

President's Input

An invisible agent has really wreaked havoc on our country, but we are fighting back, even though sitting at home doesn't much feel like we're fighting, but that's about all we can do right now. I hope you're all doing well and staying healthy, maintaining social distance, and washing your hands and covering your nose and mouth with a mask! This will all end sometime in the future—near future we hope. Until then, we'll carry on as many of us have in the past and many will after us. There is hope. We are a strong nation, strong in spirit and resolve.

And that is one of the reasons that May is recognized as National Military Appreciation Month. Starting with Loyalty Day on May 1; then followed by Public Service Recognition Week May 3-9; Commemoration of VE Day on May 8; Military Spouse Appreciation Day, May 8; Armed Forces Day on May 16; and Memorial Day, May 25. Please take time to reflect on the meaning of these markers in our

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Treasurer's Report for Mar 2020

Checking Account Balance ...	\$777
Savings Account Balance	\$8,011
Certificates of Deposit	\$15,359
Total	\$24,148



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Visit our website: www.moaa-swil.org

2020 USO/Fisher House Donation Drive

by

The Southwest Chapter of MOAA

USO and Fisher House Donation Drive

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

In May 2003, President Bush 43 publicly regretted using the "Mission Accomplished" banner and statement because he took so much heat about it. Why? It conveyed the wrong message; i.e., the war in Iraq is over. Today, I don't hesitate to use that same acclaim, "Mission Accomplished," because I know I'll never regret it. You made that possible.

When Ann Morey texted four days before the campaign was over that the combined total donations had reached \$8,525 (a new record), I was overjoyed. Yet I was still optimistic. I texted back, "WOW! Keep those \$'s coming. \$9,000 is possible." It sure was!

Surprisingly, with a final surge to \$9,250, our chapter had exceeded beyond all expectations by breaking the old record of \$6,918 set in 2019 by \$2,332. It was really "Mission Accomplished." Another WOW!!!

In that same text to Ann, I lamented that the JROTC had not participated

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This Month's Program

**DUE TO THE CURRENT RESTRICTIONS ON GATHERINGS,
OUR MAY BUSINESS MEETING IS CANCELLED.**

**WE WILL KEEP YOU INFORMED ABOUT FUTURE
PROGRAMS IN THE NEWSLETTER.**

*(Please see Yasemin Koss' short "teaser" article about Cappadocia on page 14.
She will be rescheduling her presentation for a future meeting.)*

MENU

No menu this program

No menu this program

Upcoming Programs

Date	Venue	Topic
13 June 2020	Black Stallion Room, Fairmount Park	Horse Races (Tentative)
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)

nation's history and also for your family. I appreciate every one of you and what you sacrificed for love of country. God bless you and keep you safe during this challenging time. We will hopefully see you in September.

Now, in this time of potential illness besetting us, here is a tidbit of information that those covered by Medicare need to consider next time you have to go to the hospital for assistance and are presented with "routine" papers to sign.

Stop! Don't Sign Away Your Coverage

Margie Barrie, an insurance agent with ACSIA Partners, knows the potential danger of making the wrong move. She recently wrote a piece for ThinkAdvisor about the day her 98-year-old mother was taken to an emergency room with what turned out to be congestive heart failure. Eventually, Barrie's mother was told she was being moved to a hospital room. Barrie recounted how a hospital employee approached Barrie's mother with several papers to sign, saying the forms were routine:

- "The first paper is about authorizing Medicare to pay the hospital bill.
- The second paper — and this is done very smoothly — states that my mother understands she will be in the hospital on observation status for 24 hours.
- As my mother is handed the paper to sign, I shout, 'Mom, don't sign it!'"

