



# The Communique

Southwest Virginia Chapter  
Military Officers Association of America



A Five-Star Chapter

VOLUME 12 NUMBER 4

ROANOKE, VIRGINIA

OCT-NOV-DEC 2020

## CORONAVIRIS (COVID-19) STILL IMPACTING CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## President's Corner

In the APR-MAY-JUNE 2020 edition of the chapter newsletter, 'The Communique', we outlined the many activities and programs planned for 2020. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic all plans were cancelled in an effort to stop the spread of this deadly virus and to protect lives. However the chapter membership proceeded with a number of initiatives while adhering to social distancing and mask wearing protocols.

During the early and late spring the chapter continued to solicit nominations from the 15 high school JROTC units, the Virginia Tech and Radford University ROTC units and the three Civil Air Patrol (CAP) units, for the MOAA JROTC/ROTC Medal Awards and the Major James Milton Archer, Jr. USA Awards. Eleven (11) JROTC Medal awards, eleven (11) Major James Milton Archer, Jr. USA Awards three (3) ROTC Medal awards Award packages were processed and mailed to the respective schools for delivery/presentation to the award recipients. Details were printed in the APR-MAY-JUNE 2020 edition of the chapter newsletter, 'The Communique'.

On Memorial Day 25 May 2020 a small contingent from the chapter including LTC Dan Karnes and CDR Lee Ensley placed a Memorial Wreath at the War Memorial on Lee Plaza to honor all veterans. CDR Ensley provided some personal remarks on veterans he served with. On 17 September 2020 chapter members dedicated a granite Memorial Bench at the Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Dublin, VA to recognize LTC James "Pat" Green, USA (Ret) for his untiring efforts in getting the cemetery established in Southwest Virginia. Planning the event were chapter members Mrs. Mary Lou Summers and LTC Steve Jamison. This event was extensively covered in the JULY-AUG-SEPT 2020 edition of the chapter newsletter, 'The Communique'. The event was covered by the Southwest Virginia Times with a front page human interest story for the newspaper.

On 15 October 2020 the chapter held a ZOOM Board of Directors meeting to discuss options for future events. Various initiatives were tentatively approved:

1. Meeting programs conducted or scheduled for 2020-2021

- a. 19 November 2020 - Board of Directors Zoom meeting. The program for the ZOOM membership meeting featured Dr. Diana Christopulos, PhD. She discussed her newly published memoir about her father James L Christopulos (1917-2010) titled "Combat Engineer, A World War II Memoir", recollections of WWII, in both Europe and the Pacific as a combat engineer."
- b. 17 December 2020 – Board of Directors Zoom meeting. Installation of Officers and Board Members for 2021. A Zoom program with MOAA on the current state of MOAA by Captain Jim Carman, USN (Ret), Vice President of Council/Chapter and Member Support of MOAA.
- c. 21 January 2021 – Zoom Board of Directors meeting followed by a Zoom program, Ms. Amy White, from Virginia Western Community College. STEM Program and veterans.
- d. 18 February 2021 – Board of Directors Zoom meeting. Zoom program TBD.
- e. 18 March 2021 – Zoom program TBD
- f. 15 April 2021 – Board of Directors Zoom meeting. Zoom program TBD.

Continued on Page 2 "Coronavirus Still Impacting Chapter Activities"




What are you doing during this holiday season? Enjoying the company of loved ones? Staying warm and enjoying a toddy

by the fire? Maybe a family feast with all the trimmings? Decorating a tree? Watching children, grandchildren, or even great grandchildren, opening presents? It is all wonderful. And it's important to remember how some Americans have spent these holidays in the past. One memorable holiday season was in 1944. The allies were pushing toward Berlin in the final months of WWII. On 16 December, the enemy launched a massive counter-offensive. The weather was bitter. There were many casualties. It became known as the Battle of the Bulge and lasted until 25 January 1945.

Then there was Korea. On 27 November 1950, the enemy launched an attack. It was freezing cold and brutal conditions. This action continued into December. Another memorable holiday season, it became known as the Battle of Chosin Reservoir.

