



# Heartlander

South Central Florida Chapter  
January 2021



## South Central Florida Chapter of MOAA

P.O. Box 7841  
Sebring, FL 33872

### Chapter Officers:

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**Secretary:** Doug Tait, tel. 863-385-1763  
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**Past President:** Roy Whitton

**Our Web Site:** [www.scfcmoaa.org](http://www.scfcmoaa.org)

**Florida Council of Chapters website:** [www.moaaf.org](http://www.moaaf.org)

**Take Action. MOAA Legislative Action Link:**

<http://www.moaa.org/takeaction/?tab=Legislative-Action-Center#Legislative-Action-Center>

**15 January 2021.** Dinner/Social with spouses/better halves/significant others: 6:30 PM, Dimitri's Banquet Room, 2710 Kenilworth, Sebring 33870

**3 February 2021.** Board Meeting: 1700 (5:00 PM)  
Business Meeting, 1830hrs (6:30 PM). Venue: Sea Services Museum, 1402 Roseland Ave., Sebring, FL 33870, (corner of Kenilworth and Roseland, about a mile east of Sebring High School).

**Membership Renewal:** Chapter Members, it's time to "REUP" for 2020. Please bring to the next meeting \$20 in cash, or a check made out to SCFC of MOAA in the same amount. Amount for Surviving Spouses is \$15. If you would like to mail it to us the address is: SCFC of MOAA, PO Box 7841, Sebring, FL 33872. Scholarship donations are also appreciated.

### WHO CAN JOIN MOAA?

MOAA membership is open to all officers, commissioned or warrant, whether on active duty, retired, former, reserve or national guard of all the seven uniformed services, including the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Public Health Service.

### January Birthdays:

4 Jan: Malcolm Johnson      4 Jan: Fred Carino  
5 Jan: Paul Ebersbach      6 Jan: Doc Savage  
14 Jan: Gil Uribe

**Editor's Note:** If your birthday is not recognized, it is because you did not include it on your application form. Please contact our Secretary, Doug Tait at 863-385-1763, and provide the same.

### President's Message:

As we leave a bizarre 2020 behind us, we enter a new year that will bring many changes to our lives. The COVID vaccine is being distributed around the country. Some of you may have received it by the time you read the newsletter. We can only hope that it works well, works fast, and gets out to the population as soon as possible. We'll be talking about COVID for a long time!! Hopefully, it will only be a once in a lifetime event for us all.

We continue to keep COVID in mind as we plan our chapter events. For the upcoming dinner/social at Dimitri's Banquet Room on 15 January at 6:30, we ask that you wear your mask as usual. We'll take folks' temperatures as they enter the room. We'll have hand sanitizers everywhere you look. And we'll leave the decision to attend up to each and every one of you—you are all adults and can make adult decisions on whether or not to attend. I do ask that you let me know if you plan to attend. We want to give Dimitri's an idea of numbers for their planning purposes. We had a fantastic showing for the Christmas toy program for the Salvation Army. These toys get to the least fortunate kids in the community. I want to commend Glenn and Pam West for all they did to orchestrate this program. See the photos elsewhere in the newsletter. A gazillion toys went into Santa's sleigh, including 22 bicycles!!

We hope that you had a great Christmas and holiday season. We hope that 2021 brings good things for you all. Look forward to seeing you at the dinner/social. Be there or be square!

### Are you looking for a way to serve veterans in a very direct and meaningful way?

Well, here is your chance. The County Veteran Services Office, located right behind the Watering Hole restaurant is short staffed and needs help desperately. They need someone to answer phones, greet folks coming in, and generally serve as an all-around receptionist. There is no pay for this job, but there is reward—the reward of helping our veterans. If you want to volunteer, call Denise Williams or Carol West at 863-402-6623.

**New Members:** Bill Muckler

## Did You Know? The Latest Info on SBP/DIC Offset Elimination

The elimination of the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) offset from the Survivor Benefit Program (SBP) payments is still a bit confusing for many. Let's try to clear the air.

SBP is a survivor annuity administered by DoD. DIC is a survivor annuity administered by the VA. Receiving both payments simultaneously has been considered double dipping (two government payments for the same event), and so the DIC amount has been subtracted from the SBP to prevent double dipping.

The FY 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) included MOAA-supported language that eliminated this offset, a change that will be phased in through 2023. The bill marked the [successful conclusion of a long advocacy process](#), but MOAA remains engaged to assist members through its implementation.

