



Northeast Alabama Military Officers Association

Post Office Box 5579

Anniston, Alabama 36205

July 2017

Our July meeting will be July 8th at Cane Creek Grill with happy hour at 6:30 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m. The price will be \$20.00 per person. The menu will be Bar-B-Q chicken or ribs, potato salad, baked beans, salad, rolls and dessert. Call Bob Dobson at 256-435-3145 or Barbara Stamper at 256-892-0629 by Sunday, July 2, 2017 for reservations.

IN THE CHAPLAIN'S CORNER:

America! What a beautiful name! Its history, its glory, its ever flowing stream of democracy. Let nothing mar what it has been and what it means for its people and for the world at large.

Freedom! What a glorious thought; how precious the reality. We Americans are blessed with rights of which millions around the world can only dream.

Bored with familiarity, many citizens rant, rave and crusade about a plight they deem depriving. Determined to alter our heritage, some malcontents would create a different history from their own biases seemingly oblivious that, if they succeed in changing the history books, they will have destroyed the very stuff that brought our nation to greatness. Granted, injustices and heinous acts of government and citizens alike can never be excused. But, forgiven? Yes!

Well it is July and I just felt like saying something that shows how proud I am to be a citizen of the United States of America, which we declare to be "one nation under God." A perfect nation? No! But, is there a nation any better?

Now, to another matter of great importance: God doesn't go on vacation, period. Wherever you journey during this summer season, God should be the first one you remember in the morning and the last one you remember at night. Make all the excuses you will, but there is no real substitute for joining others as they pause to enrich one another in the worship of God. And, for those of you who just vacation at home, so to speak, exercise your freedom to worship God each Sunday. That's quite a gift you know.

Peace and Joy! --

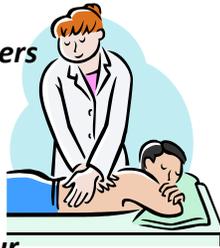
George

Happy 4th of July

The group discussed having the White Elephant Sale again at our September meeting. You have a longer time to check your storage area for some really good items for the sale. Remember the funds we raise are used to pay our yearly contribution to our scholarship funds. Hope everyone will come out and have fun at the auction. Ask and bring a guest with you.

Sick Book:

We have several members that have been a little under the weather. Curt has finished his treatments so continue to remember him in your prayers as he recovers at home.



Bob Dobson has been in hospital. He is home now and feeling some better. Vivian Soyster is also home and feeling better. BG Watson's youngest Grandson had a motor vehicle accident. He is in an Atlanta area hospital in a coma. Keep him and the family in your prayers.

Financial information as of 6/30/2017:

Income:

ads, dues, contributions, white elephant	1,08250
interest	9.70
widows Christmas luncheon	2,640.00
dining income	2,140.00
Total income	\$ 5,872.20

Expense:

contributions, dues, postage & supplies	1,340.50
widows Christmas luncheon	-0-
dining expense	2,103.65
Total Expense	3,444.15
 Net Income	 2,428.05
Stamper Scholarship balance	\$ 36,651.86

Our Meeting Schedule:

All our meetings will be at Cane Creek Grill unless notated.

Month	Happy Hour, 6:30 pm	Board, 9:30 am
July	8th	18th
August	12th	15th
September	9th	19th
October	14th	17th
November	11th	21st
December	9th	19th

The Board of Officers:

- President – MAJ David Kellogg 256-435-1258 dgkellogg13@gmail.com
- 1st Vice- President - Curt Sasser, 256-435-8682 CurtSasser@aol.com.
- 2nd Vice President—Barbara Stamper 256-892-0629(H) bjstamper@bellsouth.net
- Secretary – Lt Col Jack Walker 256-820-1679 gunmechinc@aol.com
- Treasurer – LCDR Bob Folsom 256-236-9874 rbfolsom@cablone.net
- Chaplain – COL George Gray 256-848-9508 GGray33469@aol.com
- Legislative representative – Lt Col Bob Dobson 256-435-3145-256-591-6003 mdobson@cablone.net
- Newsletter Editor – Martha Dobson 256-435-3145 mdobson@cablone.net

Legislative Report:

TRICARE Fees to get a Big Raise:

DoD has released its 2018 budget proposal. Unsurprisingly, the document included large increases in TRICARE fees across the board. Several groups escaped the proposed changes, including TRICARE For Life beneficiaries (no changes), active duty service personnel, medically retired servicemembers, their families, and survivors of those who died on active duty. This week, MOAA takes a deeper dive into what those fee hikes will mean for affected beneficiaries.