But our American fighting forces had an earlier such memorable winter, that of 1776. Gen. George Washington and his Continental Army had suffered a string of devastating defeats. They had been pushed westward by a far superior British army. The Americans evacuated New York and New Jer-

Continued on Page 3 "President"

<p><b>2021 OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS</b></p>	<p><i>Continued from Page 1 "Coronavirus Still Impacting Chapter Activities"</i></p>	
<p><b>PRESIDENT</b> CDR Lee M Ensley, USN (Ret)</p> <p><b>FIRST VP</b> CAPT Matthew K Haag USN (Ret)</p> <p><b>SECOND VP</b> COL Robert F Brown USA (Ret)</p> <p><b>SECRETARY</b> LTC Steve Jamison, USA (Ret)</p> <p><b>TREASURER</b> BG Scott Van Cleef, USAF (Ret)</p> <p><b>PROGRAMS</b> COL Thomas J Dalzell, USMC (Ret)</p> <p><b>CHAPLAIN</b> LTC Dave Gilleran, USA (Ret)</p> <p><b>MEMBERSHIP CHAIR</b> COL Robert F Brown USA (Ret)</p> <p><b>VCOC REPRESENTATIVE</b> LTC James Flynn, USA (Ret)</p> <p><b>LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS REP</b> LTC Robert Habermann, USA (Ret)</p> <p><b>PERSONAL AFFAIRS REP</b> LTC Steve Jamison, USA (Ret)</p> <p><b>NEWSLETTER EDITOR</b> COL Thomas J Dalzell, USMC (Ret)</p> <p><b>FACEBOOK EDITOR</b> CDR Lee M Ensley, USN (Ret)</p> <p><b>WEBMASTER</b> LCDR Klaus (Ted) Lonitz, USN (Ret)</p> <p><b>PUBLIC AFFAIRS</b> LTC Steve Jamison, USA (Ret)</p> <p><b>AWARDS CHAIR</b> LTC Robert Habermann, USA (Ret)</p> <p><b>SERGEANT AT ARMS</b> MAJ Michael Kasnick, USA (Ret)</p> <p><b>BEREAVEMENT COMMITTEE</b> LTC Dave Gilleran, USA (Ret)</p> <p><b>TRANSITION TEAM REP</b> CDR Michael Leigh, USN (Ret)</p> <p><b>COMMUNITY SERV VOL REP</b> LTC Dan Karnes, USAR (Ret)</p> <p><b>SURVIVING SPOUSE REP</b> Mrs. Mary Lou Summers</p> <p><b>SMITH MOUNT SATELLITE REP</b> CAPT Richard Cocrane, USN (Ret)</p> <p><b>DIRECTORS</b> COL Robert F Brown USA (Ret) CAPT Roger Burnett, USN Ret BG Scott Van Cleef, USAF (Ret) CAPT Richard Cocrane, USN (Ret) COL Thomas J Dalzell, USMC (Ret) CDR Lee M Ensley, USN (Ret) LTC James Flynn, USA (Ret) LTC Dave Gilleran, USA (Ret) CAPT Matthew K Haag USN (Ret) LTC Robert Habermann, USA (Ret) LTC Steve Jamison, USA (Ret) CPT Larry Johnson, USAR (former) LTC Dan Karnes, USAR (Ret) MAJ Michael Kasnick, USA (Ret) CDR Michael Leigh, USN (Ret) COL John Miller, USA (Ret) Mrs. Mary Lou Summers</p>	<p>g. <u>20 May 2021</u> – Board of Directors Zoom meeting. Zoom program TBD.</p> <p>2. The Board of Directors approved a donation of \$100 to the Roanoke Hospitality House earmarked for the Veterans Assistance Fund. The motion also called for this to be an annual \$100 donation to the Veterans Assistance Fund.</p> <p>3. The <i>Communiqué</i> newsletter – 1st Quarter (JAN-FEB-MAR) was published in April 2020. 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter (APR-MAY-JUNE) published in June 2020. 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter (JULY-AUG-SEPT) published in September 2020. Copies are on the chapter website <b>moaswva.org</b>.</p> <p>4. The chapter Website &amp; Facebook are up and running as of September 2020. LCDR Ted Lonitz is the web site manager. CDR Lee Ensley is managing the Face book postings.</p> <p>5. Public Affairs/Media – The chapter needs a volunteer to fill this position. LTC Steve Jamison is filling that spot as of now.</p> <p>6. During 2020 the membership chair COL Bob Brown continued a vibrant membership drive by sending out some 460 recruiting letters plus emails to prospects that did not have a mailing address. Response has been good with approximately 20 new members signed up.</p> <p>7. The Chapter was awarded the 2020 Five Star Chapter COL Marvin J. Harris Communications Award for newsletter. The award is based on the 2019 calendar year recognizing the chapter for its exemplary communications efforts, “newsletter”, in communicating with its members and community. No submission was made for the web site as it was not up and running last year.</p> <p>8. The Chapter was awarded the <b>2020 Four Star Chapter Level of Excellence Award</b>. The award is based on the 2019 calendar year programs and events.</p> <p>So while the pandemic has affected the day to day life of chapter members the leadership has been planning to conduct membership ZOOM meetings. COVID-19 has rapidly affected our day to day life, businesses, disrupted the world trade and movements. Identification of the disease at an early stage is vital to control the spread of the virus because it very rapidly spreads from person to person. Presently the impacts of COVID-19 in our daily lives are extensive and have far reaching consequences. So while we clearly miss the camaraderie of face to face meetings and more community activities for direct veteran support we have moved forward to grow and keep our membership engaged "marching on" safely in difficult times.</p>	<p><b>The Southwest Virginia Chapter (SWVC) of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)</b> is a non-profit veterans’ association dedicated to maintaining a strong national defense and ensuring our nation keeps its commitments to currently serving, retired, and former members of the uniformed services and their families and survivors. Membership is open to those who hold or have ever held a warrant or commission in any component of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Public Health Service, or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and their surviving spouses.</p>
	<p>MOAA Southwest Virginia Chapter P.O. Box 3090 Roanoke, VA 24015-1090 Email: <a href="mailto:info@moaswva.org">info@moaswva.org</a> Webpage: <a href="http://www.moaswva.org">www.moaswva.org</a> Facebook: MOAA SWVA</p> 	