Barrie says various members of the hospital staff tried to browbeat her mother into signing the forms — at least until Barrie uttered some magic words: "I write a column in a national newsletter that has a large circulation." After a bit more debate and discussion about whether Barrie's mother had been given oxygen in the ER — she had been — her mother's hospital status was changed from "observation" to "admitted." As it turns out, Barrie's mother did end up going to a skilled nursing facility for physical therapy and rehabilitation after leaving the hospital. Had Barrie not pushed to get her mother's hospital status changed while her mother was at the hospital, the stay in the nursing facility would have cost \$650 a day — out of pocket.

Barrie's parting words of advice to others who find themselves — or loved ones — in a similar situation are as follows:

"Know these rules so that you can challenge them if appropriate. This discussion must occur in the emergency room. The reason is that when the patient leaves the emergency room, you cannot get the status changed."

To learn more about the rules that determine whether someone's Medicare hospital status is observation or outpatient versus admission or inpatient, you might want to start by reviewing Medicare's "Are You a Hospital Inpatient or Outpatient?" handout at [Are you an Inpatient or Outpatient? \(PDF File\)](#). [Source: MoneyTalksNews | Chris Kissell | February 5, 2020++]

- **Act Now to Help Veteran Caregivers** ([Link](#))

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, establishing a minimum standard of information in downgrade notification letters, and extending benefits for at least 90 days after a termination



Continued on page 4

Legislative News (continued)

letter is sent for cases where a veteran is deemed “no longer clinically eligible” for the program.

- **Call on Congress to Halt Military Medical Billet Reductions Amid COVID-19 Uncertainty** ([Link](#))

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused extraordinary flux in the civilian health care system together with increased demands on uniformed medical providers. Act now to urge Congress to halt plans to cut uniformed medical personnel and reduce military treatment facility capacity.

- **Please Consider a Temporary Waiver of TRICARE Mail Order Pharmacy Copays During the COVID-19 Emergency** ([Link](#))

Many military beneficiaries cannot access their military treatment facility pharmacies due to installation access restrictions or social distancing measures. Please act now to urge Congress to temporarily waive TRICARE mail order pharmacy copays to ensure impacted military families don't face unexpected costs for medications.

- **Protect Gold Star Spouses During Future Shutdown** ([Link](#))

Under current law, Gold Star spouses receiving benefits from the Department of Defense are protected from interruptions in payments during a government shutdown. But because Coast Guard paychecks come from the Department of Homeland Security, these survivors are still at risk.

- **Americas Gold Star Families Need Your Help** ([Link](#))

Recent changes to the tax law inadvertently increased the amount of taxes Gold Star Families pay on their survivor benefits.

- **Support Full Concurrent Receipt for Disabled Military Retirees** ([Link](#))

Act now to support H.R. 333, the Disabled Veterans Tax Termination Act, that provides full concurrent receipt for disabled military retirees, including Chapter 61 retirees. And to support the Retired Pay Restoration Act, a bill to provide concurrent receipt of both military retired pay and veterans' disability compensation.

- **Act Now to Extend CHAMPVA Coverage** ([Link](#))

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, they would expand coverage under CHAMPVA for children of eligible veterans, family members, and survivors so they can maintain their health care coverage until age 26.

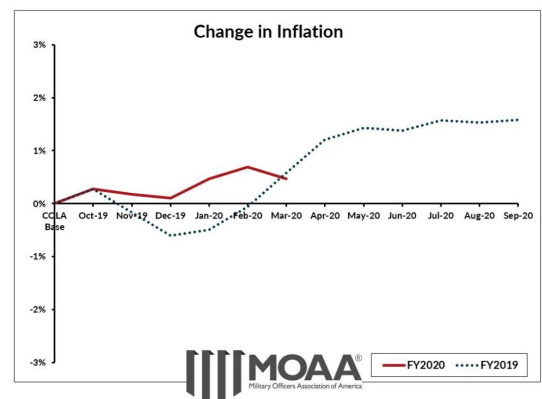
Continued on page 6

COLA Watch

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

The March 2020 CPI is 251.375, 0.5 percent above the FY 2020 COLA baseline.

The Consumer Price Index for April is scheduled to be released May 12. The CPI baseline for FY 2020 is 250.200.