### The Details

This offset elimination only affects survivors who are eligible to receive both SBP and DIC payments. The offset is where the DIC amount is subtracted from the SBP amount. The DIC has and will continue to be paid in full; it's the SBP amount that's been reduced by the amount of DIC paid.

For some survivors, the DIC amount subtracted from your SBP left you with no SBP payment, as the DIC amount was greater than your SBP amount. You still have SBP eligibility, you just don't receive your SBP.

Survivors who received an SBP premium refund in the past because you were denied your full SBP amount due to the offset do not have to pay back the refund.

Whether you received no SBP or a partial SBP amount due to the offset, all with the offset received the Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA) payment. SSIA is a payment to minimize the damage done to your SBP amount by the DIC offset.

Survivors with both SBP and DIC will receive a letter from the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS, the administrator of SBP) in December explaining how the first phase of the offset elimination (2021) will affect you. The letter will provide you with your payment amounts so you can see the benefit of the first offset elimination actions starting with your Feb. 1, 2021, payment. The offset elimination phase-out continues in 2022, and the offset ends in 2023.

The bottom line: The DIC offset amount in your SBP will decrease, thereby allowing you to collect more of your SBP amount. Plus, you will continue to receive SSIA.

The SSIA payment will continue until 2023, when it will be discontinued because all SBP and DIC survivors will be receiving their SBP and DIC amounts in full.

Read more about the process [on the DFAS website](#).

## Did You Know 2? The VA Announced its Preliminary COVID Vaccine Rollout Plan (Bay Pines not on list, but Orlando is). NOTE: Bay Pines indicates they will be getting it.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced a preliminary plan for distributing COVID-19 vaccinations it will implement once the Food and Drug Administration issues an emergency use authorization for a vaccine.

VA has worked in close coordination with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Operation Warp Speed to plan for COVID-19 vaccination of VA staff and Veterans.

VA will first provide vaccinations to front-line VA health care workers and Veterans residing in long-term care units in 37 of its medical centers across the country.

The centers, listed below, were chosen for their ability to vaccinate large numbers of people and store the vaccines at extremely cold temperatures.

Health care workers will be among the first to receive vaccinations because they are at high risk for contracting and spreading COVID-19 to other staff members and patients, and their health is critical to ensuring the continued care of Veterans.

Veterans in VA's long-term care facilities will be the first patient group to be vaccinated. As vaccine supplies increase, additional Veterans will receive vaccinations based on factors such as age, existing health problems and other considerations that increase the risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19.

VA anticipates a limited vaccine supply immediately after FDA's approval, but expects more supplies to be available in short order.

"VA is well prepared and positioned to begin COVID-19 vaccinations," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "Our ultimate goal is to offer it to all Veterans and employees who want to be vaccinated."

The 37 VA sites chosen for initial distribution of the vaccine will closely monitor patients and staff for side effects and log this information in its vaccine monitoring and tracking system. This is the same system VA uses to monitor reactions to all vaccines, including those for the flu and shingles.

VA will report directly to the CDC data on all vaccine doses administered by VA. The department will also provide general, public updates on the number of people who receive the vaccination at these sites, similar to how VA posts COVID-19 testing figures.

The 37 VA sites are spread throughout the country and include Orlando, but not Bay Pines. For additional information you should visit the [VA COVID-19 vaccine webpage](#), contact your care team or visit your facility website.

### **Did You Know 3? Not Only Military Retirees Have PX/BX/Commissary Privileges**

Recently, someone said they “had heard that people other than retirees could use the BX/PX. It is a bit more complicated than that, of course. While we are all familiar with the nearly unlimited privileges afforded to those who did a full career and retired from the military, in fact, others also have some privileges. Here is the short answer: Honorably discharged Veterans can shop online at [shopmyexchange.com](http://shopmyexchange.com). The Veterans online shopping benefit does not grant on-installation access. For more information about this benefit, please check out the below link. Anyone visiting a military installation can eat at the PX food court—as long as you consume the food and beverages on the installation. There’s more: In-store privileges are available for all service-connected disabled veterans. You will need your VA ID card. Purple Heart recipients and former POW’s are also eligible. Finally, caregivers or family caregivers of veterans registered in the VA’s Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers Program also have privileges. The best bet is to check out the website for more detailed information: [Veterans Online Shopping Benefits | Shop the Exchange](http://Veterans Online Shopping Benefits | Shop the Exchange) ([shopmyexchange.com](http://shopmyexchange.com))