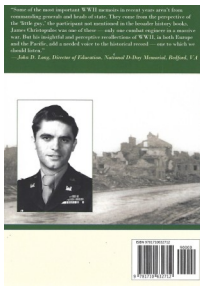
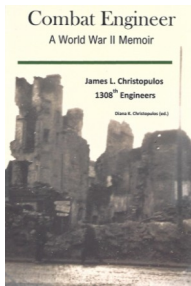




## MOAA SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA CHAPTER BEGINS ZOOM MEMBERSHIP MEETING SCHEDULE



On **Thursday 19 November 2020** the Southwest Virginia Chapter held it's first Zoom membership meeting. The guest speaker and program was presented by Dr. Diana Christopulos, PhD. She discussed her newly published memoir about her father James L Christopulos (1917-2010) titled "*Combat Engineer, A World War II Memoir*", *recollections of WWII, in both Europe and the Pacific as a combat engineer.*" Her presentation is a memoir by *James L Christopulos (1917-2010)* her father who was an officer in the US Army's 1308<sup>th</sup> Engineer General Service Regiment from its formation in Fort Sutton, North Carolina through deployments in both the European and Pacific fronts. She is his daughter who edited and annotated the memoir. Her presentation was extremely interesting and well documented based on her book and especially her fathers story. The power point presentation including family pictures and her father's pictures



from the combat zones in Europe coupled with her personal comments throughout the presentation were insightful and informative. She provided an online link to purchase a copy of her book and her mailing address for those who wished to purchase a signed copy of the book. The program was very well received and comments about the Zoom meeting were overwhelming positive including this comment: "*The general meeting actually replicated the informal flow of our luncheons and the guest presentation was actually better than some in person ones I've seen. The speaker's viewgraphs were easy to see as well as her "non verbal's" during the talk.*"

On **Thursday 17 December 2020** the Southwest Virginia Chapter held its second Zoom Membership meeting. The guest speaker and program was presented by Capt. Jim Carman, USN (Ret), MOAA Vice President, Council/Chapter and Member Support. Captain Carman administered the oath of office to the 2021 Chapter Officers and Board members and then presented an update on the current status of MOAA. The title of his presentation was:

### Serving the Military Community and Having Impact

**Six Strategic Focus Areas were discussed:**



1. Advocacy -Educating and Informing Congress
2. Membership – 350,000 members -47% Life, 19% Premium, and 34% Basic Members.
3. Chapters – Delivering member value with programs
4. Engagement – Keeping members informed
5. Resources – More video and online content; Community Outreach Grants; increasing Chapter support with sales training, webinars, virtual chapter growth, chapter leader workshops; MOAA Scholarship Fund; The MOAA Foundation.
6. Organizational Capacity and Innovation – Strategic investments: World Class Headquarters, strengthening the MOAA team, Strategic Plan update, Board Selection completed .

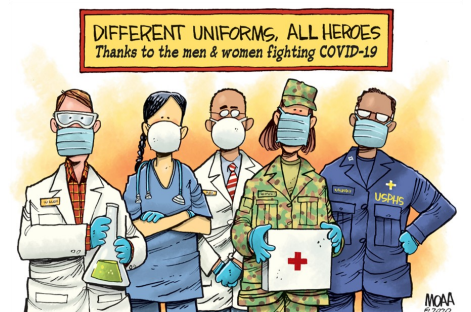
**Here's some of what MOAA is doing for you!!**



Protect Current Health Care System



Support Concurrent Receipt



Recognize US Public Health Service and all health care providers during COVID-19

## **NDAAs Update: Where We've Been, Where We Are, and What's Next**

By: *Brenden McMahon 22 July 2020*

The House passed its version of the FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) on July 21 by a strong bipartisan vote of 295-125, and the Senate followed suit July 23, passing its version by an 86-14 margin. While these votes mark significant steps forward in the NDAA process, it's far from over.