USO/Fisher House Drive (continued)

this year, for there was no notice that they had collected any “Wish List” items. Like Bush, I now regret that statement. Within a day or so, Ann received a call asking her, “When are going to pick up this stuff?” This stuff was well over 1,000 pounds of bulk and individual “Wish List” items for both the USO and Fisher House collected by the Dupo High School JROTC. This was also record high collections and another “Mission Accomplished.” The chapter owes them a salute of huge gratitude and praise.

2020 became the year of new records across the board. The record \$9,250 splits into record high donations of \$4,740 to the USO of Missouri and \$4,510 to St. Louis Fisher House. St. Michael’s Episcopal Church, a perpetual contributor, brought to the chapter record high collections of \$2,470, split \$1,310 for the USO and \$1,160 for Fisher House. The chapter membership also hit all-time high record donations of \$3,430 for the USO and \$3,350 to Fisher House, for a sensational new combined high of \$6,780. If you can, give yourself a proud pat on your back; if you can’t, at the first opportunity, pat another member.

Thank you to every chapter member and every chapter couple who anted up so generously to make this year of records complete. Thank you to the Dupo youth for their great record achievement. Thank you to St. Mike’s parish for outstanding record support. Thank you to Ann Morey, with whom I shared this campaign’s management. Ann and I are proud to have served you, the contributors, and in turn the USO and Fisher House and all the uniformed and veteran beneficiaries of your contributions. They, I am sure, are thankful to you also.

I would be remiss to not wish all members and their families and friends sustained good health, safety and well-being throughout this uncertain period of attack by a silent adversary.

Nick Wartonick (Campaign Co-chair with Ann Morey)

We Won (Again)!

The Southwest Illinois MOAA Chapter was once again a Five-Star winner in the Colonel Marvin J. Harris Communications contest.

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.



Legislative News (continued)

Act now to join other concerned veterans, servicemembers, families, and surviving family members in delivering this message to get this enacted once and for all.

- **Support the Jobs and Childcare for Military Families Act** ([Link](#))

According to Department of Defense data, 24% of the military spouse labor force remains unemployed. That's over six times higher than the national unemployment rate. Additionally, many military families feel the impact of the rising cost of health and dependent care. To retain the best and brightest in an all-volunteer force, we must remove as many barriers to family financial stability as possible. Ask Congress to expand the Work Opportunity Tax Credit to military spouses and provide Flexible Spending Accounts as a servicemember benefit.

- **Tell Congress to Expand the Military Lending Act Protections to All Americans** ([Link](#))

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.

- **Tell Congress to Ensure the VA Covers These Four Conditions Linked to Agent Orange Exposure** ([Link](#))

Four medical conditions – bladder cancer, Parkinson's like symptoms, hypothyroidism, and hypertension – have met scientific scrutiny to join the list of diseases connected to exposure to Agent Orange or other herbicides. The VA is conducting additional studies about whether to cover veterans impacted by these four “presumptives,” and we need Congress' help!

- **Support Incentive Pay Parity for Guard and Reserve Components of the Uniformed Services** ([Link](#))

RC aviation personnel currently receive only 1/30th of the Aviation Incentive Pay their active duty counterparts receive. In the wake of a nationwide pilot shortage, the uniformed services are experiencing retention problems. Providing incentive pay parity, across all components, would encourage both departing active component aviator and their RC peers alike, to continue serving in the Guard and Reserve. This issue is not just one of fairness, but one of maintaining our readiness as a total force. H.R. 2953, the Aviation Incentive Pay Parity Act, would remediate this discrepancy by authorizing incentive pay equivalent to the regular component.

- **Support Concurrent Disability Pay and Retired Pay for Combat-Related Retirees** ([Link](#))

Contact your representative and urge them to support H.R. 5995, the Maj. Richard Star Act, and the companion S. 3393, which would eliminate concurrent receipt for servicemembers unable to complete 20 years of service due to their combat-related injuries. Help ensure these men and women get their full service-earned retirement, as well as their disability compensation from the VA.

