

# Jayhawk Chapter



# **MOAA Newsletter**

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### DUES

Dues for 2021 were due 01 January 2021 in the amount of \$20.

If you have not already done so, please send your check to:

Jim Cooper, 5216 Brown Lane, Lawrence, KS 66049-5112

### ★★★★ CHAPTER awarded in:

2002 / 2003 / 2005 / 2008 / 2009 / 2010 / 2011 / 2012 / 2013 / 2014 / 2016 / 2017 / 2018

★ ★ ★ ★ CHAPTER awarded in:

2004 / 2006 / 2007 / 2015 / 2019

# **July Program**

July 20, 2021 7:00 PM Central Time

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Mr. David Nickel
Citizen Counsel for the Kansas
Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board
(CURB).

Join Zoom Meeting

https://tinyurl.com/5bru9ybx

Meeting ID: 856 4044 0488 Passcode: 038081

## Staff

### Volume XXVI, Issue 4 11 July 2021

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#### **Newsletter Editors:**

MAJ Ray Finch, Mrs. Raelean Finch
Web Master LtCol Stan A. Sneegas, USAF (Ret)

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### **President's Comments**

Our speaker for the May meeting was absolutely superb – Mr. Christian McWhirter, Lincoln historian at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield, Illinois, spoke on Lincoln's visit to the Kansas Territory in 1859. It was one of the best presentations that we've had. Our speaker for July will be David Nickel, chief consumer counsel for the Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board in Kansas, David Nickel. Mr. Nickel is Citizen Counsel for the Kansas Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board (CURB).



The CURB is committed to providing efficient and effective legal and technical representation for residential and small commercial utility ratepayers and to ensure that utilities are allowed to charge only just and reasonable rates to Kansans. This should be an interesting presentation – we're all involved with utilities and paying for utilities, so this is a topic that touches us daily. Please join us – see the Zoom link above.

We are planning our first in-person meeting since January 2020 to be at the Lawrence Country Club on Tuesday, September 28<sup>th</sup> (a week later than normal). I am really looking forward to resuming in-person meetings. More details on that meeting as we get closer to the date. And again, my offer stands - in case any of you are in need of any kind of assistance regarding the Covid 19 vaccine or anything else whatsoever, please contact myself or one of the other members of the board of directors. And, as always, if you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please email or call me: (785) 979-7279 or jscooper36@hotmail.com

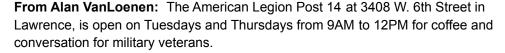
Stay smart, stay safe, stay cool, practice reasonable safeguards against the virus, and get the vaccine if you have not already done so!

Coop



### **PERSONAL NEWS**

From Herschel Stroud: When Veterans started dying during COVID, I started Sounding Taps again for Military Honors, Graveside. The Uniform, I bought when still on Active Duty in 1956. The Bugle is about 100 years old. Given to me by my uncle, who won it in the Kansas National Guard Buglers Contest just after WW1. I have been sounding Taps since 1944, when Peabody soldiers started coming back from Europe. I was 14 years old way back then. Just reminiscing.





Also every Wednesday and Saturday there are bingo games at 6:45PM; doors open at 4:30 PM for pull tabs games; and snack bar opens at 5PM. All bingo sales go to support the American Legion Post 14 in our efforts to support our military veterans and Lawrence's local youth sports programs and other local community items. There is a progressive black out bingo game that usually has a pay out ranging from \$1,500 to \$7,000 plus pay out as the game advances from session to session.



**In Memoriam:** Shirley Grace Hodges, 89, of Lawrence, died June 16, 2021. She was born February 28, 1932, in Lawrence, the daughter of Lemuel and Mary (Curtis) Rothberger.

Shirley graduated from Liberty Memorial High School and attended the University of Kansas. In 1951 Shirley married Ervin E. Hodges and they were blessed with 68 years together. Shirley was a proud homemaker as she supported Erv's 23-year military career and later civilian opportunities. She often shared memories of the 22 moves that she successfully orchestrated. Though Shirley remained flexible for Erv's commitments, she was always active in her community. While stationed in Manassas, Virginia, she taught elementary school and was a hospital

volunteer with the American Red Cross.