Here's a look at what's happened so far, where things stand, and the status of some MOAA-supported NDAA provisions, including ways you can reach out to your legislators to make your voice heard.

### **Where We've Been**

The NDAA worked its way through the House and Senate Armed Services Committees (HASC and SASC, respectively). On June 10, the SASC voted 25-2 to advance its draft of the NDAA, pushing it to the Senate floor. The HASC followed suit and completed its committee mark-up for the NDAA just before midnight July 1.

Unlike last year, when the markup of the HASC version of the NDAA was divided down party lines, this year's version was passed by unanimous consent. This was in large part due to the bipartisan collaboration between Chairman Adam Smith (D-Wash.) and HASC ranking member Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Texas).

The House worked through 407 amendments before passing H.R. 6395, its version of the NDAA. More than 700 amendments went to the House Rules Committee. The SASC adopted 62 amendments during its markup of S. 4049.

### **Current State of Play**

This is a critical juncture for the FY21 NDAA, as the bill will advance to a conference committee, where members of the House and Senate will negotiate behind closed doors.

These legislators typically begin their work as soon as possible once the chambers pass their versions of the bill, so the window of opportunity to influence what is reported to conference is narrowing.

### **Provisions to Note**

This year, some provisions in the NDAA will benefit servicemembers, retirees, survivors, and their families, and some provisions will be detrimental. The provisions MOAA is advocating to make it through the NDAA process include:

#### ***Military Pay***

A provision to increase military pay by 3% tied to the Employment Cost Index is included in both the House and Senate versions of the NDAA.

#### ***Military Health Care***

Despite the success of MOAA's Virtual Storming the Hill, efforts to include a halt to military medical end strength cuts and the realignment of military treatment facilities (MTFs) in the NDAA remain at risk. While the House version has language supporting these provisions, the Senate version does not.

MOAA is pivoting its focus to the Senate to ensure the House provisions make it through conference. Contact your senator today to express your support for the House provisions.

**[RELATED: Halt Military Medical Cuts: MOAA's Virtual Storm Shows Results in NDAA]**

Even though the Defense Health Agency has announced a delay to all MTF restructuring and billet cuts, we believe legislation is needed to not only slow the process but also bolster reporting requirements and oversight mechanisms at every possible juncture to ensure DHA conducts qualified analysis and planning for any patient care moved out of MTFs.

#### ***Military Family Readiness***

The Senate NDAA version includes provisions to consider family discounts at child development centers (CDCs) for families with two or more children at a center. The House version includes provisions to reassess fee assistance for families with consideration of cost fluctuations by location, as well as an assessment of the priority system CDCs.

Both the House and Senate also recommend substantial increases to the authorized amount of spending on military privatized housing support to better facilitate hiring of housing staff and to support needs for maintenance and repair work.

MOAA expects most of the child care and military housing provisions to make it through the NDAA process.

**[RELATED: Here's How the NDAA Would Improve Military Housing]**

#### ***Commissary-Exchange Merger***

The House version of the NDAA seeks an updated business case analysis for the Defense Resale Enterprise's proposal to consolidate the commissaries and exchanges after the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found significant problems in the proposed merger. Unfortunately, the Senate version stayed silent on this issue. MOAA is focusing its efforts on the Senate to ensure the House language is adopted in conference.

*Cont'd from Pg 6 NDAA UPDATE*

### ***National Guard and Reserve Components***

The Senate version includes language that would redesignate the DD-214 form as the Certificate of Military Service, making it a standard total-force record of military service for all members of the armed forces, including the reserve components.

The House version includes a section that would standardize payment of hazardous duty incentive pay for members of the Guard and Reserve, and the Senate version includes a mandate for hazardous duty pay at the rate of no less than \$150 a month. While the language is different for these hazardous duty pay sections, they do show a positive step that reflects Congress's understanding of the essential role the National Guard and reserve components play.

**TAKE ACTION:** Tell Congress to Take Care of the Reserve Component in the NDAA]

### ***Toxic Exposure and Access to VA Benefits***

The Senate version includes an amendment, put forward by Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.) and passed Wednesday afternoon, which would add bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, and Parkinson's-like symptoms to the list of veterans' diseases associated with exposure to Agent Orange. Unfortunately, the House NDAA does not include a similar amendment.

While this will make the fight for this much-needed expansion of Agent Orange presumptives more challenging, MOAA is working to ensure the Senate amendment survives the NDAA conference process. You can help by writing a letter or making a phone call to your representative asking for their continued support of this change, which would benefit tens of thousands of Vietnam veterans.