- **Tell Congress to Control TRICARE Copays to Protect the Military Health Benefit** ([Link](#))

Military Health System (MHS) reform has meant numerous out-of-pocket cost increases for beneficiaries and uncertainty about the future of the health care benefit. Act now to urge Congress to demonstrate good faith with military families by addressing copay increases for prescription drugs, mental health visits, and physical, speech and occupational therapy.

- **Congress Must Secure America's Pharmaceutical Supply** ([Link](#))

The global coronavirus response has highlighted the vulnerability of the international medical infrastructure, and the need for a close look at the domestic production of critical medications. Ask your

Legislative News (continued)

lawmakers to support the Securing America's Medicine Cabinet (SAM-C) Act, which will strengthen U.S. drug manufacturing and help end the security threat posed by Chinese dominance in this supply chain. Act now to send your elected officials a letter in support of this legislation.

- **American-Made Meds for Troops and More Oversight of Foreign-Made Drugs** ([Link](#))

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.

Here's How You Can Help Improve the TRICARE Pharmacy Benefit

by

Kevin Lilley, 1 Apr 2020

The provider responsible for TRICARE prescription benefits has launched a user-research program designed to improve services for all recipients – and has asked MOAA to spread the word.

The Express Scripts User Research Panel will ask volunteers to participate in research studies involving phone interviews, online surveys, and in-person research sessions. Participants would be invited to such activities throughout the year via email and would be compensated for their time.

Those interested in taking part in the panel can fill out a short qualifying survey [at this link](#). The initial survey should take less than 10 minutes.

Questions? Contact Express Scripts Research Manager Angela Lewis at ARLewis@express-scripts.com.

MOAA Urges Congress to Temporarily Waive TRICARE Mail Order Copays

by

Karen Ruedisueli, 1 Apr 2020

Note from MOAA: Have you been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, or the response? Share your story to help MOAA understand the needs of the uniformed services community in this challenging time.

With additional legislation to address the coronavirus pandemic potentially in the works, MOAA is urging congressional leaders to temporarily waive TRICARE mail order pharmacy copays.

TRICARE pharmacy copays were set into law with the FY 2018 National Defense Authorization Act. For calendar year 2020, the mail order copay for a 90-day supply of medications is \$10 for generics, \$29 for brand name, and \$60 for non-formulary drugs.

Many military families — particularly those with special needs, wounded warriors, and Medicare-eligible retirees and their spouses — take multiple maintenance medications each day.

Even with the COVID-19 national emergency, the Defense Health Agency (DHA) does not have the authority to modify TRICARE pharmacy copays, so MOAA is advocating for a legislative fix.

Military families appreciate the option of getting medications at no cost from pharmacies at military treatment facilities (MTFs), since TRICARE mail order copays can quickly add up. The TRICARE pharmacy copay structure creates a strong incentive for patients to visit the MTF pharmacy, increasing risk of exposure to COVID-19.

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Waive TRICARE Mail Order Copays (continued)

Eliminating mail order copays reduces the financial incentive to use MTF pharmacies and encourages social distancing during the coronavirus pandemic, a precaution that is strongly recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

A copay waiver is particularly important since some installations have instituted temporary access restrictions while others have put limitations on pharmacy access intended to protect both patients and health care teams, with more restrictions likely should conditions worsen.

MOAA seeks to ensure impacted families don't face sudden, unexpected out-of-pocket costs related to medication copays.

Please consult the TRICARE website for guidance on transferring your prescriptions to mail order or retail. If you experience problems transferring your prescriptions, please let us know at legis@moaa.org or by sharing your story.