The proposed fee increases will fall squarely on all other categories of beneficiaries not mentioned above. Retirees under the age of 65

and their families are hit hard. These fee increases are a direct result of the repeal of the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act's grandfathering clause. The intention of the grandfathering was to keep fees where they currently are for beneficiaries in the service prior to January 1, 2018.

Where MOAA Stands:

MOAA believes these fee increases are disproportional and do not reflect the service and sacrifice of the beneficiaries who have earned the health care benefit. **These fee increases serve no purpose** other than either funding DoD's readiness accounts or underwriting some other earned benefit - a recurring strategy we've seen in the past. For example, remember when pharmacy fee increases for beneficiaries were used to fund retirement reform for future entrants two years ago? **DoD's healthcare costs continue to decrease.**

MOAA believes Congress should maintain the grandfathered fee structures it put into law last year as part of the Military Health System reform.

What This Means to You:

The projected increases would result in the doubling and tripling of many fees and vastly outpace beneficiary COLA'S.

With regard to the new TRICARE Selection option, an established set copayment structure is favorable. However, beneficiaries should not be expected to pay any participation fee, let alone one three times higher than what Congress put into law, especially because access to care under the new TRICARE Select network has not been established yet.

MOAA believes these fee increases are disproportional and do not reflect the service and sacrifice of beneficiaries who have earned this health care benefit.

"We were happy with the Military Health System reform provisions Congress put into law last year. We hope they see fit to hold the line on those reforms, to include the grandfathering clause, before they allow any fee increases,"

says MOAA President and CEO Lt. Gen. Dana T. Atkins, USAF (Ret.).

Please send your legislators a MOAA-suggested message to prevent these hefty fee increases from negatively affecting servicemembers and their families.

DEFENSE BILL KICKOFF

June 23, 2017

The House Armed Services Committee (HASC) subcommittees released their markups of the FY 2018 defense authorization bill this week, providing milder recommendations than in years past.

The active duty pay raise will match the Employment Cost Index at 2.4 percent. This is a welcome change from the president's budget request of a 2.1-percent raise, which would have widened the existing pay gap between the military and private sector.

For the first time in many years, the mark includes a provision aimed at supporting military spouse employment. It would allow for reimbursement of up to \$500 in expenses when a military spouse must acquire a new license or certification as a result of a PCS to a new state.

On the TRICARE front, unlike the budget the DoD recently proposed, the HASC bill proposes no changes for TRICARE For Life, TRICARE Prime, or last year's new TRICARE Select, and it maintains the current grandfathered fee structure. The new fee structure begins only for those future service entrants after Jan. 1, 2018. This bill would continue to grandfather currently serving and retired servicemembers and families against the large fee hikes proposed in last year's defense authorization bill.

Other proposed changes to health care include clarifying the roles of the services' surgeons general, placing greater emphasis on their responsibility for the provision of readiness training at their respective military treatment facilities (MTFs), and prohibiting DoD from reducing inpatient capacity at overseas MTFs.

All in all, MOAA supports the HASC's balanced approach to reforming military personnel policies and especially appreciates the committee's rejection of the large TRICARE fee increases proposed in the FY 2018 DoD budget.

MATTIS TAKES THE HILL TO TALK PAY AND BENEFITS:

June 16, 2017

Secretary of Defense, Gen. James Mattis, USMC (Ret) and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Joseph Dunford, USMC, testified before a series of hearings on Capitol Hill this week as they work with Congress on shaping the FY 2018 defense budget.

The two men stayed on message during the four hearings, pressing Congress on three main issues: fully funding the defense budget, passing the budget in a timely manner, and fixing sequestration so defense leaders can plan adequately.