### ***Sexual Harassment and Assault***

Both House and Senate NDAA versions include language to establish the "Safe to Report" program across all the branches of the armed services. This and other sexual trauma-related provisions would encourage reporting by victims without fear of punishment for minor collateral misconduct, such as underage drinking.

### ***What's Next?***

As MOAA continues its advocacy, you, our members, and other stakeholders have an important role to play. MOAA's annual Summer Storm is set to begin in early August.

Our Virtual Storming the Hill was exceptionally impactful, and now it is imperative that we shift our focus to the Senate as the congressional summer break is set to begin.

In the future, MOAA will be providing MOAA members with information about these NDAA topics, including ways you can help during the final stages of the NDAA process. Keep up with the latest advocacy news from MOAA for all the details.

## **MOAA's Legislative Priorities for the 117th Congress**

The 116th Congress is scheduled to end its session Dec. 18, though House and Senate leaders can extend it if necessary to pass year-end legislation. There is still plenty of work to be done during this time, to include averting a potential government shut-down and passing critical defense legislation. See MOAA's Legislative update at [MOAA.org](http://MOAA.org) "Advocacy" for full details.

### **FY 2021 NDAA ACTION ITEMS: Stop Cuts to Military Medicine | Expand Benefits for Tens of Thousands of Vietnam Veterans.**

While MOAA continues efforts to shape the end of 2020's legislative session, we're also looking toward the 117th Congress, as well as the changes in the administration's leadership and priorities that may impact our service members past and present.

Here is a preview of MOAA's legislative priorities for the coming session, which we are already working to influence during the incoming administration's transition. You will also see these in the January issue of *Military Officer*.

These objectives are broad and topical in nature. They are subject to refinement and interpretation depending on the latest legislation, as well as activities on the Hill or within the administration and its departments. Visit the [Advocacy News page](#) for the latest on all these subjects and others.

- Protect the value of the military health care benefit.
- Protect the military health system's pharmacy benefit, and achieve flexibility in TRICARE pharmacy co pays.
- Address barriers to accessing care within the military health system, including TRICARE coverage gaps and mental health care access challenges.

*Cont'd on Pg 8 MOAA'S LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES*

*Cont'd FROM Pg 7 MOAA'S LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES*

- Protect family support programs, and ensure military-provided services (housing, PCS, child care) are affordable, readily available, and meet quality standards.
- Sustain pay raises for the troops and COLA raises for retirees.
- Ensure Coast Guard members are paid during a government shutdown.
- Sustain Veterans Health Administration (VHA) foundational missions and services.
- Achieve equity of benefits, protections, and administrative support for Guard and Reserve members consistent with their active-duty counterparts.
- Reform the presumptive process to support veterans claiming service-connected disabilities for toxic exposures.
- Achieve concurrent receipt of service-earned retirement pay and VA disability pay.
- Protect Arlington National Cemetery as an option for those currently eligible to receive full military honors through expansion of our national cemetery.
- Improve survivor benefits.

How does MOAA determine the priorities?

MOAA's Government Relations team evaluates the legislative landscape throughout the year to inform the overall objectives framing our legislative priorities in no certain order — MOAA has 10 registered lobbyists who may be prioritizing any one of these issues at any given time. The team works diligently to assess all aspects of their portfolios following these methodologies:

**Proactive:** Research and analyze emerging issues, for example: The president's budget and accompanying analytical perspectives (due out by the first Monday in February). The Congressional Budget Office report: *Options for Reducing the Deficit, out in December of even years (read the 2018 copy)*. The *Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation, the 13th version of which is due this month*. See the president's memo to the secretary of defense laying out the objective of the review, which is to assess the adequacy of military compensation and each of its underlying components.

**Responsive:** Assess the state of play for legislation in progress or not yet submitted. For example: We are still waiting on the FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to get through the conference committee. MOAA lobbied this past spring and summer for certain health care provisions to be included in the final bill. If we succeed, our efforts will pivot to implementation and oversight; if not, we will need to re-ignite support on the Hill, likely the Senate, to get these provisions into the FY 2022 NDAA. Also, appropriations for the government beyond Dec. 11 are still up in the air, as are potential COVID-19 relief measures. In short, MOAA's legislative objectives need to be flexible and scalable to match the legislative environment.

### **The Coming Storm**

So, which of these objectives will become topics for future Storming the Hill efforts? As you can surmise from the above information, especially when dealing with the unknown or not-yet-solved legislation toward year's end, the specific topics at the heart of MOAA's signature advocacy push sometimes don't crystallize until the last moment. As such, the potential topics remain as broad as the list above; MOAA's Board of Directors has a role in approving the storming topics toward the end of January.