Coronavirus Resources:

- [Coronavirus.gov](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention -- Coronavirus Web Site](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)
- [CDC Advice for Higher-Risk Individuals](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)
- [VA Coronavirus Web Site](https://www.va.gov/coronavirus)
- [TRICARE Coronavirus Information](https://www.tricare.mil/coronavirus)
- [DoD Coronavirus Response Web Site](https://www.dod.mil/coronavirus)
- [Health.mil Coronavirus Information](https://www.health.mil/coronavirus)
- [Military OneSource Coronavirus Resources](https://www.militaryonesource.com/coronavirus)
- [National Institute of Health Coronavirus Information](https://www.nih.gov/coronavirus)
- [Latest Coronavirus News from Military.com](https://www.military.com/coronavirus)
- [Latest Coronavirus News from Military Times](https://www.militarytimes.com/coronavirus)

Reservists Deserve the Same Pay for the Same Risks

by

Cory Titus, 16 Mar 2020

The reserve component (RC) is critical to our national security strategy and has continuously deployed at a greater pace than imagined a decade ago. Whether serving overseas, securing our border, or helping to protect in our communities with COVID-19 quarantine operations, reserve forces play an increasingly important role for our national security.

Essential to their readiness is maintaining proficiency standards to do their job. National Guardsmen have many specialty duties that require constant training to ensure servicemembers are ready to activate when our nation needs them.

The standards to maintain proficiencies such as parachute duty, aircrew duty, and many others are not dependent on duty status; however, the pay is. Reserve component personnel receive only 1/30th of the pay their active-duty counterparts receive for their specialty pay.

For example, to qualify for hazardous duty incentive pay (HDIP) for parachute duty, a servicemember is required to jump at least once during a three-month period. This qualification is the same for active and reserve components. An active-duty member who is paid HDIP for a static line parachute jump receives \$150 per month, while the reservist receives \$12 despite having to make the same number of jumps to keep the HDIP.

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Reservists Deserve Same Pay (continued)

A servicemember in the reserve component is taking the same risk as their active-duty counterpart for a fraction of the pay (See more examples below). This issue is not just one of fairness, but one of maintaining our readiness as a total force.

Fortunately, Congress recognizes this inequity and is working to resolve it. Bipartisan and bicameral bills were introduced last month to fix this issue. Sens. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.), Kevin Cramer (R-N.D.), and Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill.) released the Senate version.

In a press release, Manchin said, “Our National Guard and Reserve servicemembers risk their lives so Americans can enjoy the freedoms they have fought for us to keep. We owe it to those who put themselves in harm’s way that they are paid comparably to their active duty colleagues.”

The House version of the bill was introduced by Reps. Andy Kim (D-N.J.), Trent Kelly (R-Miss.), Tim Ryan (D-Ohio), Steven Palazzo (R-Miss.), Tom Cole (R-Okla.), and Elissa Slotkin (D-Mich.).

Rate Breakdown

Monthly Hazardous Duty Incentive Pay rates for:

Aircrew

- Active enlisted: \$150-\$240
- Reserve component (RC), enlisted: \$12-\$20
- Active warrant officer: \$150-\$215
- RC, warrant officer: \$12-\$17
- Active, officer: \$150-\$250
- RC, officer: \$12-\$20

Parachute Duty (High Altitude, Low Opening)

- Active: \$150-\$225
- RC: \$12-\$20

Other hazardous duties offer \$150 per month to active duty members and \$12 to RC members. These include:

- Demolition
- Experimental stress
- Flight deck
- Exposure to highly toxic pesticides
- Laboratory duty utilizing live dangerous viruses or bacteria
- Toxic fuels and propellants
- Handling chemical munitions
- Maritime visit, board, search, seizure (VBSS)
- Weapons of mass destruction civil support (WMDCS) team
- Diving

All Military Moves Could Be Delayed Into July

by

Amy Bushatz, 8 Apr 2020

This article originally appeared on Military.com.

A global stop-movement order delaying all military moves into mid-May might be extended into July, the Air Force's top officer said this week.

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Military Moves Delayed (continued)

"My sense is that we're probably going to see an extension of the stop movement for some period of time," Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David Goldfein said Monday during a Facebook live townhall. "I believe the SecDef is looking to make a decision on that either this week or next."