Citing the problems of budget uncertainty, Mattis told lawmakers, "During nine of the past 10 years Congress has enacted 30 separate continuing resolutions to fund the Department of Defense, thus inhibiting our readiness and adaptation to new challenges."

He said continued use of stopgap funding measures and inconsistent budgets could lead to a "hollow force" in his mind.

Mattis, widely considered one of the most talented military minds of his generation, offered a stark assessment of the effects of years of arbitrary budget caps, saying, "I retired from military service three months after sequestration took effect. Four years later, I've returned to the department and I have been shocked by what I have seen about our readiness to fight."



Sustained conflicts abroad and a high operational tempo also have taken their toll on the services. "When Congress approved the all-volunteer force in 1973, our country never envisioned sending our military to war for more than a decade without pause or conscription. America's long war has placed a heavy burden on men and women in uniform and their families."

"We have only sustained our ability to meet America's commitments abroad because our troops have stoically shouldered a much greater burden, but our troops' stoic commitment cannot reduce the growing risk," Mattis added.

The Trump administration's proposed \$603 billion budget offers a slight increase in funding from the Obama administration's projected FY 2018 budget. It's part of a multi-year effort to increase the size of the military. The budget calls for increased spending on weapons, training, and equipment.

However, House and Senate leaders on the Armed Services committees believe the increase doesn't go far enough, and instead want to fund the department at \$640 billion.

It's currently unclear how Congress would be able to pay for such an increase. House and Senate lawmakers still are negotiating a top-line for spending.

The committees rapidly are moving through the bill making process, and hope to finish work on the defense bill by the Fourth of July holiday.

ACT NOW: Send your elected officials a MOAA-suggested message urging them to repeal sequestration.

HOW TO KEEP UP WITH TRICARE CHANGES:

June 16, 2017

As we look into the future of what health care will be for TRICARE beneficiaries, we see there are some significant changes to come in both the short and long term.

Through significant changes in law and policy, the Military Health System is modernizing both its delivery processes and how the benefit will be administered. Some of these key changes were outlined by MOAA.

In the very near term, by Jan. 1, 2018, the current three TRICARE regions will be consolidated into two. TRICARE West will cover most states west of the Mississippi and TRICARE East will cover the majority of the Northeast and Southeast states. Accompanying this regional consolidation will be a change in the TRICARE contractors that currently administer the health care programs in those regions.

Humana Military will take over the TRICARE East region, largely replacing Health Net Federal Services. In the TRICARE West region, currently served by United Health Care Military and Veterans, will be transferred to Health Net Federal. The result will be two new TRICARE regions with a rearrangement of contractors.

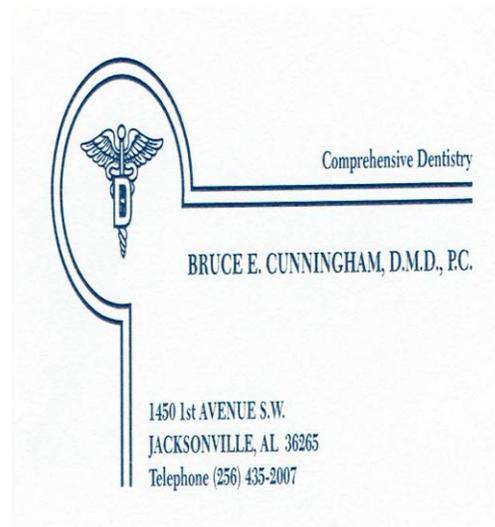
During this same time period, the TRICARE plans also will be updated with the newly created TRICARE Select option, which replaces TRICARE Standard. Most beneficiaries will be automatically enrolled from Standard into Select unless they choose to change their coverage.

In the longer term, there will be other significant changes. One of these will be the implementation of a new electronic health record (EHR). The new EHR, will better support the effective delivery of health care at the patient level as well as provide better integration between military hospitals and clinics and the TRICARE network of civilian providers.

“What can beneficiaries start doing now? To best prepare for the upcoming changes in the TRICARE program, beneficiaries should update both their own and their families information in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System,” said Capt. Kathy Beasley, USN (Ret), MOAA’s director of government relations for health affairs.

Beneficiaries can also follow all changes and communication from TRICARE.

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Never Stop Serving