



The MCMOAA'n

2010, 2011 & 2012 5-Star Levels of Excellence Award Winning Chapter



The e-Newsletter of the Minnesota Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America
One Association. One Voice. Yours.

Published: January – March – May – July – September – November

290

Minnesota Chapter

1,275

March 2014



The President's Pen

CW2 Rita Cox, ritakcox@gmail.com



We're off to a great start to 2014. We were pleased to have a wonderful speaker at our JAN meeting, CAPT John Plehal, USN (Ret), who's newly retired from the MOAA staff. He gave a very informative update on MOAA's membership and legislative agenda for 2014. Those in attendance appreciated the information provided.

From 1978 to 2013, our Minnesota Chapter of MOAA was part of the Minnesota Council of MOAA. When the Minnesota Council was started, there were four Chapters. That dwindled, over the years, to two Chapters – ours and the Head of the Lakes Chapter in Duluth. The Minnesota Council was disbanded as of 31 DEC 2013 for various reasons, primarily because we no longer needed to function as a Council to keep track of Chapter activities. Funds from the Council were distributed between the two Chapters in accordance with Council bylaws. Minnesota Chapter and the Head of the Lakes Chapter are now recognized by MOAA as separate, independent Chapters.

MOAA has an ambitious and important Legislative agenda for 2014. If you haven't seen the issues on its website, here are a few of the most important items (as I see them) for the coming year:

- Bar disproportional TRICARE fee hikes
- Oppose any enrollment fee for TRICARE for Life (TFL), and oppose initiatives to dramatically limit coverage by Medicare supplement policies, including TFL
- Resist initiatives aimed at "civilianizing" the military retirement system or reducing benefits for those who serve a career
- Preserve full-inflation cost-of-living adjustments (COLA)
- Credit all activated service toward early Guard/Reserve retirement
- Recognize "blue water" Navy Vietnam War Agent Orange claims for service-connection

MCMOAA dues renewals for 2014 were mailed in OCT 2013 and again in JAN 2014 to those who had not responded. If you haven't already done so, please send your renewal now, using the form at the end of this newsletter. Our strength is in our membership numbers. We need you now more than ever!! To see why your membership is important, read the article on page 30 – Why Associations Matter!

Our next Chapter meeting will be on Tuesday, 13 MAY. You are also welcome to attend our Board meetings held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at the Ft. Snelling Officer's Club beginning at 11:30 AM.

As always, I would love to hear from you if you have ideas for our Board and Chapter meetings (ritakcox@gmail.com).

Rita

WWW.MCMOAA.ORG

Upcoming MCMOAA Events

(All Board and Chapter Meetings are held at the Ft. Snelling Officer's Club)

- 11 MAR** – 1130 – Board of Director's Meeting
- 8 APR** – 1130 – Board of Director's Meeting
- 13 MAY** – 1600 – Board of Director's Meeting and
– 1730 – Chapter Meeting
- 10 JUN** – 1130 – Board of Director's Meeting
- 8 JUL** – 1130 – Board of Director's Meeting
- 12 AUG** – 1130 – Board of Director's Meeting
- 9 SEP** – 1600 – Board of Director's Meeting and
– 1730 – Chapter Meeting

MOAA's 2014 Top Ten Goals

- Sustain military pay compatibility with private sector
- Bar disproportional TRICARE fee hikes
- Sustain force levels to meet mission needs
- Prevent Medicare/TRICARE payment cuts
- Protect military retirement/COLAs
- Protect wounded warriors and caregivers
- End disabled/survivor financial penalties
- Fix Guard/Reserve retirement
- Improve spouse and family support
- Eliminate the VA claims backlog and improve claims processing

Facts of the Vietnam Memorial Wall Names

- The first known name on the wall was TSGT Richard B. Fitzgibbon, Jr., USAF, of N. Weymouth, Mass., killed on 8 JUN 1956. His son is also on the wall – LCPL Richard B. Fitzgibbon, III, USMC, killed on 7 SEP 1965.
- 1 person was 15 years old, 5 were 16 years old, 12 were 17 years old, 33,103 were 18 years old and 8,283 were 19 years old.

Please renew your membership! We need you. Our 2014 Chapter dues mailings are complete. If you have not paid your dues, please do so by using the form at the back of this newsletter. We value our members and want you to be informed. This newsletter is our way of keeping you informed. To read why your membership is important, read the article on page 30 – Why Associations Matter!

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the contributing authors or sources listed and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of MOAA, the Minnesota Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America, or the editorial staff of *The MCMOAA'n*. Any errors or omissions are unintentional - you should verify any information you are considering acting on. The editor and publisher wholly reserve the right to edit, amend or reject any contribution submitted for publication. Send comments, questions, suggestions and possible articles for publication to the editor, CDR Russ Jowers, USN (Ret), editor95@comcast.net or call 612-770-2891.

March Dates in Military History

- **1 - 86 BC** - Sulla captures Athens, deposing the tyrant Aristion, takes Aristotle's library.
- **7 - 161** - Accession of Co-Emperors Marcus Aurelius (161-180) & Lucius Verus (161-169)
- **7 - 1945** – CCB, 9th Armored Division, captured Ludendorff Bridge at Remagen, Ger., was first Allied Force to cross the Rhine.
- **11 - 1779** - US Army Corps of Engineers established.
- **12 - 1799** - Austria declares war on France as part of French Revolutionary Wars.
- **16 - 1802** - U.S. Military Academy is established at West Point.
- **19 - 1941** - The Tuskegee Airmen Squadron is activated.
- **21 - 1943** - Assassination attempt on Hitler fails.
- **27 - 1952** - Elements of the U.S. 8th Army in Korea reach the 38th Parallel.
- **29 - 1973** - U.S. Troops leave Vietnam, 9 years after the Tonkin Resolution.



MCMOAA's 2014-2015 Board of Directors

The new 2014-2015 Board was sworn in by our guest speaker representing MOAA, CAPT John Plehal, USN (Ret) (far right) at the 14 JAN Chapter meeting. (From left to right) CDR Russ Jowers, USN (Ret); CDR Tammy Harstad, USN (Ret); MRS Lorraine Jasinski; CW4 Don Nesheim, USA (Ret); BG Tim Kennedy, USA (Ret); CW2 Rita Cox, USA (Ret); CW5 Bruce Hedblom, USA (Ret); LTC Kathleen Couillard, USA (Ret); LCDR Richard Buchman, USNR (Ret); CAPT Plehal. (Absent and not pictured Board members: BG (B) John Abrahamson, USA (Ret); COL Mike Moran, USMCR (Ret); LTC John Nowicki, USA (Ret) and COL Bob Rupp, USA (Ret).)

(Photo: CPT Harve Jones)



Minnesota Medal of Honor Winner

**The President of the United States
in the name of The Congress
takes pleasure in presenting the
Medal of Honor
to**

COURTNEY, HENRY ALEXIUS, JR.

Rank and organization: Major, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve.
Born: 6 JAN 1916, Duluth, Minn.

Appointed from: Minnesota. *Citation:* For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as Executive Officer of the 2d Battalion, 22d Marines, 6th Marine Division, in action against enemy Japanese forces on Okinawa Shima in the Ryukyu Islands, 14 - 15 May 1945. Ordered to hold for the night in static defense behind Sugar Loaf Hill after leading the forward elements of his command in a prolonged fire fight, Maj. Courtney weighed the effect of a hostile night counterattack against the tactical value of an immediate marine assault, resolved to initiate the assault, and promptly obtained permission to advance and seize the forward slope of the hill. Quickly explaining the situation to his small remaining force, he declared his personal intention of moving forward and then proceeded on his way, boldly blasting nearby cave positions and neutralizing enemy guns as he went. Inspired by his courage, every man followed without hesitation, and together the intrepid marines braved a terrific concentration of Japanese gunfire to skirt the hill on the right and reach the reverse slope. Temporarily halting, Maj. Courtney sent guides to the rear for more ammunition and possible replacements. Subsequently reinforced by 26 men and an LVT load of grenades, he determined to storm the crest of the hill and crush any planned counterattack before it could gain sufficient momentum to effect a breakthrough. Leading his men by example rather than by command, he pushed ahead with unrelenting aggressiveness, hurling grenades into cave openings on the slope with devastating effect. Upon reaching the crest and observing large numbers of Japanese forming for action less than 100 yards away, he instantly attacked, waged a furious battle and succeeded in killing many of the enemy and in forcing the remainder to take cover in the caves. He ordered his men to dig in and, coolly disregarding the continuous hail of flying enemy shrapnel to rally his weary troops, tirelessly aided casualties and assigned his men to more advantageous positions. Although instantly killed by a hostile mortar burst while moving among his men, Maj. Courtney, by his astute military acumen, indomitable leadership and decisive action in the face of overwhelming odds, had contributed essentially to the success of the Okinawa campaign. His great personal valor throughout sustained and enhanced the highest traditions of the U.S. Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.

MCMOAA Business

- **DEC Treasurer's Report** CW5 Bruce Hedblom, USA (Ret)
Bank Checking Account Balance - \$18,164.55
- **DEC Membership Report** LCDR Dick Buchman, USNR (Ret)
Current Membership count – 1,276

FY2013 Income/Expense Recap

TOTAL INCOME (includes dues, MOAA, misc.)	\$16,895.19
EXPENSE ADMINISTRATION General Administration (includes ROTC and programs)	\$2,284.97
MEMBERSHIP (includes printing, supplies, postage)	\$6,187.00
MCMOAA'N (includes printing, supplies, postage)	\$4,697.02
Miscellaneous	\$375.96
SUB-TOTAL-EXP	\$13,544.95
NET INCOME	\$3,350.24
CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS TOTAL (includes Fisher House, MACV, AFSC, Heroes on Horseback, and MN NG Youth Camp)	\$2,500.00
SURPLUS (= income minus expenses, after end-of year contributions)	\$850.24

The Veteran Brew Company Joshua Ray 612-418-7719

Their motto is "Come for the Mission, Stay for the Beer." The Chicago based company is hiring – especially a Brand Ambassador – MN Statewide. The microbrewer, started by Navy pilot Paul Jenkins, exists to provide jobs for disabled Veterans and provide customers with quality beer. The company is committed to being a preeminent beverage manufacturing company inspired by the highest traditions and principles of the U.S military and dedicated to the comprehensive transformation, achievement and growth of their 100% Veteran employee force. Contact Joshua Ray at the number above or joshuarayarmy06@yahoo.com if interested in employment.

Enrollment in the Survivor Benefit Program (SBP) is the only plan for continuing an income based on service retired pay to a survivor upon a retiree's death. Without SBP, there is no survivor income based on service retired pay. Participation in SBP requires enrollment at the time of retirement. After you retire, if you change your mind and wish to enroll, you can't.

I'm writing for those of you who didn't enroll in SBP when you had a chance. For currently serving members, please don't read this as an endorsement not to enroll in SBP. It is a valuable program with plenty of great reasons to enroll. Without SBP, you'll need other financial sources to provide for a survivor. The following are a few ideas. Talk to your financial adviser to determine your best course of action.

For couples in retirement, think about living small. Pay off debts, downsize and live off of minimum income as you age. Decrease the need for greater income. This simplifies things for a survivor. Survivors without adequate assets have limited options.

- Social Security benefits may become your only permanent income source. Spouses aged 60 and older or spouses with young children (age <16) at home can collect Social Security survivor benefits. Prior to age 60, a spouse without young children receives no Social Security survivor benefits. If disabled, other payments exist.
- The VA survivor program is called Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC). Not everyone qualifies. To be eligible, a Service member must die from Service-connected causes. The survivor applies at the local Veteran Service Office. The current amount of payment is \$1215 tax-free—one rate for all.
- Check with your local Administration on Aging office for other options. Search at www.aoa.gov.
- Work.
- Seek family help.
- Survivors with adequate assets have more options; starting with the ideas above. The assets could come from employer retirement plans, IRAs, investments, life insurance, other pensions or from selling properties, collectables, cars, etc.
- An investment portfolio can be managed to generate income. It's a challenge to balance a portfolio to produce income and not run out of money too soon. Who will manage this?
- Purchase an "immediate" insurance annuity. This provides guaranteed income for life. Roughly figure the annual income at 5–6% of the lump sum deposited.
- Place assets in a managed trust to provide income.