Upon returning home to Lawrence, Shirley was an active member of Trinity Lutheran Church, FZ Chapter of PEO, Meadowlark Garden Club, West Side Study Club, and the Alvamar Country Club Women's Golf Association. She was blessed with loyal friends in several bridge groups and enjoyed new friends at Brandon Woods and Bridge Haven.

Shirley is survived by son Mark Hodges, and daughter Cynthia Fritzel (Tim). Five grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband Erv Hodges in 2019. Shirley's family, friends and faith were the light in her life. She lived every day with kindness, joy, compassion and gratitude.



# army News

### **GREETINGS FROM THE JAYHAWK BATTALION**

And from balmy Fort Knox, Kentucky! "Balmy" in Army parlance means long stretches of oppressive humidity punctuated by intense downpours: conditions great for training and assessing cadets! The primary purpose of Cadet Summer Training (CST) is, in fact, to train cadets on everything from individual tasks (like how to field strip an M249 Squad Automatic Weapon or how to rappel off a tower) to collective tasks like a platoon movement to contact. The secondary purpose (and second only by a hair) is to assess those cadets taking part in CST. The "grades" they receive during Advanced Camp will largely determine both their component (Active Duty, Reserve, or National Guard) and, to that end, cadets are tested on both individual skills and on their leadership capacity.

The design of this year's Cadet Summer Training differs from past years in several respects, but the most apparent difference is a result of COVID. After arriving at Ft. Knox, Cadets are sequestered for 10 days where they receive two COVID tests (even if they are vaccinated) and they all get the opportunity to receive a vaccine. During this 10-day period, which is overseen by a small group of reception cadre, the cadets are tested on individual tasks (like first aid, call for fire, and hand grenades) and receive mandatory briefs. At the same time, the training cadre take part in the Observer, Coach, Trainer Academy where they are taught the best means to assess cadets on their leadership skills. Once the cadets emerge from sequestration, they link-up with their regimental cadre and immediately jump into physical tests (like the Army

Combat Fitness Test and the 6-mile ruck), daytime and night time land navigation, basic rifle marksmanship, and rappelling. This 10 day "garrison" period is intense: 0300 wake-up and 2100 lights out is the norm with most of the day spent outside in the lovely Ft. Knox environs. This helps acclimatize the cadets for the most intense period of CST: the 14-day field training exercise (FTX).

(Greetings from the Jayhawk Battalion, cont.)

For two weeks, the cadets eat (MREs), sleep (fitfully) under the stars while they conduct patrols against a live opposing force. The cadets rotate through various leadership positions in a platoon to try to accomplish the assigned missions (like



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reconnaissance or a platoon attack). Cadre evaluate the cadets in leadership positions for every mission during this phase to determine their leadership "grade." Interspersed with the various missions are long foot movements – including an 8-mile ruck march. The two-week field problem culminates with a 12-mile ruck march back into garrison. After a short period to clean equipment, issue grade cards, and complete a brief graduation ceremony, the cadets and cadre disperse to their follow-on assignments.

The design of the 38-day Advanced Camp is intentionally rigorous to allow for the best training and evaluation of the participating cadets. From my personal perspective, Advanced Camp is a total smoker and absolutely validates the KU Army ROTC insistence on hard physical training, its laser focus on individual tasks like land nav, and willingness to embrace the difficult conditions of being outside as often as possible. KU will have 16 cadets attending Advanced Camp (for rising seniors) this summer and I'm certain that this stalwart bunch will make the Jayhawk Battalion proud!

Over the summer, we'll say farewell to MAJ Fengxiang Zhang (KU ROTC Class of '04) as he deploys with the 35<sup>th</sup> ID. We've welcomed Ms. Taronza Bronson to help with our logistics operations. Our next big event happens just prior to the start of classes at KU and that's the New Cadet Orientation from 18-20 August.