Christiansburg: 540-394-3311

Clifton Forge: 540-862-5656

Dublin: 540-674-5100

Hollins: 540-777-1230

Ridgeway: 276-956-2002

Roanoke (Brambleton Ave): 540-989-5245

Roanoke (Williamson Rd): 540-362-1868

Salem: 540-380-4607

Vinton: 540-890-5010

Winston Salem: 336-768-3886



## Joint Leadership Council (JLC) of Veterans Service Organizations 2021 Initiatives

JLC 2021 Initiatives: During the 21 October 2020 meeting, the JLC adopted the following eight initiatives for 2021, and forwarded them to DVS and the General Assembly:

**JLC 2021-01** - Income Tax Subtraction for Certain Low-Income Disabled Veterans.

**OBJECTIVE:** To allow individual income tax subtraction for the amount of annual retirement compensation received for service as a member of the U.S. Armed Forces, or the Virginia National Guard, for 100% service-connected disabled veterans with a federal adjusted gross income not exceeding 150% of the federal poverty level for a four-person household.

**JLC 2021-02** - Tax Credits for Employers Who Hire National Guard and Reserves.

**OBJECTIVE:** To promote the hiring of members of the Virginia National Guard and the Reserves by recognizing Virginia employers who hire our citizen-soldiers.

**JLC 2021-03** - Expand Tax Relief for Surviving Spouses of Military Services Members “Killed in Action” to also include “Died on Active Duty”.

**OBJECTIVE:** To expand Tax Relief for Surviving Spouses of Military Services Members of the Armed Forces to include both “Killed in Action” and “Died on Active Duty.”

**JLC 2021-04** - Disabled Veteran State Park Passport.

**OBJECTIVE:** To expand the Disabled Veterans Passport for free entry into state parks and discounted services to all service-connected disabled veterans.

**JLC 2021-05** - Reduced Price Annual Passes to Virginia State Parks for Guard members.

**OBJECTIVE:** To ensure Virginia’s continued commitment to the men and women of the Virginia National Guard by offering a 50% discount on Virginia State parks annual pass.

**JLC 2021-06** - No Cost License Plates for Guard members.

**OBJECTIVE:** To ensure Virginia’s continued commitment to the men and women of the Virginia National Guard by changing the current 50% reduced price for a maximum of two license plates per household and registrations to 100% reduction for a single (1) license plate and registration.

**JLC 2021-07** - Partial State Tax Exemption for Military Retirement Income.

**OBJECTIVE:** To reform the Virginia state tax law, creating a partial exemption on military retirement income beginning in 2021.

**JLC 2021-08** – Support for Department of Veterans Services (DVS) programs and services.

**OBJECTIVE:** To support the operations of the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS) related to suicide prevention, homelessness, disability claims processing, women veterans, and education.

Details on each of the above initiatives can be found by going to the Virginia Veterans Department of Veterans Services at <https://www.dvs.virginia.gov/dvs/joint-leadership-council-veterans-service-organizations-2>



## **TRICARE SELECT ENROLLMENT FEES: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW, AND WHAT YOU'LL NEED TO DO**

By: Kevin Lilley 15 July 2020

New TRICARE Select enrollment fees take effect in 2021 – a first for retirees who joined the military prior to 2018 and their families. Here's what you should know about the new fees, and how you can ensure your medical benefit continues without interruption.

Q. Does this apply to TRICARE for Life or TRICARE Prime beneficiaries?

A. No. Only TRICARE Select retiree beneficiaries in Group A – those whose sponsor entered service before Jan. 1, 2018 – must pay the new fees beginning Jan. 1, 2021.

Q. How much are the fees?

A. Annual enrollment fees are \$150 for an individual or \$300 for a family. The Select enrollment fee will be billed monthly at \$12.50/month for individual and \$25/month for family coverage.

Q. Are any TRICARE Select Group A beneficiaries exempt from the fees?

A. Yes. Members of following groups won't pay the new fees:

-Active duty family members

-Survivors

-Medically retired beneficiaries, or their family members

Q. Is anything else changing about TRICARE Select?

A. Yes. As of Jan. 1, 2021, the catastrophic cap for TRICARE Select retiree Group A beneficiaries will increase from \$3,000 to \$3,500. Learn more about how TRICARE catastrophic caps work [here](#).

Q. I don't remember any debate or legislation regarding new fees. Why are these fees being charged now?

A. The debate took place in 2016, with MOAA and other groups successfully fighting proposals during the FY 2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) process that would've resulted in massive upticks in fees and beneficiary cost shares. Plans called for enrollment fees up to \$900 for some beneficiaries, and even an annual TRICARE for Life enrollment fee of up to \$632. Instead, the NDAA included the more modest fees that are now being implemented. MOAA has continued to fight further fee increases, proposals for which began in rapid fashion after the 2017 NDAA took effect.