Couples don't plan to fail but failing to plan will lead to heartache.

LTCOL Shane Ostrum, USAF (Ret) CFP, is in MOAA's Benefits Information and Financial Education Dept.

Welcome New Members

MRS P. Bartlett	Bloomington
MAJ B. Friedman	St. Louis Park
LTCOL J. Gackle	Farwell
MRS F. Gunberg	Minneapolis
CAPT B. Johnson	Mayer
CDR R. Lubenow	Burnsville
LCDR K. Russeau	Clarissa
MRS L. Waage	Minnetonka
CAPT G. Yankoupe	Plymouth

Flight Announcements

- "There may be 50 ways to leave your lover, but there are only 4 ways out of this airplane..."
- "Last one off the plane must clean it."
- "Weather at our destination is 50 degrees with some broken clouds, but they'll try to have them fixed before we arrive. Thank you, and remember, nobody loves you, or your money, more than we do."

Letter to the Editor

Hi Russ,

I thought you and MCMOAA readers might be interested in this story of Chaplain Ray Stubbe and the Vietnam War display at the Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans Museum in Madison, WI.

A friend and fellow Navy chaplain whom I served with in the early 1980's at NTC Great Lakes, IL, who was in the thick of the Battle of Khe Sanh in Vietnam serving Marines in FEB 1968, was featured in the SEP 2013 issue of the American Legion's *Legion Magazine*. Ray's picture was taken by Richard L. Swanson, shows him ministering to Marines in the middle of the Battle of Khe Sanh and was also featured in *Life Magazine* of 9 FEB 1968.



Ray retired from the Navy Chaplaincy in 1984 as a Lieutenant Commander after 20 years service, having suffered greatly from PTSD following the war that limited and ultimately truncated his chaplaincy career. He now lives in retirement in the Milwaukee, Wis. area. He founded and still is involved with *The Khe Sanh Veterans Association* (see: <http://khesanh.com/>). Ray served as a Marine Infantry BN Chaplain at Khe Sanh near the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) in I Corps in 1968 (3rd BN/26th Marine Regiment/9th MAB/3rd Marine Division). Ray was a courageous chaplain and a grace filled man of God to all who knew him. He is one of the most humble and unpretentious men I have ever known...he called himself an "academic nerd PhD candidate" before going to Vietnam. Yet somehow this willow-whisp wiry guy got in shape physically "on the fly" literally while on small unit Marine infantry combat patrols into "Indian Country" on the DMZ. Ray went out on combat patrols often with marine infantry on the DMZ (to the chagrin of his senior chaplain), and took a lot of risks to be close to his Marines (which the Marines he served loved). He jumped with Marine Force Recon (he wore the gold jump wings of a Navy/Marine Corps parachutist) and worked out with Navy Seals from Seal Team 2. Yet, if you met him, he would strike you with the impression of being a university professor, certainly not the macho image of a "Marine Recon Wanna-be" chaplain.

Ray graduated from St. Olaf College in Northfield, MN with a B.A. degree in Philosophy and got his M.Div. in Theology from Northwestern Lutheran Seminary in the Twin Cities in 1964 (later in 1976 the seminary became Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN). He served a Lutheran church in Wisconsin for one year and then for one year was in a PhD program at the University of Chicago in Ethics & Society when he volunteered to come off naval reserve SELRES status to active duty to serve as a Navy Chaplain in Vietnam. Within a month, he went from a civilian PhD student to being on his way from Camp Pendleton, CA to the DMZ in Vietnam to minister to Marines (in what turned out to be the biggest set piece battle of the Vietnam War...The Battle of Khe Sanh in FEB 1968).

Chaplain Ray Stubbe and historian John Prados wrote *Valley of Decision*, which has become known as the definitive history of the Battle of Khe Sanh (see: <http://www.amazon.com/Valley-Decision-Siege-Khe-Sanh>). Part of that larger story is also told in the SEP 2013 issue of *Legion Magazine*. The Wisconsin Veterans Museum did an oral history interview with Ray in 2005-2006 that is a fascinating story of a combat chaplain's experience in Vietnam that may be of interest to many Navy and Marine Corps Vietnam Veterans who fought on the DMZ near Khe Sanh in 1968. The oral history piece is really good in parts...*not just the abstract...*the 106 page transcript will take several hours to read on an I-Pad or computer. A number of times Ray will just say to himself "*Oh my, what have I gotten myself into??*"...like when he got up to Khe Sanh less than a month out of the U of Chicago PhD program...and he had to go to a three-hole latrine shortly after his arrival on the DMZ. He sat down and a Marine sitting at another latrine hole in the three-holer is dabbing up blood from shrapnel wounds with rolls of toilet paper! "Oh my" is right! He gives detailed accounts of the context and setting of the battle and the courage of many Marines and the wonderful medical people (4 docs and many corpsmen/stretchers from "Charlie Med") who saved so many lives...ordinary people doing extraordinary things in the worst possible circumstances (doctors not long out of med school doing open heart surgery beyond their training to pull out shrapnel from a Marine's heart or pericardium). He comments, "*just the right kind of people at the right time came together to make a big difference between victory and defeat...life and death... on the DMZ.*" He quotes his Regimental Commander, COL David Lowends, USMC, C.O. of the 26th Marine Regiment, as saying, while Ray stood in a command briefing (as their 6,000 Marines had become surrounded by 40,000 regular North Vietnamese Army soldiers), "*you are all going to be in the history books!*" Ray rambles at times, but there are a lot of gems in this oral history transcript. You just have to take your time, like reading a long good book.

(Continued next page)

It is the way Ray often talked. He gets into details of the Garden of Eden-like atmosphere of the DMZ...the beauty of the area, but danger lurking everywhere in nature in that terrain...cobra snakes, python snakes, tigers, wild elephants, & monkeys...6 foot high razor sharp weeds, rats, leeches, boils and infections etc. Sanitary conditions were challenging...no showers for months...the red dust actually got under the skin and took months to get out of the system...after the battle and many showers later, still clothes for months had red smears on them like he was defecating all over himself every day). Clothes were just rotting off Marines leaving their privates exposed through rotten and torn clothing. It was a small corner of hell for several months of the siege.

This is not a short summary reading...but the detail is rich and gives context to the times, terrain, and battle... and gets at motivation and issues of the spirit in a way that few military history accounts address. The Wisconsin Veterans Museum also features a summary article of the battle by Ray Stubbe entitled: *In the Belly of the Dragon: Khe Sanh* (see: http://www.wisvetmuseum.com/exhibitions/online/belly_of_dragon/?ID=18), along with a Khe Sanh exhibit and artifacts from The Battle of Khe Sanh, on display at their museum in Madison, Wis. Some MCMOAA members may want to visit this museum while traveling through Madison.

Anyhow, a great story of courage and sacrifice of those Marines and Navy personnel who participated in the Battle of Khe Sanh, written by one of the good Navy "padres" serving Marines in the Vietnam War. It also is a great story of Navy medicine and the four Navy docs and corpsmen who ran "Charlie Med" and saved so many lives of Marines in this battle in the Vietnam War in FEB 1968. Take the time to read the oral history transcript...and pass it on. It is a great read.

Dave Thompson

CDR David Thompson, CHC, USNR (Ret.)
MCMOAA member, Rosemount, MN
dathomps68@gmail.com

Desk of the Minnesota Veterans Affairs Commissioner

MGLarryShellito – (MCMOAAmember) blog16JAN

Greetings to all as we enter a new year - a year that is looking to be a 'watershed' year for Minnesota Veterans all across the state. As many of you are aware, the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs has two Divisions. First is Programs and Services with the mission of providing services to Veterans living in Minnesota. Key elements include administration of Education Benefits (GI Bill), Housing and Homelessness issues, Claims and Benefits, Veterans Preferences, our Special Assistance Program and personal counseling, among others. The work done through this department, in support of County Veterans Service Offices and the Federal Veterans Administration, provides that extra boost in ensuring a higher quality of life for many of our Veterans.



The second Division is our Veterans Homes. Minnesota has five Homes located across the state in Silver Bay, Fergus Falls, Luverne, Hastings, and Minneapolis. MDVA has been actively working to upgrade the Minneapolis campus, as well as fielding requests for several additional outstate homes. While we are operating near capacity for federally authorized beds in Minnesota, our goal is to provide the quality care our heroes deserve. Over the summer months, the State's House of Representatives created a special committee to investigate ways to make Veterans Homes more 'state friendly' in terms of costs, infrastructure, and return on investments. The committee's recommendations, which were recently released, may impact future Veteran's Homes procedures and costs. Part of the committee's focus was a push for more housing options for homeless Veterans. The 'ground truth' is health care and our aging population are growing exponentially, and with that the State is looking for ways to reduce the costs as well as determining the future role(s) of our State Veterans Homes.

This review is still a 'work in progress' and until specific legislation is introduced, we will have to wait and see. MDVA is working closely with our Veterans Service Organizations to keep the Veterans Community aware. Yet with a short session and a large bonding bill, it will be more important than ever to keep this issue on the radar of our lawmakers and communities. We all have experienced the years following a conflict. Often referred as the 'peace dividend,' support and programs drop off and Veterans are often lost in the shuffle. We must work together to be sure this doesn't happen. Let's learn from the past and make careful, strategic decisions that benefit Veterans and their families. One quick step is joining or renewing your membership in your Veteran Service Organization (VSO).

(Continued next page)

I am a member of five VSO's. Even if you are not able to attend meetings to be involved in-person, by joining and showing your support, you are empowering these organizations to work on your behalf. My support is measured in their membership numbers and in caring for my fellow Veterans. Stay tuned – more to follow!

Free Transportation Services for Disabled Veterans

MNVABLOG 10JAN

Since mid-2009, Disabled Veterans have been able to ride the transit systems throughout the state for free; some Veterans are still unaware of this benefit. It is one more way the State of Minnesota has chosen to honor Veterans. And with each adult Transit ticket costing between \$2.25 and \$3.00, this benefit helps Veterans keep a couple extra dollars in their pockets, and helps tremendously for Veterans needing special disability vehicles to travel. Disabled Veterans are able to ride the Metro Transit Buses for free with a valid Veteran's Identification Card. By presenting this card to bus operators, disabled Veterans can use any fixed route service in the state. This includes Metro Transit and suburban transit providers in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area as well as regular route services in Duluth, St. Cloud, Rochester, Moorhead, East Grand Forks and Mankato. The free ride benefit also extends to a personal care attendant assisting Disabled Veterans as they travel. Previously, the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) transportation service was responsible for transporting all disabled Veterans to and from the VA Hospital. By allowing Veterans free Metro Transit rides, the stress for the DAV to transport all Disabled Veterans has been greatly reduced. This service gives Veterans more convenient options to not only the VA Hospital, but throughout the metro area as well.

To qualify for the DAV free rides, Disabled Veterans must show a Veterans Identification Card, or VIC issued by a VA Medical Center with the words "Service Connected" or the initials "SC" below the photo. The cards are available at the VA medical centers in Minneapolis and St. Cloud. For more information on how to obtain a Veterans Identification Card, call 612-467-1991 or visit the [U.S Department of Veterans Affairs website](http://www.dav.org/Veterans/i-need-a-ride/). The DAV may also provide transportation for Veterans in your part of the state. Find out by visiting <http://www.dav.org/Veterans/i-need-a-ride/> or call 612-726-9591.

Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Events

BTYR

Salon Ultimo Free Salon Day

When: 23 FEB 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Where: Salon Ultimo, Woodbury

About: Salon Ultimo is offering hours-long service packages for 22 Service members and their significant others! More Info: [Flyer](#) or call 651-738-5904

Joining Community Forces – Minn. Meeting

When: 8 MAR 8 a.m.

