



# Wichita Chapter News

MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA



December 2020

## President's Corner

Dear Members, Spouses and Families of the Wichita Chapter of MOAA,

Thanksgiving is behind us and Christmas is just around the corner. I trust that all of you made it safely through Thanksgiving as we all look forward to the blessings of the Christmas season. I am sorry that we will not be able to get together this month for our annual Christmas brunch. But we hope to get together again on January 17<sup>th</sup> to celebrate the New Year. It is likely that we will have live music presented in January by the band *Not Worthy* who was originally scheduled for our Christmas brunch.

We had a great chapter meeting on November 15<sup>th</sup>. The new officers for the chapter were installed and a Zoom presentation was made by Debbie Kreuzman from the Cargill Food Bank. The Northwest High School JROTC provided the Color Guard. Due to COVID, Rolling Hills Country Club provided a breakfast only meal, but the cost was reduced to \$16.00 per person. Plenty of prizes were given away in the raffle with everyone in attendance receiving a gift. We also welcomed a new member, James Oswald, who is a West Point graduate who recently left the military after 6 years of active duty.

On a business note, the chapter has approximately \$9,500 in funds that have been raised over the years through golf tournaments and monthly raffles. These funds were raised for the express purpose of providing college scholarships to JROTC cadets and are administered by the Wichita Community Foundation (WCF). Unfortunately, interest in scholarships has waned over the last decade and very few cadets are applying for scholarships. Accordingly, the WCF has agreed to allow us to use the funds for other purposes as long as they are in support of JROTC or SROTC. Before we do so, I want to offer any member an opportunity to comment on this change before it is implemented. Please send any comments to me at [jhughey@usd259.net](mailto:jhughey@usd259.net).

I recently went through our chapter roster to determine if any of our members were deceased. Upon examination of online obituaries, I determined that the following members are deceased. Phillip De Voss of Wichita passed away on 1 April 2020. Victor Hillgren of Derby passed away in November of 2012. Brian Mauden of Wichita passed away on 2 September 2020. Helen Parzybok of Lakewood, Colorado passed away on 6 May 2017. Melitta Suer of Keyport, Washington passed away on 14 April 2020. Spencer Yancey of Wichita passed away on 9 January 2017. Spencer was 106 years old when he died. That means Spencer was in kindergarten during World War II! May God bless all of

these patriots and may God provide comfort to their families and any chapter members who grieve for their loss.

Sincerely,

John Hughey, LTC, (Ret), USA, President

## **JROTC Units Continue to Serve**

COL Robert Hester reported: "We had an exceptional Veterans Day program this year in spite of COVID. The District Corps Staff were phenomenal in organizing and conducting the program at the "Doc Hangar," he said. He added, "all of their presentations were exceptional and on target. Board of Education President Sheril Logan, Congressman Ron Estes and Commissioner David Dennis were equally impressed with the program and the cadets. Many veterans from American Legion Post 4 were present and thanked the cadets. This was a good recognition of the veterans and the sacrifices they have made to maintain our freedoms. We thank all of you for your service to the nation, and for all you do for the cadets. You continue to make a difference." (*COL Hester is the Director, JROTC & Leadership Instruction for USD259. He also served as a long-time treasurer for the Wichita Chapter*).

## **MOAA National Highlights Portions of the FY 2021 NDAA**

### **Pay Raises**

Congress approved a 3% military pay raise, effective Jan 1, 2021, as part of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The raise matches the administration's request and nearly matches the FY 2020 raise of 3.1%, which was the largest pay increase for service members in 10 years. A 3% increase equates to an annual raise of nearly \$2,400 for an O-3 with 10 years of service. In addition to a general pay increase, Congress increased Hazardous Duty Incentive Pay from \$250 to \$275 monthly for duty in a foreign area designated as an imminent danger area or high-risk duties.

### **Medical Billet Cuts and MTF Restructuring**

MOAA's extensive efforts to halt military medical downsizing, including our Virtual Storming the Hill and Summer Storm, paid off with two provisions addressing these concerns. One provision (Section 717) addresses medical billet cuts by prohibiting DoD and the services from reducing medical end strength authorizations for 180 days following enactment of the bill. It also requires DoD to conduct a review of medical manpower requirements that specifically considers the homeland defense mission and DoD's role in a pandemic influenza response, in addition to all other national defense strategy scenarios. The other provision (Section 718) increases requirements for implementation plans for each Military Training Facility (MTF) slated for restructure or realignment. It also requires DoD to certify to the Congressional Defense Committees that a covered beneficiary affected by restructure or realignment of a MTF would have access to health care services through the purchased care component of the TRICARE program. This provision prohibits

MTF restructuring from moving forward for 180 days following the date Congress receives the implementation plans and notice of certification or the date of enactment of the FY 2021 NDAA, whichever comes later.

### **TRICARE**

Congress included a provision to expand benefits available under the TRICARE Extended Care Health Option (ECHO) program, which covers services for a subset of military special needs families with individuals who are diagnosed with intellectual disabilities, a serious physical disability, or an extraordinary physical or psychological condition. The provision includes an increase in respite hours from 16 to 32 hours per month, and also requires a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on caregiving assistance available under programs, including Medicaid home- and community-based services. The bill includes no new TRICARE fees or copay increases. However, a new TRICARE Select enrollment fee for Group A retirees will go into effect Jan. 1, 2021 – a change that became law with the FY 2017 NDAA.

### **Toxic Exposures**

Vietnam veterans have a reason to celebrate as three new presumptive were added to the list of illnesses linked to Agent Orange exposure. The change means 34,000 veterans suffering from bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, and Parkinsonism will receive the care and benefits they deserve. MOAA fought hard to help this provision pass. The bill also requires that Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record (ILER), a collaboration between DoD and the VA to link exposures testing to service members by location, and date of service, must be expanded to allow veterans to see their personal records. While ILER's date is limited, this change marks a step in the right direction. ***(More NDAA FY 2021 highlights will be featured in next month's chapter newsletter).***

### **Slate of Chapter Officers for 2020 – 2021**

PRESIDENT	LTC John Hughey
1 <sup>st</sup> VICE PRESIDENT	LTC Greg Willingham
2 <sup>nd</sup> VICE PRESIDENT	LTC Joe Bilik
SECRETARY	Maj Earl Shellner
TREASURER	Maj Shellie Harmon
PAST PRESIDENT	Lt Col Michael George
DIRECTOR/McCONNELL AFB LIAISON	Col Michael Dillard
DIRECTOR/SURVIVING SPOUSE COORDINATOR	LTC Roy Yanchesky
DIRECTOR	MAJ Andy Trager