Q. How do I pay the fees?

A. If you receive retirement or other pay from a military pay center, you'll have the fees taken out of that payment. If not, you'll be asked to set up a recurring payment from a credit or debit card, or via an electronic funds transfer (EFT) from your U.S. bank account. You should receive notification regarding the fees from TRICARE later this summer, per the TRICARE website.

Q. What if I don't pay the fees?

A. You'll be disenrolled from TRICARE, and you'll have 90 days from your paid-through date to contact your regional contractor and request reinstatement. Any care you receive would have to come at a military treatment facility on a space-available basis.

Q. What is MOAA doing to help beneficiaries?

A. Along with getting the word out on the new fee structure, MOAA is pushing Congress and DoD to establish a longer grace period so that no beneficiary will lose coverage in 2021 because they don't pay their fees.

Q. What about TRICARE Select Group B members?

A. Group B sponsors entered service on or after Jan. 1, 2018. Group B retirees are currently a small group of medical retirees (and their family members). These beneficiaries will continue to pay annual enrollment fees – for 2020, Group B retiree enrollment fees for Select are \$471 for an individual or \$942 for a family. Group B enrollment fees are increased every year by the military retirement cost of living adjustment. Unlike Group A, Group B medical retirees and their families are not exempt from enrollment fees.

Q. Where can I get more information?

A. TRICARE's TRICARE Select Enrollment Fees website includes a breakdown of the new fee structure, as well as links to other plan features and ways you can reach out for further guidance.

Q. How can I keep up with updates to this issue, or other TRICARE benefits?

A. Bookmark MOAA's health care news page for the latest information.



**2021 ADJUSTMENTS TO RETIRED/RETAINER PAY, SURVIVOR ANNUITIES AND PREMIUMS**

The following Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLAs) are effective December 1, 2020, based on the increase in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) through the third quarter calendar year 2020. The term "retired pay" includes retainer pay and the term "members" includes former members.

**COLAs for Retired Pay**

1. The retired pay COLA for those who first became a member of a Uniformed Service before September 8, 1980 is specified according to the effective date of their retirement as follows:

<b>RETIRED PAY BASED ON RATES OF PAY EFFECTIVE:</b>	<b>PERCENT INCREASE</b>	<b>10 U.S.C. AUTHORITY</b>
Before January 1, 2020	1.3 percent	1401a(b)(2)
January 1 - December 31, 2020	1.1 percent	1401a(c)

2. The retired pay COLA for those who first became a member of a Uniformed Service on or after September 8, 1980 is specified according to the effective date of their retirement as follows:

<b>RETIRED PAY BASED ON RATES OF PAY EFFECTIVE:</b>	<b>PERCENT INCREASE</b>	<b>10 U.S.C. AUTHORITY</b>
Before January 1, 2020	1.3. percent	1401a(b)(2)
January 1 - March 31, 2020	1.1 percent	1401a(d)
April 1 - June 30, 2020	0.7 percent	1401a(d)
July 1 - September 30, 2020	0.3 percent	1401a(d)
October 1 - December 31, 2020	0.0 percent	1401a(d)

*Cont'd on Page 12 "2021 ADJUSTMENTS"*



Christiansburg: 540-394-3311  
Clifton Forge: 540-862-5656  
Dublin: 540-674-5100  
Hollins: 540-777-1230  
Ridgeway: 276-956-2002  
Roanoke (Brambleton Ave): 540-989-5245  
Roanoke (Williamson Rd): 540-362-1868  
Salem: 540-380-4607  
Vinton: 540-890-5010  
Winston Salem: 336-768-3886

*Cont from page 11 "2021 Adjustments"*

- The retired pay COLA for those who first became a member of a Uniformed Service on or after August 1, 1986 and also elected to receive a career status bonus under provisions of section 322 of title 37 United States Code is specified according to

RETIREMENT EFFECTIVE:	PERCENT INCREASE	10 U.S.C. AUTHORITY
Before January 1, 2020	0.3 percent	1401a(e)
January 1 - March 31, 2020	0.3 percent	1401a(e)
April 1 - June 30, 2020	0.3 percent	1401a(e)
July 1 - September 30, 2020	0.3 percent	1401a(e)
October 1 - December 31, 2020	0.0 percent	1401a(e)