Where: Minnesota State University, Mankato

About: You are cordially invited to Joining Community Forces - Minnesota. The goal of JCF-MN is to collaborate and synchronize community resources to support Veterans, Service members and their families. This will be accomplished by educating the participants on federal, state and community resources. More Info: [Save the Date](#), [Agenda](#) and [How to Register](#), call 651-282-4209 or john.p.wisniewski4.mil@mail.mil

Great Lakes Aquarium Tween Overnight

When: 15 MAR 6:30 p.m., to 16 MAR 9 a.m.

Where: Great Lakes Aquarium, Duluth

About: When the lights go off and the last of the day's visitors are ushered out of the aquarium, few people realize that the real fun has only begun. Before the lights go off, military-connected tweens (youth ages 9 to 13) will learn how animals are resilient through a scavenger hunt, behind-the-scenes tours and more. Tweens will spend the night at the aquarium. An evening snack and breakfast will be provided.

More Info: [Registration website](#) or call (218) 740-3474

Teen Leadership Forum

When: March 21 to 23, 2014

Where: Mankato

About: During this forum, military-connected teens will learn how to become leaders by participating in team-building games, learning about the 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens and listening to inspiring speakers. The forum will also give teens a chance to network with other military-connected teens.

(Continued next page)

More Info: [Flyer](#) or Moriah Legvold, Child and Youth Coordinator - moriah.l.legvold.ctr@mail.mil; 651-268-8378.

Joining Community Forces – Minn. Meeting

When: 22 MAR 8 a.m.

Where: Minnesota State Community and Technical College, Detroit Lakes

About: You are cordially invited to Joining Community Forces - Minnesota. The goal of JCF-MN is to collaborate and synchronize community resources to support Veterans, Service members and their families. This will be accomplished by educating the participants on federal, state and community resources. More Info: [Save the Date](#), [Agenda](#) and [How to Register](#) - call 651-282-4209 or john.p.wisniewski4.mil@mail.mil

Welcome Home the Troops Pheasant Hunt

When: 29 MAR 2014

Where: Wild Wings of Oneka, Hugo

About: This will be the sixth hunt for Veterans, sponsored by Wild Wings of Oneka and the Yellow Ribbon Networks of Hugo and Stillwater. See the form below to offer your support and help 100 Veterans enjoy a great day that includes a guided pheasant hunt, bird cleaning, shells, sporting clays and wild-game dinner. More Info: [Sponsorship form](#) - Contact Chuck Haas, 651-247-0354, charles.haas27@gmail.com

Joining Community Forces – Minn. Meeting

When: 5 APR 8 a.m.

Where: Southwest Minnesota State University, Marshall

About: You are cordially invited to Joining Community Forces - Minnesota. The goal of JCF-MN is to collaborate and synchronize community resources to support Veterans, Service members and their families. This will be accomplished by educating the participants on federal, state and community resources. More Info: [Save the Date](#), [Agenda](#) and [How to Register](#) - call 651-282-4209 or john.p.wisniewski4.mil@mail.mil

Joining Community Forces – Minn. Meeting

When: 17 MAY 8 a.m.

Where: University of Minnesota, Duluth

About: You are cordially invited to Joining Community Forces - Minnesota. The goal of JCF-MN is to collaborate and synchronize community resources to support Veterans, Service members and their families. This will be accomplished by educating the participants on federal, state and community resources. More Info: [Save the Date](#), [Agenda](#) and [How to Register](#) - call 651-282-4209 or john.p.wisniewski4.mil@mail.mil

Korean War Veterans – Free Book

BlairRumble TheHorseSoldier ICAVNews FEB14

To commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Korean War, a special book honors Veterans who served in that conflict. *"Korea Reborn: A Grateful Nation Honors War Veterans for 60 Years of Growth"* is available **free** to Korean War Veterans and families as a gift of gratitude from the Korean government. This beautiful 158-page color documentary of the war, up to the present, is a must for any Veteran who served. Order this FREE book from: Mr. Edward Valle (President, Minnesota Korean War Veterans Chapter One), 1410 Foster St, River Falls, WI 54022, 715-425-8992. Shipping is \$5.60.



MOAA Services – 800-234-6622 – <http://www.moaa.org/main/featurelist.aspx?id=308>

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Army Special Forces (SF) Training

military.com

Like all soldiers, SF candidates begin their career with nine weeks of Boot Camp. Upon completion of Basic Combat Training, you will attend Advanced Individual Training (AIT). For Special Forces, you will go to Infantry School to learn to use small arms, anti-armor, and weapons like howitzers and heavy mortars. Basic Combat Training lasts 9 weeks, AIT lasts four weeks, and Airborne last 3 weeks. All take place at Fort Benning, Georgia.



After graduating AIT, training will continue with the following schools:

- Army Airborne School – 3 weeks in Ft Benning
- Special Operations Preparation Course (SOPC) - 4 weeks in Ft Bragg, N.C.
- Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS) – 3 weeks in Ft Bragg, N.C.
- Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC) – 34 -76 weeks depending upon Military Occupational Specialty (MOS)
- Live Environment Training (LET) - Immersion Training in foreign countries – varies in time.

Depending upon your MOS within Special Forces Training, the process of completing these schools can take 14-18 months. Details about each phase of training are listed below:

Army Airborne School

Your next step will be to complete Airborne training. Airborne School is a unique experience requiring special dedication and a desire to be challenged mentally and physically. This three-week course, also known as Basic Airborne Training, teaches you the techniques involved in parachuting from airplanes and landing safely. The final test includes a non-assisted jump. Airborne school is broken down into 3 weeks. The following explains the training you must complete for each week.

Ground Week:

You start with an intensive program of instruction to build individual airborne skills. These skills prepare you to make a parachute jump and land safely. You will train on the mock door, the 34-foot tower and the lateral drift apparatus.

Tower Week:

Tower Week completes your individual skill training and builds your team effort skills. To go forward to Jump Week, you must qualify on the Swing Lander Trainer (SLT), master the mass exit procedures from the 34-foot tower, and pass all physical training requirements.

Jump Week:

During Jump Week, you must successfully complete five jumps at 1,250 feet from a C-130 or C-141 aircraft. If you successfully meet the course requirements you will be granted an additional skill identifier and will be authorized to wear the coveted "Silver Wing" on your uniform.

Next Issue: Training Continued

Have you seen our award winning website?
www.MCMOAA.org

VA Burial Benefit Update

RamseyCoxTheHill 18NOV13

The Senate passed S.1471 on 18 NOV and sent it to the House allowing the Department of Veterans Affairs to unbury military Service members in national cemeteries if they committed a capital crime. SEN Dan Coats (R-IN) introduced the Alicia Dawn Koehl Respect for National Cemeteries Act after Koehl was shot by a Service member. Michael Anderson was buried at Fort Custer National Cemetery, but Coats argued he shouldn't have been since existing law prohibits anyone convicted of a federal or state capital crime from receiving a military honor burial. The cemetery claimed they couldn't disinter Anderson's remains because he wasn't officially convicted since he shot himself after committing the crime. Coats' bill corrects that technicality. "No Veteran who commits a capital crime should be given the right to a military honor burial ... to ensure that our fallen Veterans can rest in peace ... not next to criminals who commit such a heinous crime," Coats said. S.1471 would authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of the Army to reconsider decisions to inter or honor the memory of a person in a national cemetery if the person may have committed a federal or state capital crime but was not convicted by reason of unavailability for trial due to death or flight to avoid prosecution. The bill passed through a unanimous consent agreement and now heads to the House for further action.

VA ID Card Susceptibility

JackieCallawayWFTSABCNews art16NOV13

Anyone with a smart phone and a bar code app can scan any VA identification card issued since 2004 and the cardholder's Social Security number immediately pops up on the screen. Tampa businessman and Army Veteran Barry Landau wants answers. "I didn't think that was possible." Landau said. "The card is absolutely no good." WFTS found Veterans Affairs published warnings about the Veterans information, or VIC, cards on their website in 2011 and in July of this year. The alert states, "Some barcode readers, including those available as applications on cell phones, can scan the bar code on the front of the card, and reveal the Veteran's Social Security number." Thirty-year Navy Veteran Walt Raysick, who holds a leadership position with the American Legion, said the VA failed to alert him of the card's vulnerability. "That's my Social Security number. That's terrible," Raysick said. No one from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs would go on camera to answer questions.

A VA spokesperson did respond, saying they've begun work on the next-generation ID card, which will not contain a Social Security number. It will be rolled out in 2014. Dave Braun, co-chairman of the Veterans Memorial Park Museum Committee, said the VA should have done more to get the word out about the risk of identity theft if one of these cards is lost or stolen. "Where is the distribution to notify everyone?" Braun said. "They are not telling anyone about it." Congressmen Gus Bilirakis, vice chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, said it is "...unacceptable that nothing more immediate has been done to rectify this issue. ...The VA should take all precautions to make sure this information is protected." Meanwhile, Veterans should treat their current ID cards as they do their Social Security card. It is recommend you leave it at home unless needed for a day-of appointment or you plan to use it for obtaining a Veteran discount in those states that have not yet implemented placing Veteran status on their driver licenses.

Vet Jobs Update

TREANews art25&30NOV

Starbucks has announced that it is planning to hire at least 10,000 military Veterans and active-duty spouses over the next five years as part of a plan to grow its workforce by 200,000 over the same time period. Starbucks aims to have a total workforce of 500,000. **AT&T** announced a plan to hire 5,000 Veterans over the next five years, which it, too, has expanded to 10,000. Additionally, **Subway** has announced special waivers for Veterans who want to become franchisees. The standard license fee of \$15,000 will be waived for any Veteran who wishes to start a Subway restaurant on a government or military site, and the fee will be cut in half for development anywhere else.

Also, Arizona State Parks is partnering with the Department of Veterans Affairs to offer a new program providing job opportunities for homeless or returning U.S. military Veterans. Qualifying applicants will be matched for jobs as temporary park specialists in rural Arizona. Applicants must have a driver's license and be able to work in the outdoors where temperatures can be extreme. Applicants also are required live in rural Arizona either in or near the parks. Arizona State Parks hopes to become a national model program for (other) state parks to help returning Veterans find jobs. Organizing agencies will provide vocational assistance, job development, placement, and ongoing support to improve employment outcomes for the participating military Veterans. For more information, call the ASP headquarters at 602-542-4174. Veterans seeking employment opportunities can visit the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services website at <http://www.azdvs.gov>, or the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

American Battle Monuments Commission Video Series

The loss of American life during World War I and World War II affected people in every corner of the United States and forever changed the future of these families that suffered losses. In honor of Veterans Day, the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) launched a new, online video series: "Never Forgotten." With more than 220,000 American men and women buried or memorialized at ABMC's overseas cemeteries around the world, the ABMC works every day of the year to honor the sacrifices of these individuals. This new online series helps to tell the story of those that gave their lives from the perspective of their family members. The first released video tells the story of Merchant Marine LT Murray M. Blum, who died 3 DEC 1943 in the North Atlantic attempting to save another man's life. Hear his brother Calvin, niece Robin, and nephew Murray, recount this selfless story of sacrifice during World War II. LT Murray M. Blum, who is buried at Cambridge American Cemetery in England, is just one of the more than 8,900 individuals buried or memorialized at this site. The second release in this online video series will feature the story of 1LT Kenneth H. Underwood, who died 18 MAY 1944 and is also buried at Cambridge American Cemetery. Established in 1923 by Congress, ABMC is a small U.S. government agency charged with commemorating the service, achievements and sacrifice of the U.S. Armed forces. ABMC administers our nation's overseas commemorative cemeteries and federal memorials. For more information visit <http://www.abmc.gov>, or connect with us on Facebook or YouTube.

