual, and retired pay, Social Security, SBP and other annuities are only chasing those expenses after the fact. Given a choice, we'd prefer lower inflation and the resultant lower COLAs.

#### **MOAA's Legislative Update for Friday, August 26, 2005:**

##### Issue 1: Benefits Busters Back At It

Last year, Rep. Jeb Hensarling (R-TX) introduced legislation aimed at imposing automatic and arbitrary cuts in so-called entitlements spending programs when their cost rose above certain relatively modest levels. Under government accounting definitions, military retirement, survivor benefits, veterans' benefits and TRICARE For Life fall in this category, along with programs ranging from student loans to Medicare.

MOAA and many others, from the Disabled American Veterans to AARP, opposed an effort by Rep. Hensarling and Rep. Mark Kirk (R-IL) to include such a mechanism in a

budget bill last year, and the House of Representatives rejected the proposal.

Now, Hill sources tell us, House Majority Leader Tom Delay is consulting with a group of colleagues (including Reps. Hensarling and Kirk) about considering some kind of budget enforcement bill this fall.

Hensarling's proposed legislation (introduced this year as H.R. 2290) would require automatic cuts in selected programs if total entitlements spending growth over the previous year exceeds that due to increases in inflation and population - about 2.4% per year.

But its cutback formula would impose disproportional cuts on selected programs. Social Security would be exempt, as would Medicare Part A (hospitalization) -- but not Part B (doctor bills). Federal civilian retirement would be exempt from automatic cuts, but military retirement and survivor benefits, veterans' benefits, and TRICARE For Life would not.

Because Medicare, Medicaid and interest on the national debt will grow far faster than inflation, cuts in non-exempt programs would have to be far bigger. H.R. 2290 would let Congress elect to cut any entitlement program but Social Security in order to avoid the "doomsday" automatic cuts.

We think Congress is unlikely to enact a plan that draconian, but some such mechanism isn't out of the question. Gramm-Rudman-Hollings deficit control legislation passed in 1985, which worked on a similar principle, forced substantial delays in military retired pay cost-of-living adjustments for several years in the mid-1990s.

We would hope most members of Congress are more sensitive to military benefit issues these days (especially with a war on) than in the mid-1990s, but history (and current Pentagon rhetoric about the rising cost of military benefits) makes it clear that sentiments can change in a hurry, so this potential threat can't be discounted.

We've posted H.R. 2290 on MOAA's Web site as a bill we oppose, along with a suggested letter to House members to let members and others register their concerns ([http://moaaonline.org/ct/Rpz\\_irK1-Xvhl/](http://moaaonline.org/ct/Rpz_irK1-Xvhl/)). (H.R. 2290 can be found at the bottom of the bills list, under "Veterans and Other Issues").

In the meantime, MOAA and the Coalition will keep a watchful eye and generate additional updates and alerts if any such initiative takes shape on the Hill.

##### Issue 2: BRAC Surgery

After long months of hearings, installation visits, and sometimes bitter public debates, the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission is getting down to vote on specific basing actions recommended by the Defense Department.

As this update was being prepared, the Commission had endorsed Pentagon proposals to close Fort Monmouth, NJ; Fort Monroe, VA; Forts Gillem and McPherson, GA; Pascagoula Naval Station, MS; and NAS Brunswick, ME; and to realign almost 23,000 jobs out of leased office space in Northern Virginia to installations in Virginia, Maryland and elsewhere. Additionally, the Commission agreed to close Walter Reed Medical Center in favor of expanding medical facilities at Fort Belvoir, VA and Bethesda, MD.

(continued to Page 10)



## JAYHAWK CHAPTER MOAA



A membership meeting will be held Tuesday, 20 September 2005, at the Lawrence Country Club.  
Dinner cost is **\$20.00** per meal.

**The Program:** Dr. Robert St.Peter, President of the Kansas Health Institute, will address  
the role of the Kansas Health Institute in promoting the health of Kansans.

**Social Hour:** 1800 hours

**Dinner:** 1900 hours

**The Menu:** *Filet mignon, baked potato, vegetable, rolls, salad, tea or coffee and ice cream*

Send your reservation and check payable to **Jayhawk Chapter MOAA** to arrive no later than 17 September 2005, to:  
CAPT (Ret) Jim Cooper  
1115 Stone Meadows Drive  
Lawrence, KS 66049-3961

If you have any questions, you may contact Jim at 842-7037 or John Halladay at 843-6184.

*cut here*

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Yes, please make \_\_\_\_\_ reservations for me and my guests. (Spouse and other guests are welcome.)

The cost is \$20.00 per meal. I am enclosing a check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for meal(s).

TOTAL: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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Name

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Telephone

**Dinner reservations are confirmed on Monday before the Tuesday dinner.  
Cancellations, if necessary, should be made prior to Monday noon;  
otherwise, the Lawrence Country Club will charge us for those meals.**

# **BRING A GUEST !!!**

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

MOAA WEBSITE: [www.moaa.org](http://www.moaa.org)

JAYHAWK CHAPTER WEBSITE: [www.jayhawkmoaa.org](http://www.jayhawkmoaa.org)

We are still looking for members willing to receive the Newsletter by e-mail. If you received this issue by mail and would prefer e-mail, please let us know at [jwhalladay@sunflower.com](mailto:jwhalladay@sunflower.com).

**2005 MOAA Calendar:**

Tuesday 20 September MOAA meeting

Tuesday 15 November MOAA meeting

Tuesday 17 January 2006 MOAA meeting

Tuesday 21 March 2006 MOAA meeting

Tuesday 16 May 2006 MOAA meeting

**MOAA LEGISLATIVE UPDATES (continued from Page 8):**

But the Commission denied the Defense Department's plans to close the Groton submarine base in New London, CT; Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, ME; Red River Army Depot, TX and a naval support center in New Orleans.

Issue 3: Key Benefits Panels Get MOAA Input.

MOAA's Director of Government Relations will testify today before the Veterans Disability Benefits Commission and next Wednesday before the Defense Advisory Committee on Military Compensation.



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

*May you each  
have a safe and happy  
Labor Day*