

March 2020

President's Input

Spring is in the air! Well, almost. Which also means MOAA will soon be Storming the Hill! This annual event that includes representatives from each of the State Councils will look to educate the members of Congress and the staffs about the high priority issues that our military members are facing. You read about the MOAA's 2020 Goals in the February newsletter. Information specific to the top three issues should be coming out soon, so take advantage of this information to talk or write to your elected representatives on the issues.

MOAA continues to provide transition services and information to its members. The Spring 2020 MOAA Military and Veteran Virtual Career Fair is set for March 11, 2020, 1 PM to 2:30 PM EST. This free Virtual Career Fair is open to all servicemembers, veterans, and military spouses. So, if you're thinking about taking off your uniform or if

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2020 USO/Fisher House Donation Drive

**By
 The Southwest Chapter of MOAA**

WHERE ARE YOU?

Managing an annual drive like this one is difficult at best. Why this statement? Because there are only three ways to communicate with the chapter's membership. They are, in order of their effectiveness, (1) blast emails to all members, (2) articles, like this one, in our newsletter, and (3) announcements at chapter meetings. Let's look at them again to evaluate their potential usefulness.

The emails (Do you pause to read them completely?) are usually weekly updates on the status of the campaign and an opportunity to incite members to both contribute personally and get active soliciting from others. This kind of communication requires the recipient, you, of the email to first read it and at least make a mental note, if not an actual note,

Continued on page 4

Treasurer's Report for February 2020

Checking Account Balance ...	\$485
Savings Account Balance	\$8,607
Certificates of Deposit	\$15,327
Total	\$24,420



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Visit our website: www.moaa-swil.org

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This Month's Program



For our March meeting, we're back at Cardinal Creek Golf Course. We'll meet at 6 pm for our social hour, and then enjoy an Italian buffet.

After dinner, Bob and Yasemin Koss will talk about Cappadocia and Fairy Chimneys in Anatolia, Turkey.

14 March 2020

Dinner/Meeting

Cardinal Creek Golf Course Clubhouse, Scott AFB IL

Italian Buffet

Cash Bar

Social Hour: 6-7 pm, Dinner: 7 pm

Cost: \$22.00/person

Attire: Business Casual

Tuscany Italian Buffet

Three different Pastas
Three different Sauces
Italian Sausage and Peppers

Caesar or Tossed Salad
Garlic Bread
Tea & Coffee
Dessert

Upcoming Programs

Date	Venue	Topic
16 April 2020	Global Brew Tap House (4:30 to 6:30 pm)	SW IL MOAA Happy Hour
16 May 2020	Ann Morey's Home	Annual Business Meeting
13 June 2020	Black Stallion Room, Fairmount Park	Horse Races
12 Sep 2020	Tavern on Main	2020-2021 Chapter Kickoff Social
10 Oct 2020	Cardinal Creek Golf Course Clubhouse	Aging Successfully
14 Nov 2020	Cardinal Creek Golf Course Clubhouse	O'Fallon Fire Chief
12 Dec 2020	Cardinal Creek Golf Course Clubhouse	Scholarship Auction

President's Input (continued)

you're a military spouse with a career on the move, you can get information that will help you earn top dollar for your skills, get the job you want, and connect with the best employers. If you're seeking employment, register at <https://app.brazenconnect.com/a/moaa/e/XMv3J>. If you're an employer, please register at <https://app.brazenconnect.com/a/moaa/e/XMv3J/exhibitors>.

One last push for Fisher House and USO donations! Nick Wartonick has set a very achievable goal for the Chapter, and we count on everyone to please contribute. These organizations only exist through the generosity of contributors, not receiving any money from the government for the services they provide.

Thank you again for your service, and continuing to serve and be part of the force to hold the line for our military members. God bless you and your families, those serving and in harm's way, the families who support those serving, those who have given the last full measure, and this great country that represents freedom—the land of the free and the home of the brave.