TRICARE OTC Demo Project Extended

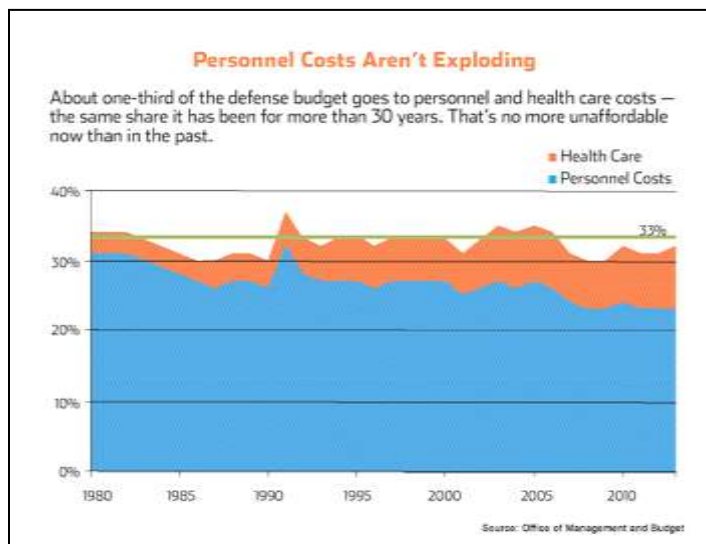
TRICARENewsRelease 15NOV

TRICARE beneficiaries may continue to receive select over-the-counter medications at no cost to them until 30 NOV 2016. The Department of Defense has extended the Over-the-Counter Medication Demonstration Project (OTC Demo) to allow more time to determine its effectiveness. The OTC Demo began in 2009 and was scheduled to end NOV 2014. The OTC Demo allows TRICARE beneficiaries to get OTC medications from retail network pharmacies and TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery at no cost. Beneficiaries must get a prescription from their doctor for most of the medications covered under the OTC Demo. Covered drugs include allergy medications Cetirizine and Loratadine (brand names Zyrtec© and Claritin©) and heartburn medication Omeprazole (Prilosec OTC©).

The OTC Demo now includes the Plan-B One-Step Emergency Contraceptive (levonorgestrel). Plan-B will be available at no cost and without a prescription to all active duty service women and female beneficiaries who can bear children, without any age restriction. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved Plan-B for use without a prescription in JUN 2013. All military pharmacies already carry Plan-B and dispense it without a prescription at no cost. Plan-B is not available through TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery, because it must be taken within three days. For more information about the OTC Demo, go to www.tricare.mil/otcdemo. The online formulary search tool, www.pec.ha.osd.mil, allows TRICARE beneficiaries to see which prescription medications TRICARE covers and determine the applicable cost. To locate the nearest TRICARE Network pharmacy, go to <http://www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE/pharmacy/>.

The Real Facts About Spiraling Cost Growth are Being Misrepresented by Pentagon Leadership

MOAA



Army Dropping Number of Paratrooper Units

BrettBarrouquereAP art1DEC



The legendary Pathfinders have taken their final jump and the Red Devils aren't too far behind. The two paratrooper units -- formally known as the 5th Battalion, 101st Combat Aviation Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division and the 508th Infantry Regiment -- are closing out long histories as a result of the U.S. Army's reconfiguration and budget cutting. Among the changes being made is a reduction in the number of parachute positions across the service. "You have to make the best use of resources across the Army to make sure we're using tax dollars as best we can," said Jim Hinnant, a former 1LT and paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne at Fort Bragg and spokesman for U.S. Army Forces Command.

The military is capping parachute positions at 49,000 as part of the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance, a plan detailing the development of military forces through 2020. The plan calls for some units, including paratrooper units, to change their focus. LTC Don Peters, the team chief for Operations, Intelligence and Logistics with Army Public Affairs, told the AP the reductions are being made in part because of reduced budgets and to reach the mandated maximum number of 49,000 paratrooper slots. Peters said 24 units accounting for 2,600 soldiers across the country were removed from jump status. That includes 12 units with the 18th Airborne Corps and the 82nd Airborne at Fort Bragg, N.C., and the Company F (Pathfinder), 4th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, 159th Aviation Brigade at Fort Campbell, Ky. "However, paratroopers continue to train and maintain readiness to execute airborne operations should a mission arise, and the impact on the reduction of paid parachute positions will not degrade the capability of the Army," Peters said.

The Army kept three standing pathfinder companies: Company F (Pathfinder), 5th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, 101st Aviation Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault); and Company F (Pathfinder), 4th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, 159th Aviation Brigade, both at Fort Campbell, Ky.; and Company F (Pathfinder), 2nd Battalion, 82d Aviation Regiment at Fort Bragg, N.C. The Pathfinder units are dropped into place in order to set up and operate drop zones, pickup zones, and helicopter landing sites for airborne operations, air resupply operations, or other air operations in support of the ground unit commander. They also handle rescues of downed pilots and helicopters.

In the case of the Pathfinders at Fort Campbell and the Red Devils at Fort Bragg, their units trace their history back to being among the first to drop into Nazi-occupied France at Normandy on D-Day during World War II, helping set the stage for the allied siege that eventually drove the Germans out of the country.

Current soldiers are aware of that history and what the loss of jump status means to their roles in the Army's future. Some are dismayed by the changes, but generally believe the units can still carry out the missions. "History is history. Being on jump status is history. It's out of my control," said SGT1Class Bryan Beville of Cheyenne, Wyo., a member of the Pathfinders. "We'll continue to fine-tune what we do." SSGT Ryan Savage, an Elk Rapids, Mich., native and Pathfinder member, said soldiers prepare for every scenario imaginable and while no longer jumping in ahead of ground troops, they'll be ready to tackle their duties without helicopters. "It's a real fancy and pretty way to do it," Savage said of jumping from helicopters. "But, for every soldier, you still have to train and prepare to do the same mission." The cutbacks have some airborne alumni worried about the future of paratroopers at various posts. Kenneth "Rock" Merritt, a retired Command Master Sergeant Major with the 18th Airborne Corps at Fort Bragg, N.C., said the military's focus on special forces could be detrimental to units such as the one he served with until retiring in 1977. "My big concern is ... I just wonder how long they're going to keep the 82nd Airborne on airborne status," Merritt said. "I'm wondering if some day, somebody's going to get the bright idea and the 82nd Airborne is going to go back to the 82nd Infantry."

Army officials haven't publicly spoken about pulling units from airborne status. Current soldiers hope one day they'll be allowed to return to making air jumps. "We're ready for anything," said SGT Shea Goodnature of Clarksville, Tenn.

British Fighter Flies with 3D Printed Parts

MikeHoffmanMilitary.com art13JAN

The United Kingdom's Tornado became the first fighter jet to fly with 3D printed parts in DEC. Done by BAE Systems, the Tornado was fitted with metal components constructed by a 3D printer. The plane then completed test flights at the end of DEC at BAE System's airfield in Warton, Lancashire, UK. The 3D printer constructed a protective cover for the cockpit radio, a protective guard for the landing gear and support struts on the air intake door, according to BAE Systems. 3D printing has gained a lot of momentum, especially in the defense and aviation industries.

(Continued next page)

Companies such as General Electric featured 3D printers at their booths at the Paris Air Show last summer to display the relatively new technology. Aviation companies see 3D printing as a tool to produce specialized aviation parts cheaper. Feeding a design into a 3D printer is often cheaper than traditional methods of manufacturing, GE officials said in Paris.



“You are suddenly not fixed in terms of where you have to manufacture these things. You can manufacture the products at whatever base you want, providing you can get a machine there, which means you can also start to support other platforms such as ships and aircraft carriers,” said Mike Murray, head of airframe integration at BAE Systems. The Army’s Rapid Equipping Force has deployed 3D printers to the front lines of Afghanistan as part of their Expeditionary Labs that come with experience engineers who develop parts and gear for soldiers on site.

Sad Christmas Controversy at VA Hospitals

PatriciaKimeMarineCorpsTimes art3JAN14

Several incidents at Veterans Affairs medical centers over the holidays have prompted the House Veterans Affairs Committee chairman to question whether VA has violated the civil rights of Veterans in its care. In separate events at VA hospitals in DEC, administrators limited private donors, schools and Veterans organizations from delivering Christmas-specific holiday cards, singing religious carols publicly and delivering gifts wrapped in Christmas paper. The incidents sparked outcries from conservative groups and now have attracted the attention of at least two Republican lawmakers, House Veterans’ Affairs Committee Chairman Rep. Jeff Miller of Florida and Rep. Martha Roby of Alabama. Each has sent letters to VA Secretary Eric Shinseki asking him to look into the incidents and provide copies of VA policies regarding the distribution of religious material and gifts.

In his letter to Shinseki on 3 JAN, Miller argued that because Christmas is a federal holiday and also a religious day, VA may be violating Veterans rights by denying them the right to celebrate a government-approved holiday as well as their own religious traditions. He noted that President Obama celebrated Christmas publicly by lighting the National Christmas Tree with “well-chosen words” recognizing the lessons of Jesus Christ without “proselytizing or seeking to impose” them on anyone. “In taking it upon themselves to restrict Christmas cards, carols and gifts in certain locations, VA officials clearly ignored longstanding federal government traditions, basic common sense and possibly a 2011 federal consent decree that ordered VA not to ban religious speech,” Miller wrote. The consent order Miller referred to is a 2011 judge’s ruling that forbade VA officials at a Houston cemetery from “editing, controlling or excising ... the content of private religious speech and expression by speakers at VA-sponsored or non-VA-sponsored special ceremonies or events.” The ruling resulted from a lawsuit in which a pastor and several Veteran families alleged they were told by the cemetery director that prayers at official cemetery events had to be nondenominational. The same director also banned volunteer honor guards from having any religious elements in their burial rituals, according to the suit.

Miller’s letter called attention to at least two incidents: one at the VA North Texas Health Care System in which a group of schoolchildren were not allowed to deliver handwritten cards containing phrases including “Merry Christmas” and “God Bless You”; and the enforcement of a rule at the Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center in Augusta, Ga., that bans volunteer choruses from singing religious-themed carols in public hospital spaces. A VA spokesman said Friday that the department does accept religious cards and Christmas carols “for our patients who celebrate Christmas, as we do for Veterans who celebrate religious holidays of all faiths.” “Veterans entered the military to protect our freedoms, including the freedom to practice a religion of our choice. At VA, it is our duty to uphold and respect the honor and sacrifice of all Veterans, from all faiths and backgrounds,” Spokesman Drew Brookie said.

According to VA officials, the incident at the Texas facility resulted from a miscommunication and the facility “thanks all the students who took the time during the holiday season to write Christmas cards for the Veterans we serve.” The Augusta, Ga., facility allows carolers to sing publicly from an approved list of songs and “is happy to provide more private areas for groups to sing [religious-based songs] for Veterans who choose to participate,” VA officials said. Roby wrote to Shinseki on 2 JAN with concerns similar to Miller’s, alarmed that one of her constituents had made more than 100 goodie bags and Christmas cards for Veterans at the Central Alabama Veterans Health Care System but was only able deliver fewer than 20 because they were the only ones to meet the facility’s guidelines as secular gifts. “My concern is that such a senseless policy exists to begin with, or, in the case that no such policy expressly prohibits mentioning Christmas in cases like this, that the culture of bureaucracy at the VA would encourage facility administrators to err on the side of suppressing religious expression and discouraging acts of kindness toward Veterans,” Roby wrote.

(Continued next page)

Brookie said VA has received the letters and will respond. “VA greatly appreciates holiday donations and volunteerism by students and organizations on behalf of Veterans of all faiths and backgrounds,” he said. The House Veterans’ Affairs Committee is asking VA patients, employees or volunteers to report any perceived instances in which VA attempted to curtail the celebration of Christmas or other federal holidays to its tip line, varoi@mail.house.gov.

New Book by a MCMOAA Member

MGRobertDShadley

At Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md, in 1996, the U.S. Army’s most highly visible sexual abuse scandal on record was uncovered by MG Robert D. Shadley. Known as GAM, or “Game ala Military,” an entire network of senior male instructors was in competition to abuse their power in order to exploit the young female trainees in their charge and commit sexual assault. Immersed in a battle unlike anything he’d been trained for, MG Shadley unraveled the game, got help for the victims, and brought the perpetrators to justice.