### **Did You Know 4? TRICARE/EXPRESS SCRIPTS HAS A NEW FORMULARY SEARCH TOOL**

Do you have questions about prescriptions or medications? If yes, then TRICARE’s Formulary Search Tool can help. TRICARE’s Pharmacy Program provides prescription drug coverage for all beneficiaries. Those prescriptions are managed through the pharmacy contractor, Express Scripts. “Our online search tool has been refreshed and is now even easier to navigate,” said Lt. Col. Melissa Pammer, deputy chief of the Purchased Care Branch, Pharmacy Operations Division at the Defense Health Agency. “The search tool can give you information about your medication, let you know whether it’s covered under the TRICARE pharmacy benefit, provide any required forms that your provider needs to complete, and show you what you can expect to pay at each pharmacy type.” The Formulary Search Tool on the Express Scripts website is located at: [www.express-scripts.com/frontend/open-enrollment/tricare/fst/#/](http://www.express-scripts.com/frontend/open-enrollment/tricare/fst/#/) To start a search, put in the brand name or generic name of the drug and then select the strength prescribed, as well as the patient’s age and gender. The updated tool makes it easier to look up specific information about the prescription drug. A search can tell: • Where the prescription can be filled (details below) • Copayments and limitations, such as prior authorization • Coverage review requirements and forms • Alternative medicines, including costs. • Formulary status (generic drug, From TRICARE brand-name drug, non-formulary drug, non-covered drug) ) “Using the (Cont.)

### **Did You Know 4? (Cont.)**

search tool and learning the best ways to fill your prescription is an important part of taking command of your health,” said Pammer. Filling Prescriptions The search tool can help determine where to fill the prescription. How the prescription is filled depends on the beneficiary category and type of drug prescribed. Here are some choices when it comes to having prescriptions filled: • Military pharmacies. If you want to keep your costs low, fill the prescriptions for free at a military pharmacy. You can get up to a 90-day supply of most covered generic and brand-name drugs at no charge. Military pharmacies usually don’t carry non-formulary drugs. • TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery. This is a convenient way to get your prescriptions. With home delivery, you can get up to a 90-day supply of most drugs. Some limits to home delivery include: • Controlled substances (based on the laws where the prescription is being delivered) If you have other health insurance: • Mailing overseas must be to an APO/ FPO address, isn’t available for refrigerated medications, and isn’t available in Germany • TRICARE retail network pharmacies. If you need a prescription filled, you can also visit a network pharmacy. You have to pay a Copayment. Search online to find a nearby network pharmacy. You can also call Express Scripts at 1-877- 363-1303. • Non-network pharmacies. If you need to fill a prescription at a nonnetwork pharmacy in the U.S. or certain U.S. territories, you’ll pay full price for prescription drugs and file a claim for partial reimbursement, after the deductible is met. If you have questions about using the tool, contact Express Scripts by phoning (877) 363-1303 toll-free. For TTP, call (877) 540-6261, and for those outside the U.S. (877) 363-1303.

### **Chapter Calendar**

**15 January 2021.** Dinner/Social with spouses/better halves/significant others: 6:30 PM, Dimitri’s Banquet Room, 2710 Kenilworth, Sebring 33870

**3 February 2021.** Board Meeting: 1700 (5:00 PM) Business Meeting, 1830hrs (6:30 PM). Venue: Sea Services Museum, 1402 Roseland Ave., Sebring, FL 33870, (corner of Kenilworth and Roseland, about a mile east of Sebring High School).

**19 March 2021.** 2nd Annual Gala at the Island View Restaurant at Sun N’ Lake clubhouse, 5223 Sun N’ Lake Blvd, Sebring. Time to be determined.

**7 April 2021.** Board Meeting: 1700 (5:00 PM) Business Meeting, 1830hrs (6:30 PM). Venue: Sea Services Museum, 1402 Roseland Ave., Sebring, FL 33870, (corner of Kenilworth and Roseland, about a mile east of Sebring High School).

## SURVIVING SPOUSE CORNER

### Craig Smith, Surviving Spouse/Personal Affairs Chair

As we go into 2021, we can expect changes that will affect all of us. A new administration will pick up the COVID ball. Will the vaccine be the answer? Will wearing masks all day everyday be the norm for the next 100 days? Uncertainty has us seeking answers. MOAA is a good place to go to get the latest on all of this plus changes and improvements to your benefits.