Now that Punxsutawney Phil has made his forecast, the next question is “will March come in like a lion ... or a lamb?” Whatever happens, I'm sure none of us will have an effect on that outcome. Unlike the weather, though, we are able to make an impact on several things in our lives. We have choices. Like in elections. Like sending messages to Congress about issues that affect our military—those who are serving,



those who have served, and even those who will choose to serve later. Some great headway was made in the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), but this is not the end and not the time to back off. There are still issues with military medical health care, TRICARE fees, TRICARE pharmacy, and concurrent receipt that need attending. So, don't stop your support. Continue to take action when called.

Let's go over some of the “wins” and effects of the 2020 NDAA. Active duty, Guard, and Reserve members received a 3.1% military pay raise on January 1. Military retirees and survivors received a 1.6% increase in cost of living adjustment. And while there were no enrollment fees or deductible adjustments for TRICARE for Life participants in 2020, nor new programmed TRICARE fee increases in the NDAA, several previously scheduled increases took effect on January 1, 2020. Active duty families pay no enrollment fees for TRICARE Prime or Select, and military survivors and medically retired beneficiaries will not see an increase in their TRICARE fees.

- Enrollment fees for retirees who entered service prior to January 1, 2018. TRICARE Prime: \$300 (single)/\$600 (family), up from \$297/\$594; TRICARE Select: No fee.
- Enrollment fees for retirees who entered service after Jan. 1, 2018. TRICARE Prime: \$366 (single)/\$732 (family), up from \$360/\$720; TRICARE Select: \$471 (single)/\$942 (family), up from \$462/\$924.
- Retail pharmacy fees. \$13 for 30-day supply of generic, \$33 for brand name, \$60 for non-formulary (up from \$11, \$28, and \$53, respectively).
- Mail-order pharmacy fees: \$10 for a 90-day supply of generic, \$29 for brand name, \$60 for non-formulary (up from \$7, \$24 and \$53, respectively).

Privatized military housing has been under the microscope and several milestones during this year will hopefully help improve the living conditions of many of those actively serving. On March 1, 2020, the Secretary of Defense will submit to the congressional defense committees the list of any landlords who do not agree to the contracts in the previous month. Those contracts, which will apply retroactively, are intended to increase flexibility in contract renegotiation; increase landlord responsibility for health and safety hazards (including relocation/health costs incurred by hazards); and maintain an up-to-date work order system. On June 17, 2020, the Secretary of Defense will establish a landlord-tenant dispute resolution

Legislative News (continued)

process, including requests to withhold payments, to ensure tenants entering into the process have access and assistance from a military housing advocate or military legal assistance attorney. On May 1, 2020, DoD will provide a report to Congress on food insecurity in the military, looking at the number of military families on food stamps, use of food assistance programs, use of free or reduced school lunch programs, and the use of food banks. On June 1, 2020, DoD will provide a report to Congress on plans to consolidate the commissary and exchange systems. On September 30, 2020, the Secretary of Defense will establish and implement a standard record of service for members of the reserve component of the armed forces, similar to a DD-214. The record will summarize the member's service and include dates of active duty service.

One of the huge wins that has been a long, long battle is the elimination of the Widows tax. While not happening immediately, on January 1, 2021, the first of three increments to phase out the Survivor Benefit Plan-Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (SBP-DIC) offset begins. Full elimination will happen in 2023. Thank you to all who were part of the effort to educate Congress by sending messages.

Now some not so good news ... a fourth category of prescription drugs was enabled after the 2018 NDAA which excludes drugs from coverage and will require beneficiaries to purchase these drugs out-of-pocket as they are neither available from pharmacies at military treatment facilities, nor through the TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery Program. Additionally, costs for Tier 4 drugs do not apply to the annual TRICARE catastrophic cap. The first round of Tier 4/non-covered drugs was announced in August 2019 and included Glumetza, Vimovo, and Lexette. Excluding these drugs had little impact on beneficiaries since very few TRICARE patients were using these prescription drugs and alternative agents were available for them.