**COLAs for Survivor Annuities**

- Retired Serviceman's Family Protection Plan annuities payable on December 1, 2020 under the provisions of subchapter I of chapter 73, title 10, United States Code to the spouse or child of a member who died on or before March 20, 1974 will be increased by **1.3 percent** (ref: 10 U.S.C. 1434 (e)).
- Annuities under the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) and Reserve Component Survivor Benefit Plan (RCSBP) under the provisions of subchapter II of chapter 73, title 10, United States Code will be increased by the same percentage specified in paragraphs 1, 2, or 3 above by which the retired pay of the person providing the annuity would have been increased at such time if the person were alive and otherwise entitled to such pay (ref: 10 U.S.C. 1451 (g)).
- COLAs for supplemental annuities paid to certain low income widows of members who were deceased before November 1, 1953 will be increased **1.3 percent** (ref: section 653 (c), Public Law 100-456, section 653).
- Annuities for Certain Military Surviving Spouses (ACMSS) payable monthly under the provisions of section 644, Public Law 105-85, November 18, 1997 will be increased **1.3percent** from \$267.17 to **\$270.64** effective December 1, 2020 (ref: P.L. 105-85, sec 644).

**Increase in the SBP Low-Cost Premium Threshold**

- Previous amounts with respect to which the 2.5 percent factor of the SBP premium (cost) formula apply will be adjusted effective December 1, 2020 in conjunction with the adjustments in retired pay made under the provisions of section 1401a of title 10, United States Code (ref: 10 U.S.C. 1452(a)(4)(B)). The Defense Finance and Accounting Service will perform necessary calculations to determine actual premiums based on the individual circumstances of each case.
- The amount with respect to which the 2.5 percent factor of the SBP premium (cost) is applied for participation upon retirement will be increased 3.0 percent effective January 1, 2021 from \$869 to **\$895** (premium for this coverage will be **\$22.38** plus 10% of the difference between retired pay and the threshold amount. and the breakeven base amount will be **\$1,917.86**) (ref: 10 U.S.C. 1452(a)(4)(A)).

**Increase in the Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA)**

- In accordance with provisions of Section 1450(m) of Title 10, U.S.C., as amended by section 621 of P.L. 115-91 and section 622 of P.L. 115-232, the maximum amount of SSIA payable will be increased by **1.3 percent effective December 1, 2020**. The new SSIA rate will be **\$327**. (ref: 10 U.S.C. 1450(m))



<p align="center"><b><u>SW VIRGINIA VETERANS CEMETERY</u></b> <b><u>WREATH LAYING CEREMONY POSTPONED</u></b></p> <p>The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Wreath Laying ceremony scheduled for 12 December 2020 at the Wall of Honor in the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery Dublin, Virginia has been postponed due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Wreaths will be placed by cemetery/volunteer personnel on 19 and 20 December. However, the cemetery will be closed to the public while the wreaths are placed. Funding support to purchase the wreaths is appreciated. Contributions to the Wreath Program can be mailed to: Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery Volunteers, PO Box 11373, Blacksburg, VA 24062– 1373. Checks should be made payable to: <b>SWVAVCV</b>. Check their website, <a href="https://www.swvavcv.org/">https://www.swvavcv.org/</a> for details and updates.</p>	<p align="center"><b><u>CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP</u></b> <b><u>as of 31 December 2020</u></b></p> <p>Regular Members            109 Surviving Spouses            <u>12</u> Total Members                121</p> <p>Talk to a fellow officer about joining the Southwest Virginia Chapter!</p>	<p align="center"><b><u>JOIN THE CHAPTER</u></b></p> <p>Looking to join the Southwest Virginia Chapter? Want more information on how to join and become involved? Check us out on the chapter website at <a href="http://moaaswva.org">moaaswva.org</a> or on face book at <a href="https://www.facebook.com/moaa.swva">moaa swva</a> then Contact COL Bob Brown, USA (Ret), Chapter Membership Chair at (540) 904-2810 or email at <a href="mailto:bfbrown68@gmail.com">bfbrown68@gmail.com</a>.</p>
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**MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA**  
**SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA CHAPTER - ENROLLMENT/RENEWAL FORM**

Name (First ,Middle, Last, Rank) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_


Branch of Service \_\_\_\_\_ Retired \_\_\_\_\_ Active Duty \_\_\_\_\_ NG \_\_\_\_\_ Former Officer \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse Name \_\_\_\_\_ MOAA Membership ID No. \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Chapter Dues are \$30.00. Widows (ers) dues are \$15.00. Dues for those entering MOAA between 1 July and 31 December are \$20.00. Please mail dues payment to: **MOAA, Southwest Virginia Chapter, P.O. Box 3090, Roanoke, VA 24015-1090**

*Note: The *Communique* is now published quarterly. The next issue will be published March 2021.*

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MOAA's Legislative Priorities for 117th Congress  
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TRICARE Select Enrollment Fees