



Eyes to the Skies

President's Input

We have a goal!! We are heavy into raising donations for Fisher House St Louis and the Missouri USO. The goal is \$3,000. If every member donated \$25, we'd more than meet that goal. I ask you to please consider donating to this cause. You can read more about our fundraising further in this newsletter.

We've been having a few more lunchtime meetings than you've probably seen in the past. Two reasons for that: (1) lunch venues are much less expensive than dinner, and during the week is cheaper than on Friday and Saturday. We're trying to keep costs down for the members in hopes that we'll get more turnout. And (2) because many of our members don't feel comfortable driving at night, the mid-day meetings allow them to attend during the days of short light availability during the winter. Although we will have another lunch meeting in March (March 24, so don't come out on the second Saturday) followed by a visit to Jack Moelmann's for some musical entertainment. For April, the meeting may also be moved up, so watch the newsletter for information. If you have any other ideas for location or presentations, please let me know.

The FEDVIP dental program will replace the existing TRICARE Retiree Dental Plan, which will sunset Dec. 31, 2018, and is currently provided through Delta Dental. Beneficiaries are encouraged to start getting information and pre-enrollment communications through the website set up just for this program. The website—www.TRICARE.benefeds.com—was up and running Feb. 1.

Thanks for your service and continuing support to Chapter activities. You're the ones who keep the Chapter viable and moving forward. God bless you, our military, our President and elected leadership, and the great United States of America!

Welcome No new members this month.

Treasurer's Report, February 2018

Checking Account Balance	\$1,348
Savings/Scholarship Balance ..	\$7,244
CDs	\$14,956
Total	\$23,548

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This month we'll be meeting for lunch at the Horseshoe Restaurant and Lounge in O'Fallon, then we'll travel to Jack Moelmann's home for a concert.

Jack's home address is:

1015 Matthew Drive
O'Fallon IL

This Month's Program

Saturday, 24 March 2018

Lunch/Concert

Horseshoe Restaurant and Lounge

950 Talon Dr, O'Fallon, IL 62269

Individuals will order from menu

Lunch from 11:00 to 1:00 pm

Meet at Jack's at 1:30

Menu

Order from the menu & pay individually

Menu: (<http://www.menupix.com/menudirectory/menu.php?id=28522867>)

Upcoming Programs

Date	Venue	Topic
5 Apr 2018	Regency Center, O'Fallon IL	Taste of the Area
16 May 2018*	Ann Morey's Home	Business Meeting
Jun 2018	Busch Stadium (tentative)	Watching the Cards!

* Note: 16 May is a Wednesday

Reminder Scholarship applications are due.

Packages must be postmarked no later than 10 March 2018.

What's my name?

Your final votes are in! In case you didn't notice the name at the top of page 1, 'Eyes to the Skies' won. Congratulations to Kim Dalrymple for the winning name. Out of 19 votes, 'Eyes to the Skies' narrowly beat 'Standing for America.' Thanks to the following people who provided names:

- Mary Le Clark
- Nick Wartonick
- Yasmin Koss

March

Federal Legislative News

We don't have a budget! But we have a two-year deal! On February 9, President Trump signed into law a far-reaching budget deal that will—if seriously considered—boost spending by hundreds of billions of dollars and allow the federal government to reopen after a brief (about 1 hour) shutdown. Announcing his signing, the President added, “Our Military will now be stronger than ever before. We love and need our Military and gave them everything — and more.” Alas, we still face a CR on March 23rd.

Recall the State of the Union Address by President Trump on January 30. Did you get his message that has been one of MOAA's top priorities....ending sequestration? Here's a reminder:

“Around the world, we face rogue regimes, terrorist groups, and rivals like China and Russia that challenge our interests, our economy, and our values.”

“In confronting these dangers, we know that weakness is the surest path to conflict, and unmatched power is the surest means of our defense.”

“For this reason, I am asking the Congress to end the dangerous defense sequester and fully fund our great military.” That has been done.