Everyone who draws retirement or Social Security or VA disability gets the COLA raise, that's a bit of good news to start with. The pay charts should be out soon and MOAA normally will have access to them.

The VA launched its long-awaited revived Caregiver Program. After a year-long delay, the program was launched Oct 1 2020, in two phases. October started the first phase for eligible veterans who served before May 7, 1975. The second phase goes into effect two (2) years later for all remaining eligible veterans. Provided below are the VA eligibility requirements for a quick review to see if you qualify. The MOAA Military Officer Magazine has a detailed article on page 20, in the December issue. **The report below is from the VA benefits website.**

### The Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

We recognize the important role of family caregivers in supporting the health and wellness of Veterans. Find out if you may be eligible and how to apply for the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC).

Here are the eligibility questions to help you make that decision. You may be eligible if you and the veteran you're caring for meet all of the requirements listed below.

Eligibility requirements for the family caregiver

You must be at least 18 years old and at least one of these must be true for you.

#### You must be either:

- A spouse, son, daughter, parent, stepfamily member, or extended family member of the Veteran, **or**
- Someone who lives full-time with the Veteran, or is willing to do so if designated as a family caregiver

Eligibility requirements for the Veteran

#### All of these must be true for the Veteran you're caring for.

The Veteran must have a VA disability rating (individual or combined) of **70% or higher**. The Veteran's service-connected disabilities must have been caused or made worse by their active-duty service during one of these periods of time:

- On or after September 11, 2001, **or**
- On or before May 7, 1975

#### And the Veteran must:

- Have been discharged from the U.S. military or have a date of medical discharge, **and**
- Need at least 6 months of continuous, in-person personal care service (Cont.)

## SURVIVING SPOUSE CORNER (Cont.)

If you have a specific question or concern, the following MOAA National Chairpersons are more than willing to help you address your specific concern, as am I. Their contact information is below or you may contact me at 207-703-3402.

Gail Joyce  
[mssvc02@gmail.com](mailto:mssvc02@gmail.com)  
(214) 676-2132

Micki Costello  
[mssvc02@gmail.com](mailto:mssvc02@gmail.com)  
(214) 770-4140

**Nametags:** If you don't have and DO want a chapter nametag, please let us know. We need your info as you want it to appear on the tag: Name, Rank, Service. Spouse/significant other's name. The cost is \$10.00 each. Here is an example:



### Would you like to buy a MOAA polo shirt or some other MOAA item?

Go to the MOAA "Store," click on the following link: <http://www.tmgwebstores.com/moaa/default.html> You can also call them at 1-866-860-9293. They have everything from men's and ladies' polos, coffee cups, hats, you name it.

### If you want to sign up for a range of updates from MOAA National:

Go to: [http://moaa.highroadsolution.com/moaa\\_preference\\_page/EmailSearch.aspx](http://moaa.highroadsolution.com/moaa_preference_page/EmailSearch.aspx) and follow the prompts. It gives various options for the type of information desired, as well as the frequency you may wish to receive it. Don't miss out on this valuable resource!

## **Heard on the Hill—Charley Dye, Legislative Affairs Chair**

The latest FY2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) has passed Congress. Some items of interest in this act include a 3% pay raise for active-duty personnel, two Virginia class fast attack submarines, one Columbia class ballistic missile submarine, 14 F-35's, funding for the B-21 Raider program, and a national cyber director within the White House. As of this writing, the bill awaits signature on the resolute desk.

MOAA has released legislative priorities for the upcoming 117th Congress. Further details are forthcoming in the January 2021 MOAA magazine, but here is what we know at this point:

### **MOAA Legislative priorities for the 117th congress (january 2021 moaa magazine) Advanced Copy Submitted by Dan Merry, Colonel USAF (Ret), MOAA Vice President of Government Relations and Co-Chair of the Military Coalition**

**Objective:** Recognize COVID-19 changed the landscape for many of our priorities.

**Overview:** Assess programs relative to our priorities and ensure a credible accounting of the impact COVID-19 has on the servicemember, families, survivors, and the government entities on which we rely to effect legislation attending to these people and their concerns.

#### **Actions:**

- Assess congressional influence already executed (stimulus), actions under consideration, and the need for influence not yet being discussed. Some of our concerns can be addressed through such spontaneous legislation.
- Ensure awareness of COVID-19 impact on all issues, ranging from authorizations to appropriations and the mounting deficit.
- Do not treat COVID-19 as a catch-all to explain difficult times, nor use COVID-19 to justify our priorities; rather, COVID-19 remains a discussion point and its impact may be significant, scalable, marginalized, or discounted altogether.