Rock Chalk! LTC John D. Finch Professor of Military Science

### **2021 Army Grads**

Emma M. Bakken	Adjutant General	Reserves
Nicholas J Canton	Adjutant General	Active Duty
Donovan M Franklin	Infantry	Active Duty
Tyler J French	Military Police	Active Duty
Alexandra Garbarino-Hermann	Medical Services	National Guard
Michael J Garitz	Medical Services	Active Duty
Daniella R Grossman	Adjutant General	National Guard
Miurel I Hamburger	Nursing	Active Duty
Harrison E Manlove	Armor	Active Duty
Thomas A Miller	Infantry	National Guard
Alexis M Mitchell	Medical Services	National Guard
Robert L Obourn	Infantry	Active Duty
Arik D Parker	Armor	Active Duty
Grady B Petit	Infantry	Active Duty
Avick J Rana	Military Intelligence	National Guard
Alexandra L Reiher	Military Intelligence	Active Duty
Janet M Rollings	Ordnance	Active Duty
Caleb M Sifuentez	Infantry	National Guard
Jaaron NW Vaughn	Infantry	National Guard
Rachel L Witt	Field Artillery	National Guard



# Navy News



### **GREETINGS FROM THE JAYHAWK BATTALION**

Academic year 2020/2021 is in the books and I could not be more proud of the Jayhawk Battalion. These Midshipmen persevered and excelled through two extraordinarily difficult semesters. From social distancing, countless quarantines, virtual training, modified PT, and loss of most of our team-building events, our students and staff overcame all challenges and continued to meet our mission. Our senior Midshipman leaders learned important lessons in strength and resilience that they will use in the fleet. I am confident that the newly commissioned Ensigns and Second Lieutenants from this Battalion will go above and beyond carrying out the mission of the United States Navy and Marine Corps.



As our seniors completed their college and NROTC careers, they were rewarded with a well-deserved commission into the US Navy and Marine Corps. Even with the lingering threat of COVID and the spring Kansas thunderstorms, we were able to hold our outdoor commissioning ceremony on the lawn of Allen Fieldhouse. I want to publicly thank the senior KU leadership for allowing the three KU ROTC programs to commission in person.

#### Newly Commissioned Class of 2021 in Allen Fieldhouse

ENS Allen, Surface Warfare

ENS Barnhill, Surface Warfare

ENS Rodriguez, Submarine Warfare

ENS Sherrill, Aviation

ENS Ulmer, Aviation

2LT Blake, Ground

2LT Hawkins, Ground

2LT Bowers, Aviation

2LT Miller, Aviation

2LT Lee (August Commission), Ground

Our events were practically the only ceremonies authorized to be held. We did complete an outstanding ceremony in front of family, friends and shipmates. Additionally we welcomed back Capt Irma Mosqueda, USMC, and former KU Marine Officer Instructor to campus as she served as our guest speaker. We were also grateful for the attendance of Chancellor Doug Girod, Dr. Christopher Brown, Col (ret) Mike Denning and CAPT (ret) Jim Cooper. It was a great day for these outstanding O-1s. Two of the new Ensigns will be heading to NAS Pensacola

for flight school, two Ensigns to Basic Division Officer's Course enroute to their first ship, and one will start his nuclear training. On the USMC side, all four 2LTs will be heading to The Basic

School with two pursuing ground contracts and two aiming for aviation contracts. We also have an additional Marine that will commission in August. What a great time to be a Jayhawk!