The Pentagon issued sweeping travel restrictions March 14 blocking all troops and their families from starting permanent change of station moves through May 11 as officials sought to stem the tide of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"These restrictions are necessary to preserve force readiness, limit the continuing spread of the virus, and preserve the health and welfare of Service members, DoD civilian employees, their families, and the local communities in which we live," said a memo released with the order.

But Goldfein this week said he has reviewed coronavirus predictions that show instances of the virus only growing into May, with curves starting to taper by July.

As of April 3, officials said there have been 1,752 total cases of COVID-19 within the DoD: 978 military, 256 dependents, 306 civilians and 108 Defense Department contractors.

Goldfein said Matthew Donnavan, undersecretary for personnel and readiness, has been tasked with sorting through the Pentagon's choices for how to deal with the on-hold moves after May 11.

"What [Secretary of Defense Mark Esper] tasked [Donnavan] to look at was: does he extend that period of time or does he turn that over to the services for determinations of what happens May 12?" Goldfein said.

The stop-movement order also blocks troops from taking leave or traveling beyond a general area surrounding their duty station.

A top consideration for officials while considering when to lift the stop movement, he said, is getting families in place at their new duty station before the start of the 2020-2021 school year, which begins in mid-August to early-September, depending on location.

"If families are going to move, we are going to want to get families in place before it starts," he said.

Troops and families forced to delay their moves have access to additional funding for housing and food through temporary duty (TDY) orders and per diem payments, according to guidance released by the Pentagon March 18.

Goldfein also said Air Force personnel officials will soon issue guidance allowing retiring or separating airmen to extend their service time until after the pandemic subsides. Although the global stop-movement order exempts moves related to leaving the service, airman will be permitted to delay if they so choose.

"You're going to see [Air Force personnel] pushing out to the force through the command teams the opportunity for those who would like to extend and not retire on their current dates to pull that paperwork and two work a later retirement following the recovery from the COVID," he said.

What You Need to Know About the Military's New Face-Covering Policy

by

Hope Hodge Seck, 5 Apr 2020

This article first appeared on Military.com. Get more on the COVID-19 pandemic, including links to key resources, at [MOAA.org/Coronavirus](https://moaa.org/coronavirus).

On the heels of new guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advocating the use of face masks while in public, the Pentagon has released its own updated policy ordering all personnel under its purview to cover their faces.

Continued on page 11 10

New Military Face-Covering Policy (continued)

As case numbers continue to climb amid the novel coronavirus pandemic, Defense Secretary Mark Esper appeared Sunday on ABC's "This Week," saying a military directive was coming regarding face masks.

Hours later, the Pentagon released its policy directing cloth face coverings for all personnel, including troops, civilians, family members, contractors and all others on Defense Department property in certain situations. The order sidestepped concerns around the nationwide shortage of N95 and surgical masks, telling personnel they will not be issued these in order to leave them available for medical professionals.

Instead, troops and other DoD-affiliated individuals are encouraged to make simple coverings out of clean T-shirts and other household materials, the Pentagon memo says.

"The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness will issue updated force health protection guidance on DoD implementation," it states. "The Military Departments will issue guidance on wear for Service members."

It's not clear when the military services will issue their specific guidance in light of the new directive.

Face coverings will be mandatory whenever people cannot maintain six feet of social distance in public areas or places of work, the policy, signed by Esper, states. They're encouraged to wear the coverings in all public situations, it adds.

The guidance caveats that the directive must be observed "to the extent practical" and notes that face coverings may need to be pulled down at security checkpoints to verify identification.

The challenge of social distancing in the military was driven home this month when videos surfaced from aboard the carrier Theodore Roosevelt showing swarms of sailors gathered to send off Capt. Brett Crozier after he was relieved of command of the carrier following a request for aid addressing a coronavirus outbreak that became public.