**Objective:** Protect the value of the military health care benefit.

**Overview:** Budget pressures, together with shortfalls in both the MHS' readiness and benefit provision missions, led Congress to pass MHS reform legislation in the FY17 NDAA. MOAA will not fight to reverse MHS reform laws aimed at addressing medical readiness issues, but we will not stand by if MHS reforms are turned into cost-cutting exercises.

#### **Actions:**

- Oppose any proposal for TFL enrollment fees, increases to TRICARE Prime costs for active duty family members, or increases to working age retiree costs that exceed retiree COLA.
- Secure reduction in mental health and physical, speech and occupational therapy copays to eliminate cost as a barrier to accessing mental health care and other important therapies and bring them in line with high quality commercial plans.
- Continue efforts to increase transparency, DoD reporting requirements, and Congressional oversight of MTF restructuring and medical billet cuts.
- Oppose cuts to military medical research and the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences which is essential to the uniformed provider pipeline and increases the number of culturally competent providers for military beneficiaries.

**Objective:** Protect the MHS pharmacy benefit and achieve flexibility in TRICARE pharmacy copays.

**Overview:** MHS reform legislation has eroded the value of the pharmacy benefit and poses a threat to MTF pharmacy access and zero copay prescription medications. Inflexibility in TRICARE pharmacy copays, governed by statute, require beneficiaries to pay full copays even when TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery program is unavailable, or the full prescription quantity cannot be filled.

#### **Actions:**

- Oppose any plans to restrict access to MTF pharmacies.
- Secure an appeal process for Tier 4/non-covered drugs to protect military families from financial risk.
- Require DoD report on frequency of TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery out-of-stocks and feasibility of offering lower mail order copays at retail for drugs unavailable due to Home Delivery program shortages.
- Secure legislation allowing DoD to charge pro-rated pharmacy copays for partial prescription quantity fills. (Cont.)

## MOAA Legislative priorities for the 117th congress (Cont.)

**Objective:** Address barriers to accessing care within the MHS, including TRICARE coverage gaps and mental health care access challenges

**Overview:** TRICARE coverage policy is governed by statute and often requires legislation to remain aligned with new technologies and treatment protocols and benchmarks set by high quality commercial plans and other government payers. Access problems with mental health care, validated by an Aug 2020 DoD IG report, are particularly pronounced and must be addressed.

### Actions:

- Support pilot program to test MHS mental health appointment schedulers to assist beneficiaries with access to care and allow the Defense Health Agency to more effectively track appointment availability versus access standards.
- Secure an independent evaluation of TRICARE reimbursement rates for mental health care providers and the impact on access to care under the TRICARE program.
- Extend TRICARE eligibility to dependents up to age 26 with no additional premium to bring TRICARE on par with commercial health plans.

**Objective:** Protect family support programs, and ensure military-provided services (housing, PCS, childcare) are affordable, readily available, and meet quality standards.

**Overview:** Programs and services for military and veteran families are often the first to see cuts to staffing, quality, and availability when government funding becomes tight. These benefits are essential to ensure servicemembers are squared away and can focus on the mission. Additionally, military spouses play a vital role in a servicemember's decision to stay in the military. When DoD prioritizes people first, it can retain a mission ready all-volunteer force.

### Actions:

- Create innovative approaches and incentives to increase access to quality childcare providers.
- Address military spouse unemployment rate through resources, program expansions, and private sector incentives.
- Push for full implementation of comprehensive housing reform and accountability.
- Improve accountability of contract movers and claims during PCS moves.
- Assess impact of COVID-19 on programs and progress.

**OBJECTIVE:** Sustain Veterans Health Administration (VHA) foundational missions and services.

**OVERVIEW:** Since the VA MISSION Act was signed into law in 2018, VHA has been aggressively pursuing implementing one of the most historic shifts in how VA will deliver care in the coming years—a system virtually untouched by major transformation in more than 25 years. There are a lot of challenges facing the VA as it attempts to sustain its four health care missions (clinical, research, education and training, and emergency management response) and the associated programs and services that have earned VHA its reputation as a high-quality health care system.

### ACTIONS:

- Strengthen and modernize VHA's Workforce.
- Eliminate health disparities for women-minority veterans to ensure health equity in accessing timely, sensitive, and quality care and benefits through VA.
- Expand access to caregiving, palliative, geriatric, and extended care programs and services for veterans and wounded warriors.