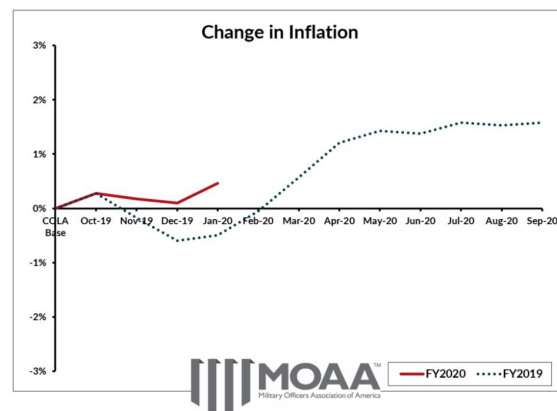
However, nearly 19,000 beneficiaries taking Dexilant to treat gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) were impacted when that drug was dropped from TRICARE coverage effective November 28, 2019. DHA is considering adding brand-name [erectile dysfunction drugs Viagra and Cialis](#) to Tier 4/non-covered status, although this decision is pending approval from the DHA director. MOAA is monitoring the Tier4 drug reviews closely to ensure DHA follows congressional intent and moves to Tier 4 only those medications that "provide very little to no clinical effectiveness" per the FY 2018 NDAA legislative language. MOAA is also pressing for an appeals process for drugs determined as Tier 4. Your help will be needed in this effort.

COLA Watch

moaa.org/content/take-action/cola-watch

The January 2020 CPI is 251.361, 0.5 percent above the FY 2020 COLA baseline.

The Consumer Price Index for February is scheduled to be released March 11. The CPI baseline for FY 2020 is 250.200.



USO/Fisher House Drive (continued)

that you must do something important in a fixed timeframe. Then it expects you to turn that note into the physical acts of writing checks and/or buying "Wish List" items or making outreach to others to do the same. As you can see, you are the key to the effectiveness of email communications.

Newsletter articles are limited to the newsletter's publication schedule. So, this is the final article of only two that you will have an opportunity to read before the campaign closes at the chapter meeting on Saturday, March 14, 2020. That's a very limited opportunity to reach you, and again it begs the question, "Do you read and react to the articles?" Like this one and as outlined above about emails, these articles

USO/Fisher House Drive (continued)

appeal to you to get active and to get involved. How effective any of these communications are depends on you.

Meetings would be an ideal time for good communications if the entire membership showed up, which of course is not likely to happen. Most often, only a small number of the same members are in attendance, so meetings allow only minimal communications. Also, meetings have the disadvantage of occurring only once a month, so there will be only three throughout the whole eight week campaign, one at the kick off, one in the middle month, and the wrap up meeting. Meeting attendees usually hand in their checks and “Wish List” items early.

For many of us, this once a year chapter campaign is the only time throughout the year we are asked to really put up and put out in a sincere effort to support our uniformed military people who serve and sacrifice for us. Some of them, whether active or veterans are harmed physically and/or mentally, requiring difficult and long-term recovery – if that can ever happen. That’s when both agencies also offer support to the families affected by separation and hardship. It’s also a time when we are really supporting our chapter. Please think about all of this when you plan and execute your total commitment to the campaign.

As a reminder, separate checks should be made payable to the **USO of Missouri** and to **St. Louis Fisher House**. Give them to either Ann Morey or Nick Wartonick. Or, you can mail them to Ann at 811 North Lincoln Drive, O’Fallon, Illinois 62269 or Nick at 7342 Timberpoint Court, Fairview Heights, Illinois 62208. Also, remember to contact Ann Morey about “Wish List” items if you desire to go shopping or are asking others to contribute such items.

So, let’s go back to the question asked in the caption of this article, “Where are you?” Where are you in the full spectrum of all the opportunities to be a thoroughly involved participant in the success of this year’s campaign???

THANK YOU!

Ann Morey (contact for “Wish List” matters), 618-628-0268, ram204@att.com

Nick Wartonick (contact for “Money” matters), 618-628-0858, wartonick-59@charter.net

Chapter Officers	
President	Col (ret) Bob Norman
2nd VP/Communications	Maj (ret) Rick Sunner
Secretary	Lt Col (ret) Ann Morey
Treasurer	Col (ret) Dick Glogowski
Membership	Maj (ret) Sabrina Luttrell
Programs	Yasemin Koss
ROTC Liaison	CDR (ret) Tim Grout
Spouses Liaison	Narni Cahill

Call for Articles! If you want to submit an article for the Eyes to the Skies, just send the draft article to me at rick.sunner@gmail.com. Please keep these things in mind:

- Submit your article by the 10th of the month prior
- The article must be in MS Word or text format

We reserve the right to edit the article so it fits in the newsletter and meets our (and MOAA’s) editorial policy.

