

October 7, 2018

President's Corner

By Lt. Col. Michael R. George

Dear MOAA Members:

An important medical and dental deadline is just around the corner! Coming up in November is open season for enrollment in the new dental and vision coverage for TRICARE beneficiaries. Be sure to read the information included in this newsletter, and/or, go to the MOAA national website and plan your selection.

In addition to the upcoming TRICARE changes, don't forget about Halloween. Included in the newsletter are lists of things to do in the area for this occasion.

During the September Brunch Meeting, Cong. Ron Estes gave a great presentation on the state of things in Washington, D.C. He is also scheduled to be the JROTC and Leadership Programs guest speaker at the annual Veteran's Day ceremony at Century II, at 10 a.m., November 7. The ceremony is open to everyone and is a free event. Please plan to attend.

We continue to get responses for the chapter interest survey on Survey Monkey. However, only a total of 20 have come in. Please take a few minutes to find the survey in your email and complete it. The average time to take the survey is under 2 minutes.

Last, but not least, GET OUT TO VOTE ON Nov. 6th. And, your input is always welcome. Email all concerns to me at m2george55@gmail.com. Also, please save these dates for upcoming MOAA meetings: October 21, November 18, and December 9. Please note these current MOAA issues:

Military Pay Raise: Sustain military pay increases comparable to civilian sector wages and salaries

End the Pay Reduction for Medical Retirees: Medical retirees were unable to complete their 20 years of service through no fault of their own and should have their retirement and disability pays computed the same as those who retired with 20 or more years of service.

Eliminate the Widow's Tax: Current federal law requires survivors of deceased military members to forfeit part or all their Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuity when they are awarded the VA's Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC). This loss of any portion of the SBP annuity is known as the widows' tax. For approximately 67,000 military survivors, the widow's tax makes SBP the only insurance that you pay into but are legally prohibited from collecting.

MOAA Brunch Guest Speaker

Our guest speaker for the October 21 brunch is Mr. Peter Grande, Chief of Staff for the United States Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth, KS. Mr. Grande has worked in the military correctional field since the mid-1970s. He is a former enlisted correctional specialist, and retired U.S. Army Military Police Corps lieutenant colonel. He is also a certified corrections executive with the American Correctional Association. Please be sure to make your reservations for the meeting. Lunch starts at 11 a.m., at the Rolling Hills Country Club. Meeting starts at 12:45. Please contact Lt.Col. George at m2george55@gmail.com to let him know you will attend.

New Dental/Vision Plans

The open season for enrollment in the new dental and vision coverage for TRICARE beneficiaries begins Nov. 12 and ends Dec. 10. Beneficiaries can now compare plan costs as they consider their coverage. The program, FEDVIP, replaces the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program managed by Delta Dental, which ends Dec. 31. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) said the average dental gross premium increased 1.2 percent from last year. The average vision gross premium dropped 2.8 percent from last year. You can compare rates by going to TRICARE.benefeds.com. This means TRICARE beneficiaries can have more time to review the rates prior to the open season. There is also a detailed article in the November issue of MOAA's **Military Officer** Magazine which describes the 10 dental and four vision plans to be offered. Also, you need to first ask your dentist if they participate in the FEDVIP plan. Otherwise, you may need to select another dentist.

JROTC Units Serve Their Communities

Cadets from Wichita and Derby schools have participated in several community service events since school began this fall. Nine Derby High School cadets helped escort and assist parents with on-line enrollment at the school on Aug. 1. Another 33 cadets set-up and decorated the gymnasium for a welcome back teachers and staff event Aug. 8-9. Some 46 cadets volunteered to operate game stations for the Swaney Elementary School Block Party on Aug. 25. Another 87 cadets decorated the Derby H.S. football stadium and distributed red, white, and blue bandanas for the Derby Armed Forces Appreciation night, Sept. 7. Also, 97 cadets set-up, supervised and helped tear down children's inflatables during the McConnell AFB Airshow Sept. 8-9. And 45 cadets conducted ceremony/formation and color guard for the Patriot Day 9/11 ceremony at Derby HS.

Upcoming Halloween Events

There are a wide variety of events in and around Wichita planned during the Halloween season. Hay Hooves & Halloween at Old Cowtown Museum is Oct. 27-28. They promised lots of spooky fun games and activities along with tons of candy. Admission is free for members and \$5 for non-members. The 25th Anniversary Hocus Pocus event at

the Orpheum Theater will be Oct. 25th. The **Sanderson Sisters** will perform. Tickets are \$7 per person. Halloween Family Fun Night at El Dorado State Park is set for Oct. 27, from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. Activities at the Walnut River beach area feature hay rack rides, campfires, hot dogs, “witches brew” and smores. Cost is \$5 per person. Kids 3 and under get in free. You can also enjoy live music, movies, face-painting and more. The South YMCA Trunk or Treat night is set for from 4 – 6 p.m., Oct. 28 at the South “Y.” Enjoy games, contests, sweet treats and more. No admission charges for this event. On Oct. 31, the first annual Trunk or Treat takes place at the DeVorss Flanagan-Hunt parking lot across from Hyde Park and Central Standard Brewing. All sorts of fun for the kids. Event organizers will also accept toy donations for the 2018 Toy Run. Also occurring on Halloween day is a Trunk or Treat event at the Augusta, KS Church of Christ from 5 – 7 p.m. This is a free event with lots of fun and candy.

Other Items of Interest from MOAA National

Military beneficiaries recently experienced unexpected increases in TRICARE fees. These increases resulted from DoD’s unilateral decision to change its fee schedules from a percent of cost model to flat-rate fees. These fee changes disregarded the intention of the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act, which prescribed current military members, veterans, and families of both were to be grandfathered from health care cost increases. Also, MOAA’s Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter recently made a valuable headquarters-level connection with the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS). TAPS is a national nonprofit organization that provides care and support to families and friends grieving the loss of a member of the armed forces. One of the principal intended effects of virtual chapters is to grow national and geographic membership through increased awareness of MOAA in previously untapped networks such as professional nurses’ associations and the surviving spouse community. Go to mssvc02@gmail.com for more information.

Last, But Not Least --- Vote Nov. 6