Although we are on break, many of our Midshipmen have a full summer of training opportunities to include summer cruises, Marine Corps Officer Candidate School (OCS), as well as summer classes for our Officer Candidates. The summer cruise experience is one of the great aspects of the NROTC program as we send Midshipmen out to the Fleet to see firsthand what their future will be like whether it is on a warship, in an aviation squadron, or with a Marine Expeditionary Unit. Many of our students are also traveling to Naval Station Great Lakes to help train newly selected Midshipman Candidates. The summer is also a particularly exciting time for our newly commissioned Ensigns and Second Lieutenants as they head toward their initial training schools. Later this summer we will host our annual New Student Orientation to welcome our new freshmen as they seek a commission in the world's finest maritime force.

I do want to take a minute to say thank you to all those that support this outstanding Battalion. For those that served, thank you for the sacrifices you made during your careers. We all stand on the shoulders of giants. This will be my last update since I will be completing my tour as the Commanding Officer in July. I have been absolutely blessed to have served with this staff for my final Navy tour after almost 31 years. I have thoroughly enjoyed every interaction with the Midshipmen to include early morning PT runs, late night drill practices, and weekend events. These Midshipmen are incredible. Do not believe anything you read in social media about this generation; we are in very good hands with these future leaders at the helm. On 16 July, I will be turning the command over to CAPT Jim Miller. He is a Jayhawk NROTC alumni and is very excited to come home to Lawrence. The Battalion is in great hands. Thank you again for your support.

For the last time...Rock Chalk and Fly Navy! CAPT Trenton Lennard Commanding Officer, KU NROTC

No AF ROTC News this month (personnel turnover)

# **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, 2 JUNE 2021: Here's How the House and Senate Toxic Exposure Reform Bills Stack Up

Last week, <u>Senate</u> and <u>House</u> Veterans Affairs Committee leadership unveiled omnibus bills to provide comprehensive reforms to benefit those exposed to toxins while in uniformed service.

Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.) introduced the Comprehensive and Overdue Support for Troops (COST) of War Act of 2021, followed a day later by the introduction of the Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act of 2021 by Rep. Mark Takano (D-Calif.). Both omnibus bills reflect the work of MOAA, notably our grassroots outreach, as well as efforts from other veterans service organizations (VSOs). The legislation includes both bills supported by MOAA's Advocacy in Action campaign, along with many other MOAA-backed positions. [TAKE ACTION: Ask Your Lawmaker to

Both omnibus bills include:

**Reform** 

· The Toxic Exposure in the American Military (TEAM) Act (S. 927 and H.R. 2127)

Support Comprehensive Toxic Exposure

- · The Veterans Burn Pits Exposure Recognition Act (S. 437 and H.R. 2436)
- The addition of Agent Orange presumptives for hypertension and monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance, better known as <u>MGUS</u> (S. 810 and H.R. 1972)
- The recognition of radiation exposure in the Enewetak Atoll and from the 1966

accident in Palomares, Spain (S. 565, H.R. 1585, and H.R. 2580)

· Improvements to studies and epidemiological reporting for all exposures [RELATED: <u>VA Will Soon Begin Processing</u> <u>Claims for 3 New Agent Orange Illnesses</u>]

These core consistencies bode well for MOAA's reform requests. Having both versions include these components mean they are highly likely to stay in the final bill. However, there are differences to be resolved:

- · The House version adds more presumptives, specifically cancers that the Senate version has not included. We expect this will be a key area of negotiation in the coming months.
- The House version creates health registries for <u>Fort McClellan, Ala.</u>, and for Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)
   MOAA supports the creation of these registries.
- · The House version establishes an independent scientific review board overseen by the VA, whereas the Senate continues to use the time-tested National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) to review evidence. MOAA believes NASEM should be continued to be used for evaluating toxic exposure conditions.
- The House version recognizes burn pit use in Yemen, Uzbekistan, and the Philippines whereas the Senate does not. We would encourage the Senate to add these locations.

Along with our existing Advocacy in Action bills, MOAA supports both chambers'

omnibus packages. Each bill delivered on our core asks, and that is certainly due to your efforts during Advocacy in Action and prior work on this issue by MOAA. Comprehensive change would not have been on the horizon without the entire community behind it.