Now retired and residing in Wayzata, MG Shadley continues to advocate for the more than 20,000 Military Service members who the Department of Defense estimates are sexually assaulted each year. In this gripping story, he sheds light on a problem that’s still sadly far from being solved and provides lessons in leadership through crisis.



You can learn more about MG Shadley's new book and order the book at his website www.shadleyeditions.com.

Here is our installment for this issue:

“National Agenda Takes Center Stage”

As pointed out in earlier installments, after we quickly surmised on 13 SEP 1996, the situation of drill sergeants abusing their positions of power to elicit sex from young trainees was gravely serious, I determined our “objectives needed to be threefold: (1) identify potential victims and ensure we provide all necessary support to them, (2) identify alleged perpetrators and allow the judicial system to work its due process, and (3) identify systemic causes for the problem and initiate corrective actions to preclude recurrence. These three vectors guided my actions for the remainder of my involvement with the Army’s APG sex scandal.” Unfortunately, our objectives were in a matter of weeks overtaken by National-level agenda. “Race, women in the military, the image of the Army, and accountability were coming to the forefront as the agendas that would play out over the next several months and years.”

Early on in our investigations, we discovered that all the drill sergeants identified as alleged perpetrators by the victims were African-American. Since the ethnicity profile of the victims mirrored that of the Army with 68% being Caucasian, it was obvious race would become an issue. My first meeting with the NAACP was on 19 DEC 1996. As I rehearsed my presentation and asked my staff for feedback “the Brigade Adjutant said: ‘Quite frankly, GEN Shadley, we in the African-American community have a problem with our males, but you will never hear us talk about it in public.’ I was worried before we started the prep session, but now I was really worried about the NAACP (meeting)... But I figured that if I presented the racial breakout for the victims and subjects compared to ... the Army data, it would make the case that our objective was to find victims and not target blacks to be subjects. My analytical mind was convinced the data would prove our point.” The meeting did not go well and “brought home to me that a lot of the concern about race was rooted in longstanding concerns by the African-American community and that we had to be sensitive to that and make doubly sure that no bias, either actual or perceived, entered into what we were doing. The issues were very emotional and facts and numbers alone would not convince anyone that we are being fair. I knew back in October that this day would come. It was more difficult than I had ever imagined it would be.”

“An interview with Mrs. Lister (Deputy Undersecretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs) appeared in the 20 JAN 1997, edition of the *Army Times* titled ‘Lister: Future still bright for women in the Army.’ This was part of the DA’s media campaign to start getting positive word out about the Army in general and opportunities for women in particular.” “An article in the 21 JAN edition of the *Wall Street Journal*, Adam G. Mersereau, Georgia State University School of Law, confirmed his position that separate standards for men and women in the military lowered morale and that Americans should be kept informed of the push for women in combat.”

(Continued next page)

I would tell people that on any given day a person could use the APG sex scandal to support any position regarding women in the military: no women in combat, women in combat, separate training for men and women, men and women trained together, no women in the military, the military would be better if women ran it, and many more agendas. This put us right in the middle, because we were on point for the Army in regard to sexual misconduct. No matter how this all turned out, to some it would be our fault if they didn't get their desired outcome."

"On 11 SEP 1997, the much-awaited press conference was held in the Pentagon to herald the release of 'The Secretary of the Army's Senior Review Panel Report on Sexual Harassment' report dated JUL 1997 and the 'Department of the Army Inspector General Special Inspection of Initial Entry Training Equal Opportunity/Sexual Harassment Policies and Procedures DEC 1996 – APR 1997' report dated 22 JUL 1997." "Secretary (of the Army Togo) West and GEN Reimer (Chief of Staff of the Army) went first, and they were followed by MG Steve Siegfried and LTG Jerry Bates. I watched the press conference on the television in my office with members of my staff. We then listened to Q&As via audio feed from the Pentagon. I didn't get any of the presentations by MG Siegfried and LTG Bates. Secretary West and GEN Reimer did a very nice job of laying out what the two reports said and the comprehensive Human Relations Action Plan to fix things. Again, I was pleased that the Army's report contained the main recommendations we had submitted months ago." "I received the transcript of the prepared remarks by Secretary West and GEN Reimer and the Q&A session the next day, so I was able to compare my handwritten notes to the official Army document. The Army's position was made clear within the first few minutes of the press conference when Secretary West said, 'The panel's members have briefed and have expressed the view that what happened at Aberdeen was an aberration. The sexual abuse—sexual abuse—is not endemic throughout our Army. Sexual harassment, however, continues to be a problem'."

"I was highly irritated, but not surprised, when I heard that 'Aberdeen was (considered by the Army leadership to be) an aberration.'" This was exactly the wrong way to "protect the brand" of the Army and doomed the Army and its soldiers to years of continued abuse of women because the problem of sexual assaults were declared to be only happening at Aberdeen under my command. The traumatic impact on scores of women could have been prevented if the Army had admitted to a force-wide sexual assault problem that had been going on for many years even before we brought it into the full light of day.

Editor's Note: *The MCMOAA'n* will publish the last excerpt of MG Shadley's book in the May issue.

Next up – "Recommended Solutions"

Veteran Hand Salute

In 2008, an amendment to the U.S. Code authorized Veterans and members of the armed forces when not in uniform to render the military hand salute at appropriate occasions. Participation in events by Veterans rendering a hand salute encourages patriotism and stands as a reminder to event coordinators and spectators that there are more than 22 million U.S. Veterans.

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Military Office

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) (www.consumerfinance.gov) mission is to make markets for consumer financial products and services work for Americans. It has a dedicated Office of Service Member Affairs (<http://www.consumerfinance.gov/servicemembers/>) to address consumer financial challenges affecting military members, Veterans, and their families. The CFPB has several resources available on their website to include:

- Answers to common consumer financial questions - <http://www.consumerfinance.gov/askcfpb/>
- The CFPB blog - <http://www.consumerfinance.gov/blog/>
- To submit a complaint – <http://www.consumerfinance.gov/complaint/>

Camp Ripley and Community Share Holiday Cheer

SSGTAnthonyHouseyTheRipleyReporter JAN14

Recently, staff members of Camp Ripley met with members of the Citizen's Advisory Committee for a quarterly meeting to discuss the impact and effects Camp Ripley has on the surrounding community. The committee also joined the employees of Camp Ripley for a holiday meal and celebration 12 DEC 2013. "This is a great time of the year to see where we stand on current projects, and gets the ball rolling on new ones," said Rich Collins of the Morrison County Beyond The Yellow Ribbon Program.

(Continued next page)

A brief presentation was made by COL Scott St. Sauver, Camp Ripley Post Commander following introductions of the Camp Ripley Staff and Citizen's Committee members. COL Jon Jensen, Chief of Staff for the Minnesota Army National Guard, attended the meeting and was instrumental in answering questions pertaining to upcoming events and exercises within Minnesota. "We are very grateful for the support the community has shown to not only our service members but the hundreds of out of state contractors we have had to bring here to train our forces," said COL Jensen. "We are expecting to see a large increase in the use of Camp Ripley by multi-service, multi-agency training exercises," added Jensen. Following the meeting, everyone was invited to a free holiday meal catered by the Little Falls Coburn's and Perkins. These agencies have put on a holiday meal for Camp Ripley employees for the past eight years. COL Jensen thanked Camp Ripley employees for their hard work during 2013 and recognized several military and civilian employees for their significant contributions to the Minnesota National Guard.

Naval Aviation Leadership Notes

- Everything put together, falls apart sooner or later.
- It is impossible to make anything foolproof because fools are so ingenious.
- No amount of genius can overcome a preoccupation with detail.
- The length of a meeting rises with the square of the number of people present.
- Government expands to absorb all revenue and then some.
- There's never enough time to do it right, but there's always enough time to do it over.

Too Much Time on Their Hands



Lockheed gets \$449M in Cruise-Missile Deals

OrlandoSentinel art10JAN



Lockheed Martin Corp's Orlando missiles unit has received two new contracts worth a combined \$449 million to produce next-generation stealth cruise missiles for the U.S. Air Force, the company said Thursday. The latest deals for the advanced cruise missile work will sustain at least 135 high-tech defense jobs in Orlando, not including an unspecified number of jobs at vendors and suppliers, officials said. About two dozen people also work on the program at Lockheed's electronics plant in Ocala, Fla. Final assembly takes place in Troy, Ala. It was the first time Lockheed received two contracts simultaneously for production of the Joint Air to Surface Standoff Missile (JASSM), the company said. Lockheed Martin's missile unit on Sand Lake Road employs more than 4,000 and is the

Bethesda, Md.-based company's oldest and largest operation in Florida. The awards come at a time when the military is still facing a new round of spending cuts in 2014, though much less than the earlier deficit-reduction mandate known as sequestration. Congress passed a bipartisan budget deal in late 2013 that reduced the planned defense budget cuts by 40% to about \$31 billion this year. "These contracts underscore the Air Force's and Lockheed Martin's commitment to this program," said Jason Denney, director of long-range missiles for Lockheed Martin Missiles Fire Control Orlando. Terms of the deal call for Lockheed to make 340 baseline missiles and 100 extended-range missiles, which brings the total number of missiles now under production contract to more than 2,100, Denney said. With a powerful warhead, radar-evading stealthiness and GPS-guided precision technology, the JASSM system is considered a key weapon against highly fortified fixed and mobile targets. From the B-1B bomber to the F-16 Fighting Falcon, a half dozen military aircraft are equipped to carry them.

JASSM is among a stable of weapons programs that guarantees Lockheed "a steady inflow of follow-on orders from a leveraged presence in the Army, Air Force, Navy and intelligence programs," Zacks Investment Research said in a previous report. The stock research firm said it expected Lockheed to have "big upside potential" despite the looming defense cuts.

Navy's Acting Undersecretary Forced to Resign

RichardSiskMilitary.com art 15JAN

The Navy's acting undersecretary resigned Tuesday under pressure from Navy Secretary Ray Mabus following allegations of sexual misconduct with a subordinate, Pentagon sources said. Mabus asked for the resignation of Robert Martinage, who has been serving as undersecretary of the Navy since last June, "following a loss of confidence in Martinage's abilities to effectively perform his duties," Mabus' office said in a statement. Mabus acted after allegations surfaced that Martinage had engaged in inappropriate conduct with a woman who worked for him, a Pentagon source said. Martinage, the deputy undersecretary of the Navy (DUSN)/Policy, Plans, Oversight and Integration (PPO&I), has been serving in that capacity since last June when Robert Work resigned to take a post with the Center For a New American Security, a Washington, D.C., think tank. The statement from Mabus' office said that Thomas W. Hicks, currently deputy undersecretary of the Navy and deputy chief management officer, will take over the acting post of undersecretary "until a new undersecretary is confirmed or until further notice, whichever comes first."

MEMORANDUM FROM THE DESK OF THE ALMIGHTY

TO: All Former Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines

SUBJECT: Which Military Service Is the Best

1. All branches of the United States Armed Forces are honorable and noble.
2. Each serves America well and with distinction.
3. Serving in the United States military represents a great honor warranting special respect, tribute, and dedication from your fellow man.
4. Always be proud of that.

Warm Regards,
 GOD
 USN, (Ret)

Compensation Commission Report Update

VFWWashington

Weekly 3JAN

The COLA penalty on military retirees isn't the only threat to Service member and Veterans' benefits. The Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission (MCRMC) is currently touring the country to gauge reactions to potential changes to military pay and benefits. Fort Sam Houston and San Antonio's VA Medical Center was their latest stop with two public hearings and a town hall meeting on 6-7 JAN. The Commission is charged with examining how the troops are compensated while in uniform, in retirement and as Veterans, and everything military or Veteran-related is on their table, to include the 20-year retirement system, military pay and allowances, concurrent receipt, the GI Bills, military healthcare, exchanges, commissaries and schools, and transition and employment assistance programs, among many others. The VFW testified before the Commission in NOV 13 and views their charter as a serious attempt to balance the budget on the backs of military families, retirees and Veterans through an erosion of pay and benefits that will negatively impact recruiting and retention, and possibly threaten the continued viability of the All-Volunteer Military. The Commission is required to issue their report to the White House by 1 MAY 2014. For more information or to leave a public comment, go to <http://www.mcrmc.gov/>.