**Objective:** Achieve equity of benefits, protections, and administrative support for Guard/Reserve members consistent with their active-duty counterparts.

**Overview:** Guard and Reserve troops can be activated with little notice to meet unknown challenges. The pandemic response highlights why we need to ensure servicemembers are always ready. Along with this, the transition to the "total force" concept has transformed the National Guard and Reserve troops into an operational force that is an essential part of America's national defense strategy. Their readiness is essential, but despite conducting the same duties as their active-duty counterparts at increasing frequencies, the reserve component is not receiving the same support. (Cont.)

## MOAA Legislative priorities for the 117th congress (Cont.)

### Actions:

- Pay, benefit, and retirement credit inequities abound and must be eliminated to honor the vital role of our Guard/ Reserve servicemembers.
- Financial readiness equals operational readiness; expanding Military Lending Act protections to the Guard/ Reserve forces will support their activation with reduced stress to meet financial obligations.
- Forced arbitration agreements for USERRA and SCRA must be eliminated to protect servicemembers' rights.
- Eliminate Guard/Reserve retirement pay processing delays and support timely health care benefits for retirees.
- Assess COVID-19 impact on short-notice deployments relative to employers and concerns noted above.

**Objective:** Reform the presumptive process to support veterans claiming service-connected disabilities for toxic exposures.

**Overview:** When deploying to defend our nation, we pursue cutting edge weapons, tactics, techniques, and procedures to defeat our enemies. After the fog of war lifts, the consequences on our servicemembers become apparent, sometimes decades later. When illnesses from Agent Orange, burn pits, and other hazardous materials cause illnesses, the current practice to place the burden of proof and record-keeping on veterans. Many are unable to prove their exposure. While research is done, ill veterans suffer without health care, benefits. If the veteran passes early, their widows will not receive the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation.

### Actions:

- Pursue enactment of legislation that concedes veterans serving in the Middle East and Southeast Asia were exposure to hazardous substances.
- Increase transparency and tracking around toxic substance use and exposure.
- Establish an advisory committee to recommend research to for emerging conditions
- Assess the impact of COVID-19 and its impact on the health of servicemembers deployed to assist the whole of government operations in response to the pandemic

**Objective:** Achieve concurrent receipt of service earned retirement pay and, VA disability pay.

**Overview:** Currently those with a 40% VA rated disability and those forced to medically retire under CH61 have their retirement pay offset for every dollar of VA disability received. The Congressional Budget Office estimates fixing concurrent receipt will cost \$33 Billion dollars over 10 years. An incremental strategy to break up concurrent receipt into smaller cost brackets can gain progress.

### Actions:

- Continue to support concurrent receipt legislation and the incremental approach to making progress.
- Develop solutions with professional staff members and the House and Senate for feasible language in the NDAA.
- Advocate to build cosponsors for concurrent receipt legislation such as H.R. 5995/S.3393 the Major Richard Star Act.

**Objective:** Protect Arlington National Cemetery as an option with full military honors for those currently eligible through expansion of our national cemetery.

**Overview:** The SECARMY has approved draft eligibility changes for internment and inurnment at ANC to extend the life of the cemetery. Unfortunately, if the eligibility changes are approved, many who had planned for an in-ground burial at ANC will have to change plans.

### Actions:

- Advocate for a halt to the current proposal with DoD and lawmakers.
- Engage members and TMC to make strong comment to DoD.
- Secure new language in the NDAA that will direct expansion of our national cemetery, protect full military honors for 20-year retirees and prevent reduction of current eligibility.
- Simplify planning by establishing a reservation system

**Objective:** Sustain pay raises for the troops and COLA raises for retirees.

**Overview:** Pay raises for the troops and COLA raises for retirees represent a commitment on behalf of our government to recognize their service and sacrifice, past and present. Budget challenges often focus on reducing such outlays to help fund weapons acquisition and other programs. There is no doubt, such challenges will appear in the coming years. (Cont.)

## MOAA Legislative priorities for the 117th congress (Cont.)

### Actions:

- Protect COLA and maintain pay raises tied to the ECI
- Monitor the Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation for indications of DoD cost saving measures at the expense of servicemembers and retirees.
- Continue to monitor COLA and pay raises each Oct and proposals in the pending QRMC.

**Objective:** Improve survivors' benefits.

**Overview:** After the repeal of the Widow's tax in the 2019 NDAA, there remains injustices to correct on survivor issues.