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.



COUNCIL AND CHAPTER NEWS

TAKE ACTION!

For more information about the articles in this month's newsletter and how you can get more involved, visit the MOAA [Take Action Center](#) webpage.

- [Don't Dismantle Military Medicine](#), the readiness of America's armed forces demand a full complement of well-trained medical professionals. But DoD's shortsighted proposal to eliminate 20 percent of military medical positions could have drastic consequences—on the battlefield.
- [Act Now to Help Veteran Caregivers](#), the Transparency and Effective Accountability Measures (TEAM) for Veteran Caregivers Act improves the veterans caregiver program by ensuring all caregivers are included in the veterans' medical records.
- [Protect Gold Star Families from Future Shutdowns](#), under current law, Gold Star spouses receiving benefits from DoD are protected from interruptions in payments during a government shutdown. Coast Guard survivors are at risk because their paychecks come from the DHS.
- [Support Concurrent Receipt for Disabled Military Retirees](#), act now to support the Retired Pay Restoration Act, which provides concurrent receipt of retired pay and disability compensation.
- [Act Now to Extend CHAMPVA Coverage](#), did you know that children of disabled veterans are the only group in America not covered by their parent's health insurance up to age of 26? The CHAMPVA Children's Care Protection Act of 2019, if passed, would expand coverage.
- [Expand Work Opportunity Tax Credit to Include Military Spouses](#), according to Department of Defense data, 24% of the military spouse labor force remains unemployed. We must remove as many barriers to family financial stability as possible.
- [Tell Congress to Ensure the VA Covers These Four Conditions Linked to Agent Orange Exposure](#), Four medical conditions – bladder cancer, Parkinson's like symptoms, hyperthyroidism, and hypertension – have met criteria to join the list of diseases connected to exposure to Agent Orange.
- [American-Made Meds for Troops and More Oversight of Foreign-Made Drugs](#), our nation increasingly relies on generic medications manufactured outside the U.S. Unfortunately, this reliance includes the associated medication manufacturing processes and ingredients, which are not under the strict scrutiny of the FDA.
- [America's Gold Star Families Need Your Help](#), Recent changes to the tax law inadvertently increased the amount of taxes Gold Star Families pay on their survivor benefits.
- [Tell Congress to Expand the Military Lending Act Protections to All Americans](#), The Military Lending Act is the most successful consumer protection to be enacted. We need to build on this success and protect members of the National Guard and Reserves, veterans, and survivors.

STATE AND LOCAL NEWS

For Illinois veteran news, please visit the state website at illinois.gov/veterans/Pages/.

- SB110—Amendment to the Standard Homestead Exemption for Disabled Veterans
The Illinois Department of Veteran Affairs reports that this bill is now out of the rules committee and back in the house finance committee. Sponsors in the legislature are needed to get this bill passed, which will also affect surviving spouses who need this exemption to survive because their income is reduced by half when the veteran dies. Please contact your Illinois State representatives.

SW IL VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE

The [VSO](#) provides free assistance to veterans, their dependents, and survivors in navigating complex services and benefits. The nearest VSO is in Belleville, and can be contacted at 618-233-8445/5140.



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

Meeting Announcement

This month's meeting will be held on Saturday, 14 March 2020 at the Cardinal Creek Golf Course Clubhouse on Scott AFB. (See Program News for details.) Cost for the meal will be **\$22.00**.

RESERVATION FORM FOR SW IL MOAA CHAPTER MEETING

Reservation deadline (mail, e-mail, or phone call received by): 9 Mar 2020

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.

Number of Reservations Desired: _____

Member's Name: _____

Spouse/Guest: _____