Resource Information for Members

Burial and Memorial Benefits – www.cem.va.gov
 1-800-535-1117
 DEERS Verification – (Update ID records)
 1-800-538-9552
 Defense Finance & Accounting – (Pay issues)
 1-800-321-1080
 Delta Dental – 1-888-838-8737
 Dept. of Army Casualty Assistance – (Retiree death notice) 1-800-626-3317
 Express Scripts Pharmacy – 1-877-363-1303
 Medicare – 1-800-772-1213
 Military Home Front (military installations info) –
www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil
 MyPay Customer Service – 1-888-332-7411
 Retired Activities Office – 612-713-4664
 Veterans Affairs Burial Info – 1-800-697-6947
 Veterans Affairs Regional Office – 1-800-827-1000
 TRICARE West Information – 1-877-988-9378
 TRICARE for Life – 1-866-773-0404

Aviation Art**Wild Children**

by Heins Krebs

B-17-F Wild Children returns to Framlingham following another dangerous mission deep into the heart of Germany. Having survived this trip in one piece and with no casualties, her crew is looking forward to one last landing before being shipped back to the United States.

<http://www.brooksart.com/Wild.html> Jan 2014

The Zippo Lighter Story

HaroldRatzburg&DavidNGreaux www.windsweptpress.com/zippo.htm &ALFranceNewsletter JAN13

In 1932 George G. Blaisdell invented the Zippo lighter in his garage. He wanted to design a lighter that was sturdy and that you could light in the wind using one hand. He named his windproof lighter after the word "zipper" because he thought it sounded "modern". The first Zippos were square cornered and formed from rectangular brass tubing with the top and bottom pieces soldered to the hollow tubing to form the lid and bottom of the case. The hinge was soldered to the outside and the lighter was chrome plated. It sold for \$1.95 and came with a lifetime guarantee. The original design called for a shiny metallic nickel-plated case, but with WW II came shortages, including the brass and chrome used for Zippo lighters, so porous steel coated with black paint was used instead. The result was a black, crackled paint job, so today's collectors refer to these rare models as "black crackle" lighters.



From 1943 through 1945, Zippo lighters, with that distinctive click they made when flipped open, were available only to Military personnel at U.S. Army exchanges and naval ship stores around the world. Soldiers liked to personalize their Zippos by scratching the surface of the lighters with their names, places they'd been, messages to loved ones or simple pictures. The lighter was so popular that it was named "the GI's friend", and after the war, the Vets came home to civilian life as dedicated Zippo customers. The company's archives are filled with letters from GIs detailing the services a Zippo lighter was called to perform, such as heating rations in a helmet, lighting campfires, sparking fuses for explosives, hammering nails and even signaling to fellow soldiers with the famous Zippo click. On several occasions, a Zippo lighter in a shirt or pants pocket even saved a life or prevented a wound by deflecting enemy bullets or shrapnel. It would be nice to say that George Blaisdell sent all his lighters to the military because he was super patriotic, but that was only part of it. George, being the smart guy that he was, didn't want the Zippo Manufacturing Plant shut down for the war's duration as "unnecessary to the war effort" or refitted to make parachutes or fatigue caps. By working with the government, he could keep his factory at full production levels. Blaisdell became "Mr. Zippo" with the help of war correspondent Ernie Pyle, who hung out with the front line troops in England, Italy, Sicily, Africa



and later in the Pacific. Pyle's columns dealt mostly with the civilian soldiers and their day-to-day lives. Blaisdell enjoyed the column and sent the correspondent a Zippo lighter with Pyle's signature engraved on the side. He sent 50 more for Pyle to give away, even though as George wrote in his letter, "You probably know nothing about the Zippo lighter." Fact was, Pyle knew all about the Zippo, as did every other American GI. "If he only knew how soldiers coveted them! Why, they're so popular I had three of them stolen from me in one year," wrote Pyle in his column. He finished the column by giving Blaisdell his nickname: "The fifty other lighters went like hot cakes. I found myself equipped with a wonderful weapon for winning friends and influencing people. All fifty-one of us were grateful to Mr. Zippo." The tradition from WW I of decorating lighters with coins and crude engravings, or "trench art" continued on the Zippo in WW II. The GIs soldered coins or unit insignia to them or even scratched or engraved maps and names of places they had been to personalize their prized Zippos.

According to collectors, over 200,000 Zippos were used by GI's in Vietnam. The Zippo played a part in almost every daily activity. The shiny top provided a handy mirror and the lighters flame warmed their food at meal time. GI's kept salt in the bottom cavities, called canned bottoms, of their Zippos, to replenish lost body salt. Other legendary Zippos were used to transmit signals or even provided a shield against enemy bullets. SSGT Naugle, who was saved because he was able to signal his position to the rescue helicopter, had a Zippo in his hand. Among men that had a close call with death, one of the luckiest was SGT Martinez, who kept a Zippo in his chest pocket. A bullet struck his chest, only to be stopped by his Zippo. This was reported in Life magazine and also appeared in various advertisements attesting the Zippos finest attributes. Zippos were also used in military operations, where Marines and Soldiers would spray gasoline over the area to burn enemy compounds and dwellings. A soldier would usually carry a Zippo in the chest pocket of his jungle fatigues. Some would insert one in the camouflage band of the helmet or put one into the magazine pouch of an M-16. Alcohol, diesel oil and even gasoline were substitutes for lighter fluid when this was not available. Zippos were made of tough stuff! Zippos were also used as IDs and canvasses.



(Continued next page)

Post Exchanges in Vietnam carried a large amount of Zippo lighters, which explains the reason why there was so many Zippos in Vietnam. By this time, Zippo merchandise quickly found its way onto the black market. Soldiers were able to buy brand new Zippos without having to go to the PX store. Vietnamese craftsmen would engrave anything from pictures to phrases onto the Zippo. The most popular motif engraved on a Zippo was the map of Vietnam. The Zippo company has produced more than 325 million lighters since its founding in 1934, so there is plenty to go around. Today the company produces several lighters for all the branches of the services and for all the specialty units such as SEALs and Rangers. Every Navy ship has had its own lighter that includes a picture of the ship, its name, and its number. Zippos commemorate leaders and Battles of WW II, the Wartime surrenders, the Civil War, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, Operation Desert Storm and the more recent Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Editor's Note: Zippo lighters can be ordered at zippo.com, amazon.com, ebay.com, usalighters.com and many other sites.

TRICARE Service Centers Closing 1 APR

Jim Garamone AFPS art13JAN

TRICARE Service Centers are customer service outlets that are operated by TRICARE regional contractors. They are usually located in military hospitals and clinics. TRICARE military health plan service centers will end administrative walk-in services in the United States on 1 APR, Pentagon officials said 13 JAN. Because our overseas areas are unique, walk-in service at TRICARE Service Centers in all overseas areas will continue. While the 189 facilities will stop taking walk-ins, beneficiaries can accomplish any administrative task online or by phone, said Pentagon spokesman Army COL Steve Warren. "The change will not – let me repeat that – will not affect any TRICARE medical benefit or health care service," Warren emphasized. "What it will do is allow the department to save \$250 million over the next five years, allowing TRICARE to invest in more important services." 50% of the visits to the centers are for in- and out-processing and requests to change primary care providers, and the rest involve billing-related questions, officials said. The Defense Department spends roughly \$50 million a year on these services, and this type of customer service can be handled more efficiently by phone or online, they added. TRICARE gets about 38,000 hits per day on its website. Officials have run tests to ensure the website and call center can handle the expected increase in volume. The TRICARE service centers have been around since the 1990s, and contractors staff them, Warren said. "This is being driven by the fact that technology has gotten so much better," he added. Customers who need the type of assistance that was being done in these walk-in service centers can quickly and efficiently receive help online or via phone, he said. Beneficiaries can get more information and sign up for updates at <http://www.tricare.mil/tsc>. The North, South and West regional contractors provide customer service for all plans except TRICARE For Life (TFL) and the US Family Health Plan (USFHP). Contact info for all stateside providers is:

TFL - Wisconsin Physicians Service, <http://www.tricare4u.com>, Tel: 1-866-773-0404, TDD: 1-866-773-0405

USFHP - <http://www.usfhp.com> or 1-800-748-7347

North Region - Includes Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa (Rock Island area), Kentucky (except Fort Campbell), Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri (St. Louis Area), New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

- Health Net Federal Services, LLC
- <http://www.hnfs.com>
- 1-877-TRICARE (1-877-874-2273)

South Region - Includes Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas (excluding the El Paso area) and Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

- Humana Military, a division of Humana Government Business
- <http://www.humana-military.com>
- 1-800-444-5445

West Region - Includes Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa (excluding Rock Island Arsenal area), Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri (except the St. Louis area), Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas (the southwestern corner, including El Paso), Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

- UnitedHealthcare Military & Veterans
- <http://www.uhcmilitarywest.com>
- 1-877-988-9378

DocGPS, a mobile application that helps consumer find providers in their health care network, is now available to people enrolled in UnitedHealthcare's TRICARE West Region health benefit plans. DocGPS will allow beneficiaries traveling within or outside the 21-state TRICARE West Region to locate the nearest in-network, TRICARE civilian health care provider and facility (including urgent care clinics) within a 100-mile radius of their current location, providing flexibility and convenience in locating care while on-the-go. The app uses mobile devices' GPS functionality to help people locate nearby hospitals and health care facilities in their health plan's care provider network. With DocGPS, beneficiaries can quickly and easily search by facility or care provider name, provider specialty, city, state or ZIP code. With a single tap, they can also find the care provider or facility office locations on a map, get detailed directions, and call the facility to schedule an appointment. DocGPS is now compatible with select Android smart phones and iPhones. DocGPS now covers the majority of smart phones currently on the market. TRICARE West Region beneficiaries can visit the Apple AppStore or Google Play Store to download these apps for free from their Android smart phone or iPhone.

ER-101 - Where to Go - What to Expect

<http://www.emergencycareforyou.org/ER101/Issues/Default.aspx> DEC13

An ER visit can be confusing and stressful, no matter what your age. Knowing what to expect and being prepared can help speed up the process and relieve some anxiety. While not all emergency departments use the exact same processes, most have similar approaches to caring for patients.

Where should I go? If you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency, call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number. The emergency medical services staff will know where to transport you. If you decide to drive, it's usually best to go to the nearest emergency department. If more specialized services are needed, emergency staff will know how to stabilize and transport you to a higher level of care.

EMERGENCY CARE OR URGENT CARE? If you think you are having a medical emergency, seek emergency care. You have two options to select from assuming you can provide your own transportation:

- **Urgent care centers** are good options for common medical problems when a physician's office is closed or unable to provide an appointment. They treat minor illnesses and injuries, such as flu, fever, earaches, nausea, rashes, animal and insect bites, minor bone fractures and minor cuts requiring stitching.
- **Emergency departments** are prepared for every kind of medical emergency, including heart attacks, stroke, motor vehicle crashes, psychiatric emergencies and life-threatening conditions. They are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and have special equipment and highly qualified physicians, physician assistants and nurses to respond to every kind of adult and childhood emergency.

TIP: If possible, make sure to tell family members to follow behind the ambulance to the hospital in order to answer necessary questions or provide the necessary documents.

Check In. When you walk into the waiting room, the first thing you will do is check in at the front desk. You will be asked to provide basic information, such as your name, address, date of birth and reason for the visit. If you arrive by ambulance, the basic information (listed above) will be obtained from you or a family member. If you are unconscious and arrive alone by ambulance, medical staff will treat you immediately. They will look for identification and to see if you are wearing any medical jewelry, indicating a medical condition, such as diabetes, a heart condition, or a drug or food allergy. In addition, if you have a cell phone, they will look to see if I.C.E (In Case of Emergency) contact information has been programmed into your contacts list. They also will look for wallet cards containing medical history, such as allergies, medicines you are taking and other information critical to know before treating you.