MOAA has reviewed both bills, and while the each have areas we believe could be improved before sending to the president, each offer a dramatic step forward in getting these veterans and their families the benefits they deserve.

[GET INVOLVED: Support MOAA's Advocacy in Action Campaign]

Even if you've already reached out to your lawmakers regarding MOAA-supported toxic exposure reform legislation, don't hesitate to reach out again – follow up with staffers or lawmakers and let them know you support their chamber's omnibus measure. With momentum building in both the House and Senate, now is the time to continue to make your voice heard.

**MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 8 JUNE 2021:** Does the Budget Threaten a Key
TRICARE Improvement?

The <u>DoD budget request</u>, released as part of the <u>administration's budget proposal</u> to Congress on May 28, includes some limited details on TRICARE utilization trends. MOAA is concerned the budget narrative related to civilian urgent care use may indicate a potential threat to referral-free urgent care for TRICARE Prime beneficiaries.

The request cites rising private-sector urgent care utilization as a factor in the department's TRICARE cost increases. This could serve as an early warning sign toward targeting referral-free urgent care in future

cost savings efforts; such a move would represent a significant step backward for beneficiaries' access to timely, appropriate care.

Urgent Care: A History

For many years, beneficiaries on TRICARE
Prime were required to obtain a referral
prior to visiting a civilian urgent care facility.
This posed a problem for many military
families because the need for urgent care
sometimes arose when primary care
managers (PCMs) who make TRICARE
referrals and/or military treatment facility
(MTF) staff were unavailable or
inaccessible: Evenings, weekends,
holidays, or when the family was traveling or
PCSing, for example.

Also, military hospitals and clinics across the direct care system varied in their willingness to refer families to urgent care when MTF acute care appointments were fully booked (and therefore unavailable). For many military families in a variety of circumstances, emergency department (ED) care became their only option – even for non-emergency medical issues such as an ear infection or strep throat.

This led to inconvenience and frustration for both military families and ED clinicians. It meant families sometimes had to seek care in the ED when a venue with lower cost to DoD would have been more appropriate. It also meant that some families delayed or deferred necessary care or paid out of pocket to be seen at a civilian urgent care facility.

[KNOW YOUR BENEFIT: MOAA's 2020-21 TRICARE GUIDE]

MOAA appreciates that Congress addressed this issue several years ago –

first with a referral-free urgent care pilot program in the FY 2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) and then with a provision in the FY 2017 NDAA that authorized access to urgent care without the need for preauthorization, making the pilot obsolete by prompting a TRICARE policy change to allow unlimited self-referred urgent care visits for TRICARE Prime beneficiaries.

Since May 2016, referral-free urgent care has provided a critical relief valve when acute primary care isn't available or accessible, particularly in the direct care system. A June 2018 DoD report to Congress (PDF download) found while private sector urgent care volume rose 13% from FY 2016 to FY 2017, much costlier ED encounter volume fell 6% during the same time period. According to beneficiary surveys, 92% of urgent care pilot participants were satisfied with the increased access to care under the pilot. The report also documented the positive impact of the TRICARE Nurse Advice Line in directing beneficiaries to the appropriate care setting.

The former urgent care referral requirement led to suppressed demand for acute care that was not visible to the military health system. It is not surprising that readily available urgent care has led to increased demand for acute care that used to be deferred or delayed.

#### What's Next

MOAA understands the importance of utilizing direct care system capacity when available and ensuring military families get the right care in the right setting. We look forward to working with the Defense Health

Agency to fully understand private sector urgent care and ED utilization rates and trends.

We also stand by to help raise awareness of the Nurse Advice Line (1-800-TRICARE, select Option 1; or chat online), a valuable service that allows military families to get health care advice from a registered nurse, obtain recommendations for the most appropriate level of care, and schedule same- or next-day appointments at the military hospital or clinic where the beneficiary is enrolled (when available).

Do you have perspectives on referral-free urgent care for TRICARE Prime families? Please share them with us at legis@moaa.org.

MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 22 JUNE 2021: Concurrent Receipt Update: Join MOAA's Push to End This Unjust Offset

Maj. Richard Star, USAR, namesake of the Major Richard Star Act (H.R. 1282/S.344), lost his fight with cancer in February of this year. Before the pandemic hit in 2020, he was tenacious – even with terminal lung cancer, he would struggle down the halls of congressional office buildings, stopping to catch his breath, to make it to the next office to advocate for concurrent receipt.

Military and veterans groups have vowed to continue his work, and have seen some success in recent weeks: The bills recently reached milestones in both chambers, with support from 51 senators and 105 House members, and growing.

There are still many lawmakers who would support this legislation if they heard from constituents. Click the links to see whether your <u>senators</u> or your <u>House</u> members support this legislation. Need more

information? Check out this <u>Star Act Tracker</u> from Senior Master Sgt. Jeremy Kitzhaber, USAF (Ret), a dedicated volunteer advocate for the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

With turmoil over delayed budgets and work on the National Defense Authorization Act, it is impactful to email and call your elected officials asking them to support the Star Act. You can call your lawmaker via MOAA's toll-free Capitol Switchboard at 1-866-272-6622.

Concurrent Receipt Talking Points
When you reach out to your lawmaker or
their staff, remember these points about the
Star Act, and why the incremental approach
it represents is so important to make
progress. By gaining co-sponsors, we
increase awareness and commitment to
resolving this inequity for those who were
retired early due to combat or
combat-related injuries or illnesses.

- · Two payments, two purposes: Retired pay is for vested years of service paid by DoD, while disability compensation is for lifelong injury paid by the VA. To reduce retirement pay because of a disability is an injustice.
- · An unfair law: <u>Title 10</u> requires a reduction, referred to as an offset, in retirement pay for every dollar of disability received. This cost-saving measure is borne on the back of retirees.
- · Incremental improvements: The VA awards disability in 10% increments. Those who are awarded 50% disability and above who reached 20 years of service were granted concurrent receipt of DoD retired pay and VA disability in 2004.
- · More work to do: Left behind after that 2004 change are those 20-year retirees with a 40% disability rating and below, and those who were medically retired under Chapter 61 with less than 20 years of service.

### By the Numbers

Lawmakers' main concern with the Star Act is cost. H.R. 1282/S. 344 would correct concurrent receipt for the 42,000-plus combat-injured servicemembers under Chapter 61 at an estimated at \$6.9 billion over 10 years. Along with paving the way for further concurrent receipt legislation, this figure is much smaller than those attached to other proposals/groups:

- · It would cost \$33 billion over 10 years to grant concurrent receipt for 40% disabled and below and those under Chapter 61, per Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates.
- · It would cost \$20 billion over 10 years to grant concurrent receipt for just 40% disabled and below (without helping Chapter 61 retirees), per the CBO.
- The total number of Chapter 61 medical retirees has grown to over 575,000 during GWOT and does not have a cost estimate.

In the year that will see our withdrawal from Afghanistan, it is important to reflect on sacrifice and cost. Our nation's longest war is still ongoing and is expensive, exceeding \$2 trillion. The cost of the war in Iraq is approaching that figure, as brigade combat team rotations there continue. Supporting those injured in a combat zone should be considered part of the cost of war.

MOAA and The Military Coalition will continue to advocate for concurrent receipt for all retirees. Addressing those injured in a combat zone is a good step forward to reaching the concurrent receipt objective; ask your lawmakers to <a href="mailto:support the Major Richard Star Act today">support the Major Richard Star Act today</a>.

Annual Chapter Dues (\$20.00) were due and payable \$	01/01/2	1	
Clayton L. Comfort Award program contribution (Separate check made out to "KU Endowment")			\$
TC	)TAL:	\$	
Name	_		
Telephone			

RETURN THIS FORM WITH A CHECK PAYABLE TO:
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IN GOD WE TRUST

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