"The Department of Defense is committed to taking every precaution to ensure the health and wellbeing of our Service members, DoD civilian employees, families, and the Nation in response to the [COVID-19] pandemic," the new memo states. "DoD supports, and will continue to implement, all measures necessary to mitigate risks to the spread of the disease, consistent with the Department's priorities to protect our people, safeguard our national security capabilities, and support the government's whole-of-nation response."

Ease Veteran Access to COVID-19 Relief Rebates

by
Cory Titus, 8 Apr 2020

Last week, MOAA joined fellow veterans' service organizations to call on the secretaries of the departments of the Treasury and Veterans Affairs to make it easier for recipients of VA payments to receive stimulus money.

Congress took aggressive action in response to the COVID-19 pandemic with the passage of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Along with funding for the response efforts, the bill authorizes a one-time payment called a "recovery rebate" to be sent to most American adults.

These \$1,200 payments are subject to certain eligibility and income requirements. The process to verify the requirements and quickly distribute the aid is critically important to support those in need.

Veteran Access to COVID-19 Relief (continued)

Individuals' tax returns are one of the main tools for the government to automatically process a payment. Those who filed a tax return in 2018 or 2019 will automatically receive a payment via direct deposit, if eligible.

However, not all Americans eligible for the payment can be tracked through this method. Unique to the military community are veterans who have service-connected disabilities and survivors who receive Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC).

MOAA co-signed an April 3 letter to Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and VA Secretary Robert Wilkie, calling on them to avoid unnecessary paperwork and to use existing systems to identify and make direct payments to VA beneficiaries and Social Security recipients.

“We are gravely concerned that absent quick and decisive action from the Administration, millions of seriously disabled veterans, their survivors and caregivers — who are among the most vulnerable Americans during the ongoing coronavirus health crisis — may never receive this critical financial support,” the veterans service organizations' letter states.

In addition to VSO support, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Jerry Moran (R-Kansas) and Ranking Member Jon Tester (D-Mont.) are urging cooperation between the Treasury and VA. Moran called for “leveraging existing resources and data with the IRS will reduce bureaucratic hurdles for our veterans and get them the needed CARES Act relief money faster.”

Additional letters were sent by Democratic senators and House leadership.

Quickly dispersing the recovery rebates is essential to decreasing the economic impact of COVID-19. Reach out to your member of Congress and ask them to join the call to decrease the burden on Social Security recipients and those receiving payments from the VA.

MOAA Continues Efforts to Stop Cuts to Military Medical Capacity

by

Karen Ruedisueli, 8 Apr 2020

MOAA continued its work on the Hill to stop cuts to military medical capacity with an April 3 letter to House and Senate Armed Services Committee leadership. The letter urges a provision in the FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to stop medical billet reductions and end the downsizing of military treatment facilities (MTFs).

MOAA appreciates Defense Health Agency assurances that all changes to MTF capacity will be conditions-based, and we understand MHS reform activities have been delayed so staff can focus on the COVID-19 response. However, simply pausing cuts to military hospitals and clinics is not enough.

“This crisis will yield many lessons learned for the entire medical system and, potentially, a new vision for DoD's role in any future nationwide medical emergency,” MOAA President and CEO Lt. Gen. Dana T. Atkins, USAF (Ret), wrote in the letter. “When this crisis has passed, DoD should not just move ahead with reform designed around pre-COVID evaluations of the MHS.”

The proposed FY 2021 DoD budget continues plans to cut approximately 18,000 medical personnel, or nearly 20% of uniformed medical billets. MHS reform also includes restructuring the direct care system of military hospitals and clinics, including the potential closure or downsizing of 48 MTFs.

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MOAA -- Stop Cuts to Military Medical Capacity (continued)

“This unprecedented situation demands an updated analysis of medical readiness requirements and optimal direct care system structure incorporating lessons learned from the COVID-19 response,” Atkins wrote in the letter.