Sequestration was a \$1.2 trillion penalty included in 2011 budget negotiations, where lawmakers were tasked with coming up with a bipartisan solution to address the nation's debt. Because they were unable to come to an agreement on a combination of spending reductions and revenue increases, the prospect of meat-axe cuts to defense and non-defense programs has loomed over every federal budget ever since.

When sequestration temporarily went into effect in 2013, civilian furloughs and considerable disruptions in government operations led Congress to quickly cobble together a two-year deal to raise the budget caps.

Congress paid for the increased levels by cutting military retired pay. The move, known as COLA-minus-1, was panned by military and veterans service organizations based on the loss in pay across all grades. Congress quickly repealed the provision after MOAA members flooded lawmakers' phones and inboxes with protests against the move.

Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis famously assailed budget caps, telling lawmakers, “For all the heartache caused by the loss of our troops during these wars, no enemy in the field has done more to harm the readiness of our military than sequestration.”

As of Jan. 1, 2018, most TRICARE Prime enrollees no longer need a referral for urgent care visits and point of service charges no longer apply for urgent care claims. This change replaces the previous policy which waived referrals for the first two urgent care visits per year.

Lastly, for those who pay alimony to ex-spouses, the tax reform bill passed by Congress and signed into law by President Trump in December changed the 75-year old tax code that allowed the person (97% men) who pays alimony (spousal support) to deduct those payments from their gross taxable income, and required the person (97% women) who receives the alimony to report those payments as taxable income. Under the **new tax code**, beginning in 2019, alimony payments will be tax-free to the recipients, and no longer deductible by those paying the alimony. Why? Nearly one-half of the women receiving alimony failed to report that taxable income. Nearly 360,000 men claimed \$9.6 billion in tax deductions for the alimony payments that they



had made in 2015, but only 178,000 women reported receiving those alimony payments. Nearly 5 billion dollars of taxable income went unreported by alimony recipients. Additionally, the majority of men paying the alimony were in a 33% or higher tax bracket, while the majority of women receiving alimony were in a 15-25% tax bracket. Congress went after the taxpayer with the higher tax bracket, rather than going after the tax dodgers. Alimony will be paid with “after-tax” dollars, but the person receiving alimony will not have to pay a dime of tax on that income. Nice tax-free income for the ex-wife, but a real rip for the guys that just keep paying. In some cases, the additional reportable income could trigger additional SS taxation. (from RAO Subic, Jan 17, 2018)

The Bost Bulletin: You can follow Congressman Mike Bost on Facebook, Twitter, and his web site—<https://bost.house.gov>. Congressman Bost has been an ardent supporter of the initiatives and recommendations proposed by MOAA National regarding the care and handling of issues dealing with the military. He also sits on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, looking forward to the discussion about President Trump’s call to invest over \$1 Trillion in our nations infrastructure, to make our transportation system safer and more efficient. “I am committed to finding common ground with anyone, Republican or Democrat, to build a bright future for Southern Illinoisans.”

Armed Forces Legal Aid Network: Illinois Joining Forces (IJF), a statewide resource referral service, has provided us with this new resource. Legal aid is one of the largest areas of unmet need facing Illinois veterans. We’re helping fix that through the launch of the Illinois Armed Forces Legal Aid Network (IL-AFLAN), the first-ever statewide hotline and legal support network for veterans, active duty military, reservists, National Guard and their dependents.

Through the IL-AFLAN, veterans and military personnel can obtain free legal help for urgent family, housing and consumer problems, as well as issues such as discharge upgrades and benefit appeals.

The free hotline [**855-452-3526 or 855-IL-AFLAN**] will offer legal advice and brief services and then connect veterans and military members to legal aid providers near their community. There are nine legal providers covering all major regions of the state that can support you, so even if you are no longer in Lake County, one of these can help you. These providers can be seen at <http://iejf.org/illinois-armed-forces-legal-aid-network/>.

State and Local Veteran News

Visit <https://www.illinois.gov/veterans/pages/default.aspx> for details about these and other IL programs.