Triage. After checking in, you will be referred to a triage nurse, who is trained to assess the severity of your condition and determine where (some ERs have different care areas, such as a fast track) and in what priority the emergency physicians will care for you. The triage nurse will do a brief exam and check your vital signs, such as temperature and blood pressure. The most seriously ill and injured patients are always seen first in an emergency room. Patients with less serious conditions will be seen after the critically ill patients are seen first.

Tip: Tell the triage nurse ALL of your symptoms, including if you are in pain. This will help determine how quickly you need to be treated. It's possible that diagnostic tests or minor first-aid procedures, such as applying ice packs, cleaning wounds, will be ordered or done at Triage.

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Waiting Area: If you are asked to wait in the waiting area, that means more critically ill patients are being treated ahead of you. Many emergency departments are crowded, especially with patients who need admission to the hospital.

- IF YOU ARE IN PAIN or your symptoms worsen, alert the triage nurse right away.
- IT IS BEST NOT TO EAT OR DRINK ANYTHING until the physician sees you and tells you that it is okay.
- IN CASE YOU HAVE TO WAIT, bring something to distract yourself, such as reading materials. If you come with a child, bring a favorite toy or book. Don't leave before you are seen by a physician, even if there are other demands on your schedule. If you can, try to avoid bringing a child to the ER (it might be uncomfortable for them) unless they are the patient or you have no other choice.

Tip: If you feel the wait time could be harmful to you, ask to speak to a physician or a patient advocate.

Medical screening exam: Once in the treatment area, you will likely be seen by an emergency physician who will conduct a medical screening exam. The physician will ask you questions and examine you. If needed, he or she will order diagnostic tests, such as blood work, an Electrocardiogram (EKG), X-rays or CT scans, as well as coordinate consultations with other medical specialists. Once all the results are in, your treatment and course of care will be prescribed. Emergency physicians will mobilize the resources of a hospital to diagnose and treat your medical emergency. Tell the physician if you're pregnant and/or suffer from any adverse reactions.

Tip: Many emergency departments are crowded, which means you may be screened and treated in a hallway. This is not ideal, but emergency physicians and nurses will do their best to provide you with privacy and the best quality of care. Crowding is caused when emergency patients are admitted to the hospital, but are held in the emergency department in the ER until inpatient beds are available.

Notes of Interest

- **DoD.** On 6 JAN the Defense Department formally adapted its definitions of "marriage" and "spouse" to include legally married same-sex couples, finalizing a plan it announced in AUG 2013.
- **DoD EHR.** The Department of Defense has decided to keep its current electronic health record system through the end of 2018. The move could have repercussions for a plan to integrate DOD's and the Department of Veterans Affairs' EHR systems.
- **WWII.** Check out the 2 hr 34 min video U Boat War: Documentary on the Submarine Battle of World War II at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJtKcUiWEms>.
- **UCMJ Change.** The 2014 NDAA law now requires the services to have judge advocates serve as Article 32 investigating officers. Previously, the Army was the only service in which judge advocates routinely did not serve as Article 32 investigating officers. Article 32 hearings -- roughly equivalent to grand jury proceedings in the civilian judicial system -- are held to determine if there's enough evidence to warrant a general court-martial -- the most serious type of court-martial used for felony-level offenses such as rape and murder.
- **Congress.** Of 534 current members of Congress, at least 268 had an average net worth of \$1 million or more in 2012, according to disclosures filed last year by all members of Congress and candidates.

Renewable Energy Boom Underway at U.S. Military Bases

SandraErwinNationalDefense art21JAN

The number of renewable energy projects at U.S. military bases rose from 454 in 2010 to 700 in 2012, an increase of 43%, according to a new study by the Pew Charitable Trusts. Approximately 384 megawatts of renewable energy capacity exist in Defense Department installations as of 2013. Of this total, almost 45% comes from a geothermal energy plant at Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, Calif. The Pew study, released 16 JAN, notes that solar energy, which currently provides 125.5 megawatts, is the second-largest component of the military's deployed renewable energy, accounting for 33% of the total.



An Obama administration policy directs the U.S. military to deploy 3 gigawatts — enough to power two to three million homes — of renewable energy, including solar, wind, biomass and geothermal, by 2025. It appears that the military is on a path to meet that goal, new data suggest. Energy consulting firm Navigant projects that 322

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megawatts of additional renewable energy capacity is in development at military bases and will be added over the next 24 months, bringing capacity to 706 megawatts. Of the capacity under development, 64% is solar photovoltaic, 20% is wind energy, and biomass projects will account for 9%. Looking ahead, almost 1.4 gigawatts could come on line over the next two to five years. If all projects in the pipeline come to fruition, the Defense Department's capacity would increase to 2.1 GW, and by the end of 2018 would be on track to meet its goal of deploying 3 gigawatts by 2025. Solar power accounts for 68 percent and biomass for 16% of anticipated renewable energy capacity. Pew analysts said the Pentagon's clean energy initiatives are gathering momentum, due in part to its significant reliance on the private sector and third-party financing. "In the coming months and years, the department's energy consumption will decline, renewable energy capacity will grow, and deployment of microgrids will expand," said the Pew study, titled "Power Surge: How the Department of Defense Leverages Private Resources to Enhance Energy Security and Save Money on U.S. Military Bases."

Honeywell Corp, for instance, has a 20-year energy savings performance contract at Tinker Air Force Base, Okla., that will save \$170 million. SunPower has a 20-year power purchase agreement at Navy Air Weapons Station China Lake, Calif., that will be the Navy's largest solar system. The Marine Corps Logistics Base in Albany, Ga., is saving \$1.3 million annually by using landfill gas and is an Environmental Protection Agency Energy Star Award winner, the study noted. Sun Edison, through a 25-year partnership, is building a 14-megawatt solar array at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Arizona that is estimated to save \$500,000 annually. Tooele Army Depot in Utah installed a 1.5 megawatt wind turbine in 2010 that reportedly saves more than \$200,000 per year in energy costs. Turning over these projects to the private sector guarantees that there will be enough energy cost savings to pay for the project over the term of the contract, the report said. The value of energy saving performance contracts across the armed forces has increased from \$277 million in fiscal year 2010 to over \$411 million in 2012. Overall, third-party financing for energy efficiency projects totaled \$459 million in fiscal year 2012. Power purchase agreements rely on private developers to finance, build, and maintain projects. At least 80% of future Defense Department renewable energy projects will be financed by these agreements, said the Pew study.

Analysts warned, however, that the military's green-energy boom will be modest by industry standards. Developing power purchase agreements is a relatively new endeavor for the military, which also must undertake extensive environmental reviews and work within government requirements, the study said. "In light of the military's detailed processes and necessary due diligence, it can take years to put into place energy saving performance contracts and power purchase agreements." It is likely that the military will meet its goals through medium-sized projects, rather than many small initiatives or a few mega-deals. "While there is potential to develop 500 megawatt projects on military bases in the Southwest, for example, no initiatives have been completed to date," the study said. "In contrast, there are more medium-size, 10-20-megawatt projects that are installed or in development on Army, Navy and Air Force bases."

Navy Arms MH-60S Helicopter with Gatling Gun

KrisOsbornMilitary.com art18DEC

Navy engineers are upgrading the MH-60R helicopters' radar, improving its sonar technologies and adding laser-guided precision rockets, service officials said. The torpedo-armed combat helicopter, in service since 2005, is configured with weapons and sensors designed for anti-surface and anti-submarine warfare, said CAPT James Glass, H-60 Multi-Mission Helicopters Program Manager.



The MH-60R is equipped with two torpedos, the Mk 50 and Mk 54 as well as rockets and small arms. Glass said the MH-60S is slated to fire a M197 20mm "gatling gun" produced by General Dynamics Armament and Technical Products. The three-barrel, 132-pound gun can fire up to 1,500 rounds per minute. The M197 is the same weapon which now arms the Marine Corps' Cobra helicopter. The MH-60R is also getting equipped with precision-guided 2.75in folding fin rockets by MAR 2015, Glass said. The program, called Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System, or APKWS, uses semi-active laser guidance to create precision targeting technology for the Hydra 70, or 2.75in rockets fired from the MH-60R, he added. APKWS has been in existence for several years and has been tested on fixed wing aircraft by the Air Force as well. The Navy's MH-60S model helicopter is slated to receive APKWS by March of 2014. The aircraft's maritime-specific radar system is specifically geared toward detecting submarines and conducting anti-surface warfare missions with a 360-degree field of view, said Glass. Glass said the Navy has a new multi-mode version of the radar system for the MH-60, called the APS-153, which will reach the fleet by January of 2014. The new upgraded radar will have automatic radar periscope detection and discrimination, or ARPDD, he said. "The upgraded multi-mode radar will allow the operator to detect smaller targets much more quickly," Glass added. The radar achieves this imaging capability, in part, through a technique

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Glass described as Inverse Synthetic Aperture Radar or ISAR mode, a technology which helps operators get a rendering, image or representation of a target or item of interest. Inverse Synthetic Aperture Radar uses the motion of the contact to create a picture of the contact, said Capt. A.C. Lynch, H-60 International Programs Manager. "The 360-degree radar is designed to identify surface contacts. There are several modes from long-range search to short range search, ISAR, and ARPDD – the radar periscope detect mode to detect submarines," Glass said. Made by a firm called Telephonics, the APS-153 is able to detect moving ship targets at night and under restricted visibility situations using the hi-resolution radar, according to statements from the company.

Engineers are also improving the reliability of the MH-60R's Airborne Low-Frequency Sonar, or ALFS, a high tech sonar system attached to several thousand feet of cable able to lower it under the water to detect submarines. The Raytheon-built AN/AQS-22 dipping sonar is nine times more effective than previous versions of similar technology. The system has been in service since 2009 and 2010. However, the Navy is now working on technical improvements. "We're going after smaller engineering and technical challenges. If we find a piece of hardware that we can improve that will keep the system more reliable, we are incorporating that in these sonars," Glass said.

The helicopter is engineered with landing gear designed for ship landings. Also, the MH-60R is built with a folding pylon tail and folding rotor blades so as to minimize the amount of space taken up on the flight deck of an aircraft carrier, destroyer, frigate or amphibious assault ship, Glass said. "The whole thing can be folded up and stuffed in a hangar," he said.

Magic Trick

A sailor and a marine go into a pastry shop. The sailor whisks three cookies into his pocket with lightning speed. The baker doesn't notice.

The sailor says to the marine: "You see how clever we are? You marines can never beat that!" The marine says to the sailor: "Watch this, any Marine is smarter than a Dixie Cup, and I'll prove it to ya."

He says to the baker, "Give me a cookie, I'll show you a magic trick!" The baker gives him the cookie, which the marine promptly eats.

Then he says to the baker: "Give me another cookie for my magic trick." The baker is getting suspicious, but he gives it to him. He eats this one too.

Then he says again: "Give me one more cookie..." The baker is getting angry now, but gives him one anyway.

The Marine eats this one too. Now the baker is really mad, and he yells: "And where is your famous magic trick?"

The marine says, "Look in the sailor's pocket!"

New USAF Secretary Sworn In

AaronMehtaMilitary.com art23DEC

The US Air Force officially has a new secretary. Deborah Lee James was sworn in as the 23rd Secretary of the Air Force at a private ceremony on 20 DEC in the Pentagon by Timothy Beyland, Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Air Force. James becomes the second woman to hold the position. "I think our Air Force is in great shape given that we've been living through some difficult times," James said [in an Air Force news release](#). "I'm enormously optimistic about the future of our Air Force. We have nothing but opportunities to face in the upcoming years."