You can support MOAA’s efforts by sending your own letter to your lawmakers at:

[Take Action: Write to Congress to Evaluate Military Health System Reform against COVID-19 Lessons Learned](#). MOAA also is asking legislators to waive TRICARE mail order pharmacy copays during the pandemic.

SW IL MOAA Chapter Recognizes Local Cadets with MOAA ROTC Medals

by

CMDR Tim Grout, USN (ret)

This year SWIL MOAA recognized deserving ROTC/JROTC cadets from our local schools.

The MOAA ROTC medal is used to recognize an outstanding cadet or midshipman in his or her next-to-last year in the program who has demonstrated exceptional potential for military leadership.

Recipients are selected by their individual’s unit commander. A recipient must be in good academic standing; be of high moral character; demonstrate a high degree of loyalty to the unit, school, and country; and demonstrate exceptional potential for military leadership.

2020 Awardees, Air Force JROTC:

- Dupo High School – Alexis Stevens
 - Mascoutah High School - Maggie D. Benton
 - O’Fallon High School – Sophia Tamblyn
-

Southern Illinois University--Edwardsville Commissions Second Lieutenants

by

CMDR Tim Grout, USN (ret)

Southern Illinois University – Edwardsville Army ROTC Unit is commissioning 13 new Second Lieutenants this year. SWIL provided the new Second Lieutenants with a Gold Bar set and a one-year membership to MOAA.

- Joseph A. S. Ariella
- Todd A. Carter
- Liam R. Elliott
- Nathan R. T. Goodsell
- Rodrigue M. Mbog
- Austin M. Snuffer
- Zachary S. Wesselmann
- Colin B. Arnold
- Jabril A. Cross-Ellis
- Oceona A. Garrett
- Justin M. Krisby
- Christopher D. Roberts
- D’Andre J. Traylor

COUNCIL AND CHAPTER NEWS

YES!!!!!!!!!! THEY WON

by

Lt Col Ann Morey, USAF (ret)

I am happy to announce that we have a winner for each of our scholarships. We received a total of 3 packages for review. Once again, the reviewers had their work cut out for them. Thank you to Bob Kaufman, David Todd, and Dale Yonker for reviewing the submissions.

The winner of the Inez Peters Memorial Scholarship of \$2,000.00 is Joshua Kosco, grandson of Richard and Delores Kosco. Joshua attends Kingwood High School in Kingwood, Tx. He plans to attend Texas A&M and major in engineering.

Kaylie Grout is the winner of the CWO3 Charles E. Nalley Scholarship of \$1,000.00. Kalie attends O'Fallon Township High School and is the daughter of Tim and Jacque Grout. She will be attending either West Virginia or Florida State and plans to major in marketing.

The JROTC Freedom Scholarship of \$1,000.00 goes to Corps Commander Alexis Stevens from Dupo High School. Alexis will attend Bradley or Augustana University, medical school, and then, a residency in pediatric surgery.

Congratulations Joshua, Kaylie and Alexis. We wish we could meet these outstanding young people at the May meeting, but we will at a later meeting.

TAKE ACTION!

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

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.

Cappadocia


by Yasemin Koss

Cappadocia is a historical region in Central Anatolia, largely in the Nevşehir, Kayseri, Kırşehir, Aksaray, and Niğde Provinces in Turkey. The name, traditionally used in Christian sources throughout history, continues in use as an international tourism concept to define a region of exceptional natural wonders, in particular characterized by **fairy chimneys** and a unique historical and cultural heritage.

Herodotus (ancient Greek historian) tells us that the name of the Cappadocians was applied to them by the Persians, while they were termed by the Greeks "Syrians" or "White Syrians". Cappadocia appears in the biblical account given in the book of Acts 2:9. The Cappadocians were named as one group hearing the Gospel account from Galileans in their own language on the day of Pentecost shortly after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Acts 2:5 seems to suggest that the Cappadocians in this account were "God-fearing Jews".



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Meeting Announcement

This month's meeting has been cancelled. (See Program News for details.)