### Actions:

- Create a platform with TMC survivor committee to garner support for efforts commensurate with the 117th Congress.
- Build cosponsors for *The Caring for the Survivors and Families of Veterans Act of 2020*.
- Continue to support DIC improvement to bring it on par with federal employees.

**Objective:** Ensure the U.S. Coast Guard continues to receive pay during a government shutdown.

**Overview:** During a government shutdown the USCG is not paid. Legislation such as The Pay our Coast Guard Act would protect Coast Guard servicemembers' pay in the event of a lapse in appropriations or shutdown. For the 117th Congress the *Pay our Coast Guard Act* will require significant support for inclusion in the NDAA.

### Actions:

- Continue to support and renew the TMC letter for the 117th Congress.
- Advocate lawmakers to cosponsor *The Pay our Coast Guard Act*.

### MOAA's Top Legislative Goals for 2021

- Protect the value of the military health care benefit.
- Protect the military health system's pharmacy benefit, and achieve flexibility in TRICARE pharmacy copays.
- Address barriers to accessing care within the military health system, including TRICARE coverage gaps and mental health care access challenges.
- Protect family support programs, and ensure military-provided services (housing, PCS, child care) are affordable, readily available, and meet quality standards.
- Sustain pay raises for the troops and COLA raises for retirees.
- Ensure Coast Guard members are paid during a government shutdown.
- Sustain Veterans Health Administration (VHA) foundational missions and services.
- Achieve equity of benefits, protections, and administrative support for Guard and Reserve members consistent with their active-duty counterparts.
- Reform the presumptive process to support veterans claiming service-connected disabilities for toxic exposures.
- Achieve concurrent receipt of service-earned retirement pay and VA disability pay.
- Protect Arlington National Cemetery as an option for those currently eligible to receive full military honors through expansion of our national cemetery.
- Improve survivor benefits.

**Take Action. MOAA Legislative Action Link:**

<http://www.moaa.org/takeaction/?tab=Legislative-Action-Center#Legislative-Action-Center>

### PURPOSES OF THE MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is a not-for-profit corporation that is operated exclusively to further the interests of the nation and its uniformed services personnel, their family members, and survivors.

#### From the preamble to the Bylaws of The Military Officers Association of America

- To inculcate and stimulate love of country and flag;
- To defend the honor, integrity, and supremacy of our National Government and the Constitution of the United States;
- To advocate military forces adequate to the defense of our country;
- To foster the integrity and prestige of uniformed service;
- To foster fraternal relations between all branches of the various Services from which our members are drawn;
- To further the education of children of Service personnel;
- To aid personnel of the Services from which our members are drawn, and their family members and survivors, in every proper and legitimate manner; and
- To present their rights and interests when Service matters are under consideration

**We unite to form THE MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA**

**TAKE ACTION!!**  
[www.moaa.org](http://www.moaa.org)

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**CHAPTER MEMBERS IN ACTION**

**CHAPTER GRANT PRESENTATION TO THE VETERANS COUNCIL:** Once again, our chapter was able to present MOAA National grant funding to the Highlands County Veterans Council. We have contributed over \$22,000 over the last few years. These monies go to support needy veterans in our community as well as help with the Thanksgiving and Christmas basket programs. The basket program is jointly sponsored by the Veterans Council, the Veterans Service Office, and our MOAA chapter, along with several other veteran groups in the community.



**Mike Borders and Glenn West present a check for \$5000 to the Harry Marsh, President of the Highlands County Veterans Council.**



**Mike and Diana Borders, along with Glenn West and some other volunteers deliver Thanksgiving baskets to needy veterans from our community.**



## CHAPTER MEMBERS IN ACTION

**CHAPTER TOY DELIVERY TO THE SALVATION ARMY:** Bob Brooks, Mike Borders, and Glenn West pose with Annmarie Hesterlee from the local Salvation Army with the toys. Due to the great work by Glenn and Pam West, we delivered over 60 Angel Trees, 22 bicycles, and lots of extra toys to assist the Salvation Army in its efforts to make Christmas the special day it should be for all the little ones in our community whose parents couldn't afford to buy presents. Also contributing toys were RE/MAX employees as well as the Avon Park Service Club.