Chapter Officers	
President	Col (ret) Bob Norman
1st Vice President	Open
2nd Vice President	Maj (ret) Rick Sunner
Secretary	Lt Col (ret) Ann Morey
Treasurer	Col (ret) Dick Glogowski
Communications	Maj (ret) Rick Sunner
ROTC Liaison	CDR (ret) Tim Grout
Spouses Liaison	Narni Cahill

Easter Egg Winners

December 2017 — Jerry McCrave

January 2018 — No one!

February 2018 — No one!

Feb 2018 Solution: a snowglobe in the first ‘O’ in the USO/Fisher House article title.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE IN THE LOCAL AREA

2018 USO/Fisher House Donations Drive (ends 10 March 2018)

Picture Uncle Sam pointing his finger directly in your face and saying, “**Your Chapter Needs You.**” That describes today’s exact circumstance with our chapter as vividly as the famous WWII poster (“Your Country Needs You!) described our nation asking for the involvement of all citizens in the cause to defeat our enemies.

Halfway through the campaign, the data on member involvement is very discouraging. Last week, I reported that **seven members** had contributed a total of **\$820**. This week, we ‘jumped’ to **eight members** contributing **\$920**. The deficiencies are obvious: **8/130** is the ratio of contributors to members; **\$920/\$3000** is the ratio of donations to date to this year’s membership total donations goal; **10/???** is the ratio of the number of checks received to the number of checks possible. You can easily interpret and understand the implications of these data. Then, you must decide what you will do about it. In Week 6 with only 4 weeks to go, our chapter has donated \$1,340—a little less than 45% of our goal.

I cannot express this emphatically enough: **The campaign really, really needs your mail-in donations.** If you are among the many who have not contributed yet, please write your checks now to the **USO of Missouri** and to the **St. Louis Fisher House**. Mail them to Ann Morey at 811 North Lincoln Drive, O’Fallon, IL 62269. Please, do not hesitate or procrastinate. I hope next week’s report will be a joy to write.

Thanks for giving this critical matter your time and positive consideration.

Nick Wartonick, 618-628-0858, leading membership collections; and Ann Morey, 618-628-0286, leading all outside collections. Please contact either one of us.

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Upcoming ROTC/JROTC Ceremonies

In last month’s newsletter, our Chapter President, Bob Norman (Col, USAF, Ret) and our ROTC Liaison, Tim Grout (CDR, USN, Ret) presented the MOAA Gold Bar award at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. We need additional presenters for these upcoming ROTC/JROTC graduation ceremonies:

- 17 March, Time TBD, Cahokia High School Army JROTC Awards Ceremony
- 26 April, 3:30pm, SIUE Army Rotc Awards Ceremony
- 28 April, 5:00pm, Alton High School AFJROTC Award Ceremony
- 3 May, Time TBD, SIUE Army ROTC commissioning rehearsal
- 5 May, 5:30pm, OTHS Milburn Campus, AFJROTC Awards Ceremony

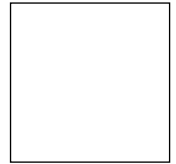
If you’re interested in presenting, please contact Tim at grouttj@gmail.com.

Editorial Policy

The Southwest Illinois Chapter Newsletter is published monthly by the Southwest Illinois Chapter which is an affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA). MOAA and its affiliated chapters and councils are nonpartisan.



Southwest Illinois Chapter
Military Officers Association of America
P.O. Box 735
O'Fallon, IL 62269



Meeting Announcement

Our March meeting will be a lunch on **Saturday, 24 March 2018**, at the Horseshoe Restaurant and Lounge in O'Fallon IL, followed by a Special Concert at Jack Moelmann's home. (See Program News for details.) We'll order from the menu like last month.

RESERVATION FORM FOR SWI MOAA CHAPTER MEETING

Reservation Deadline (Mail received by, email, or phone call): 19 March 2018

E-mail to swimoaa@charter.net, or complete this form and mail it to: Southwest Illinois MOAA, P.O. Box 735, O'Fallon, IL 62269 **to be received by the deadline**. Alternatively, phone Dick Glogowski at 618-624-6115. (No need to send a check this month.)

Number of Reservations Desired:

Member's Name: _____

Spouse/Guest: _____