**Bob Brooks, Mike Borders, and Glenn West present toys to the Salvation Army Social Services representative Annmarie Hesterlee**



**Mike presents a MOAA cup to December guest speaker John Tallent, President of the LST-325 Association**

## USEFUL ADDRESSES, PHONE NUMBERS AND WEB SITES

Air Force Retiree Services: (800) 531-7502;  
[www.retirees.af.mil](http://www.retirees.af.mil)

Arlington National Cemetery: (703) 607-8000;  
[www.arlingtoncemetery.org](http://www.arlingtoncemetery.org)

Armed Forces Retirement Home: (800) 422-9988;  
[www.afrh.gov](http://www.afrh.gov)

AAFES: (214) 312-2011; [www.aafes.com](http://www.aafes.com)

Army Retired Services: (703) 571-7232; <https://soldierforlife.army.mil/retirement>

Burial at Sea: (866) 787-0081; <http://www.public.navy.mil/bupersnpc/support/casualty/mortuary/Pages/BurialAtSea.aspx> Combat Related Special Compensation: <http://www.secnav.navy.mil/mra/CORB/Pages/CRSCB/default.aspx> DEERS: (800)-538-9552, Fax: (831) 655-8317; [www.tricare.osd.mil/deers](http://www.tricare.osd.mil/deers)

Defense Commissary Agency: [www.commissaries.com](http://www.commissaries.com)

DFAS Casualty Assistance Branch: (800) 321-1080 or (216) 5225955; (For Reporting a Retiree's death, option #1)

I.D. Cards Benefits and Eligibility: (866) 827-5672; [https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl/appj/site;jsessionid=\\_liU5y-4sPqyCtImmgUJThnUWUeAanhb15EaGXQn4lh2pEEKpso!416826654?execution=e1s1](https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl/appj/site;jsessionid=_liU5y-4sPqyCtImmgUJThnUWUeAanhb15EaGXQn4lh2pEEKpso!416826654?execution=e1s1)

Internal Revenue Service: (800) 829-1040; [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)

Marine Corps Retired Affairs: <https://www.manpower.usmc.mil/webcenter/portal/MRAHome>  
(Hover over "Veteran Marines" then click on "Retired Services")

Medicare: (800) 633-4227. TTY: (877) 486-2048;  
[www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)

Military Officers Assoc. of America: (800) 234-6622;  
[www.moaa.org](http://www.moaa.org)

National Burial Services: (800) 697-6940

NPC Navy Reserve Personnel Management (PERS 9):  
(866) 827-5672; [www.npc.navy.mil/career/reservepersonnelmgmt/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.npc.navy.mil/career/reservepersonnelmgmt/Pages/default.aspx)

Navy Casualty Assistance: (800) 368-3202

Navy Retired Activities Office: (866) U-ASK-NPC  
(866-827-5672)

MILL RetiredActivities@navy.mil; [www.npc.navy.mil/support/retired\\_activities/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.npc.navy.mil/support/retired_activities/Pages/default.aspx)

Reserve Component SBP: (866) 827-5672 ask for PERS-912

Retiree Dental — Delta Dental: (888) 838-8737;  
[www.trdp.org](http://www.trdp.org)

Servicemembers Group Insurance (SGLI): (800) 419-1473; [www.insurance.va.gov](http://www.insurance.va.gov)

Social Security Administration: (800) 772-1213;  
[www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)

**Pay/SBP Questions:** [www.dfas.mil](http://www.dfas.mil). Pay inquiries and update of pay or SBP records in case of death, divorce, or remarriage:

### Retiree:

Defense Finance and Accounting Service  
U.S. Military Retirement Pay  
P.O. Box 7130 London KY 40742-7130  
(800) 321-1080, (216) 522-5955

### SBP/RSFPP annuitant:

Defense Finance and Accounting Service  
U.S. Military Annuitant Pay  
P.O. Box 7131 London KY 40742-7131  
(800) 321-1080, (216) 522-5955  
(800) 669-8477; [www.insurance.va.gov](http://www.insurance.va.gov)

**Burial information:** (800) 827-1000; [www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov)

**GI Bill:** (888) 442-4551; [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov)

**VA:** [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) **Regional offices:** (800) 827-1000  
(overseas retirees should contact the American Embassy/consulate)

**TDD** (800) 89-4833

**Insurance:** A Regional Office and Insurance Center  
PO Box 7208 (claims inquiries) -ORPO  
Box 7327 (loans) -ORPO  
Box 7787 (payments)  
Philadelphia PA 19101  
(800) 669-8477; [www.insurance.va.gov](http://www.insurance.va.gov)

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