Nominated by President Barack Obama on 1 AUG, James' confirmation was no sure thing. Her nomination was held up by SEN Kelly Ayotte (R-NH), over an Air Force plan to cut the fleet of A-10 platforms. After weeks of stalling, SEN Ayotte lifted her hold, paving the way for James' [confirmation](#) with a vote of 79 to 6. The new secretary has prior government experience, having served as Assistant Defense Secretary for Reserve Affairs from 1993 - 1998. Prior to her confirmation, she served as President of the Technology and Engineering sector at Science Applications International Corp. With James' confirmation, Acting Secretary Eric Fanning returns to his confirmed role as Service Undersecretary. Fanning had been filling the Secretary role since the 22nd Air Force Secretary, Michael Donley, left his post in JUN. Having both James and Fanning in place should alleviate pressure on the Air Force, which has the majority of its civilian leadership positions vacant. As of 1 JAN, both Daniel Ginsberg, Assistant Secretary for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, and General Counsel Charles Blanchard

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will have departed the Pentagon. Jamie Morin, the Assistant Secretary for Financial Management and Comptroller, is still in place, but his nomination to head up the Pentagon's Office of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation could be moved on at any time, leaving another potential vacancy. The slot of Assistant Secretary for Installations, Environment and Logistics remains open without a nomination from Obama. The role of Assistant Secretary for Acquisition has been empty since early 2012, although the Deputy, William LaPlante, was recently nominated to fill the role.

Social Security Update for 2014

TomMorgeneasCreators.com artJAN14

It has been my custom for most of the past 16 years to write a year-end column that summarizes the Social Security changes and updates scheduled to take place the following year. Almost all Social Security beneficiaries are familiar with the most popular and publicized upcoming change: The increase in monthly benefit checks for 2014 due to the automated cost-of-living adjustment. In fact, Social Security recipients have probably already received a notice from the Social Security Administration telling them of the expected increase.

All Social Security checks are going up 1.5% in 2014. The COLA is based on something called the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers. This is the official measuring stick SSA has used to determine COLAs for the past 40 years. If you want to learn more about this measure, check out the website of the folks who maintain it: the Bureau of Labor Statistics. You'll find them at www.bls.gov. I always dread mentioning COLAs in this column because every single time I do, I am flooded with emails from readers complaining that the increase is not enough. (Curiously, not once in 16 years has anyone ever written to me to say that their COLA increase was too high!) Yet here's the rub: Many economists and social planners believe Social Security COLAs are too generous. (I've explained why in past columns, but don't have the space to get into that argument today.) That's why most discussions of long-range reforms for Social Security include proposals to reduce cost of living increases. Due to these increases, the average monthly retirement check will be \$1,294 in 2014, a \$19 increase from the 2013 level. The maximum Social Security check for a worker retiring at age 66 next year will be \$2,642, compared to \$2,533 in 2013. And please note that is the maximum for someone turning 66 next year. That does not mean it is the maximum Social Security payment anyone can receive. There are millions of Social Security beneficiaries who get much more than that, primarily because they work well past age 66. Another measuring stick called the national wage index is used to set increases to other provisions of the law that impact Social Security beneficiaries and taxpayers. Specifically, this includes increases in the amount of wages or self-employment income subject to Social Security tax, the amount of income needed to earn a quarter of coverage and the Social Security earnings penalty limits. The Social Security taxable earnings base will go up from \$113,700 this year to \$117,000 in 2014.

In other words, people who earn more than \$117,000 next year will no longer have Social Security payroll taxes deducted from their paychecks once they hit that threshold. This has always been a very controversial provision of the law. (Donald Trump pays the same amount of Social Security tax as his plumber!) I will bet a year's worth of my pension checks that any eventual Social Security reform package will include a big increase in that wage base. I don't think it will be eliminated. But it will increase rather sharply.

Most people need 40 Social Security work credits (sometimes called quarters of coverage) to be eligible for monthly benefit checks from the system. In 2013, people who were working earned one credit for each \$1,160 in Social Security taxable income. But no one earns more than four credits per year. In other words, once you made \$4,640, your Social Security record has been credited with the maximum four credits or quarters of coverage. Next year, the one credit limit goes up to \$1,200, meaning you will have to earn \$4,800 in 2014 before you get the maximum four credits assigned to your Social Security account. People under age 66 who get Social Security retirement or survivor's benefits but who are still working are subject to limits in the amount of money they can earn and still receive all their Social Security checks. That limit was \$15,120 this year and will be \$15,480 in 2014. For every two dollars a person earns over those limits, one dollar is withheld from his or her monthly benefits. There is a higher earnings threshold in the year a person turns 66 that applies from the beginning of the year until the month the person turns 66. (The income penalty goes away once a person reaches that full retirement age.) That threshold goes up from \$40,080 in 2013 to \$41,400 next year.

A couple of other Social Security provisions are also impacted by inflationary increases. For example, people getting disability benefits who try to work can generally continue getting those benefits as long as they are not working at a substantial level. In 2013, the law defined substantial work as any job paying \$1,040 or more per month. Next year, that substantial earnings level increases to \$1,070 monthly. Finally, the Supplemental Security Income basic federal payment level for one person goes up from \$710 this year to \$721 in 2014. SSI is a federal welfare program administered by SSA, but it is NOT a Social Security benefit.

Think Tank: Tighter Defense Budgets Could Drive Robotic Warfare Shift

MarcusWeisgerberDefenseNews art22JAN

Rapidly rising personnel costs combined with a decline in defense spending could drive the Pentagon to expand its robotic arsenal, replacing humans with autonomous systems, such as the Modular Advanced Armed Robotic System (on right), a prominent think tank says.



The Center for a New American Security (CNAS) report: [“20YY: Preparing for War in the Robotic Age”](#), written by CEO Robert Work and Shawn Brimley, executive vice president and director of studies, says the increased cost of manned combat systems could lead to this shift. “One potential answer to this daunting force design challenge is increased use of unmanned systems,” the report, which was released Wednesday, states. The US has vastly expanded its unmanned aircraft arsenal over the past decade, fielding thousands of unmanned aircraft, primarily for reconnaissance gathering in Afghanistan and Iraq. The vast majority of the systems were designed to operate in areas with little to no threat of being shot down.

But battlefields of the future are expected to include more hostile threats to these types of systems, including surface-to-air missiles and advanced electronic jamming. “[T]hese largely remotely piloted air and ground vehicles will soon be replaced by increasingly autonomous systems in all physical operating domains (air, sea, undersea, land and space) and across the full range of military operations,” the report states. “The United States will be driven to these systems out of operational necessity and also because the costs of personnel and the development of traditional crewed combat platforms are increasing at an unsustainable pace.” The US military is preparing to shrink in the coming years, with cuts of more than 100,000 being considered in the Army alone. Unlike in the past when advanced technologies, such as GPS, satellites, missiles, computer networks and stealth were created “largely from government-directed national security research and development strategies,” technologies that could be used in robotic warfare are largely being developed in the commercial sector, the CNAS report states.

“All of these technologies — largely evolving in the thriving commercial computing and robotics sectors — could be exploited to build increasingly sophisticated and capable unmanned and autonomous military systems,” the report states. Two Army generals in recent weeks have talked about [replacing soldiers with robots](#). “A warfare regime based on unmanned and autonomous systems has the potential to change our basic core concepts of defense strategy, including deterrence, reassurance, dissuasion and compellence,” the report states.

Budget Turbulence Hits Military Copters

JulianEBarnesWSJ art22JAN

A proposal to reorganize and shrink the U.S. military's helicopter fleet has touched off a fight between the Army and the National Guard, in a new outbreak of tensions brought on by budget cuts. Facing austerity measures that would drastically reduce the size of its force, the active-duty Army developed a proposal to reorganize its helicopter fleet, which officials say would save more than \$1 billion a year. But the National Guard argues that such stark changes would make the reserve force less capable of stepping in to fulfill the duties of the active-duty force.

The Army proposed that the National Guard be given 111 upgraded UH-60L Black Hawk helicopters in return for its fleet of 72 Apaches, according to Army officials. The Army also would take 48 Apaches from the Army Reserve, a separate force. In all, the swap would be part of a broader plan to eliminate 900 older aircraft. To the active-duty Army, the move makes sense. Apache helicopters, which are heavily armed but can only carry two pilots, are less useful to state governors than Black Hawks, transport and utility helicopters. “This is a bold initiative that will help us be a viable aviation force,” GEN John Campbell, the vice chief of staff of the Army, said. “That is the path we want to take.”

But the National Guard's chief and its state units have said they want to keep their Apaches. In a speech earlier this month, GEN Frank Grass, head of the National Guard, said his force needs the same capabilities as the Army and Air Force. “However the Army looks or however the Air Force looks, we've got to be interchangeable,” he said. Army officials said they have included National Guard aviation experts throughout their planning process, yet the emerging fight shows the uphill battle the military faces balancing belt-tightening with sharp budget controls imposed by Congress. In an earlier flap, Air Force plans in 2012 to cut Air National Guard and Reserve positions and consolidate planes was blocked by Congress after lawmakers became convinced the changes would hurt home-state units.

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The congressional spending bill passed this month blunted across-the-board spending cuts, but the half-trillion-dollar Pentagon budget still faces \$31 billion in reductions this year and larger cutbacks in future years. As a result, the Army will reduce its ranks to 490,000 soldiers next year from 529,000 today. Defense officials say further cuts—to 450,000 or fewer—are likely. Army officials said this means the service must cut in other areas, including its helicopter fleet. "We cannot keep the aviation force we have," said GEN Campbell. "We cannot afford it." The Army plan would retire its scout class of helicopters, the OH-58D Kiowa Warrior and replace them with AH-64 Apache attack helicopters. The Kiowa Warrior is an overhauled Vietnam-era aircraft. Previous efforts to develop new scout helicopters were shelved, and now the military has no money for a new airframe. The plan would pair upgraded Apaches with unmanned drone aircraft, including the MQ-1C Gray Eagle, an updated version of the Predator drone, providing Army units with surveillance aircraft that can linger for long periods over the battlefield. Active-duty Army officials said that in an age of sharp cutbacks, the military's basic organization must be reworked. But some defense analysts question whether the Army is too focused on protecting the size of the active-duty ground force.

Todd Harrison, a defense expert at the nonpartisan Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, said the Army should move assets to the Guard and Reserve to save money. "Instead of taking things out of the reserve component and putting it in the active, you might do the opposite," he said. "If your future strategy isn't hinged on large ground wars, you don't need as large a ground force." The budget for new Army equipment is being cut by \$15 billion over the next five years, and maintenance funds are falling. Without aviation-fleet cuts, Army officials said they would be left with lots of helicopters but not enough funds to maintain them or train pilots. Army officials originally considered an across-the-board cut to both active-duty and National Guard aviation units.

WW II Posters



Veteran Groups Vow to Fight Commissary Cuts

AmyBushatzMilitary.com art24JAN

Military family and benefits advocates said they plan to fight a new Pentagon proposal to gut the commissary program by slashing its funding. The budget proposal would reduce the Defense Commissary Agency's annual budget from \$1.4 billion annually to \$400 million by 2017, forcing the agency to make major changes -- including possible widespread store closures, sources told Military.com. The plan will potentially be included in the Defense Department's 2015 budget request expected to be released next month. "We're looking at them chipping away at what is essentially the bedrock of the pay and benefit compensation package," said **Karen Golden**, a deputy director of government relations for MOAA. "Definitely, we will be fighting this."

DeCA operates 245 stores worldwide, including 67 stores overseas and 24 in rural stateside locations. A commissary closure prospective plan ordered by DoD late last year would look at closing 154 non-rural stateside stores. DeCA officials declined to comment for this story. When lead Pentagon spokesman RADM John Kirby was asked about the commissary budget cuts, he said it would be too early to comment on the 2015 budget proposal and reiterated that all options remain on the table. "No commissaries have been closed and I'm not going to get into provisions that may or may not be in the fiscal 2015 budget submission, which has clearly not been submitted yet, but Defense Secretary Hagel has been pretty clear that he doesn't want to close doors," Kirby said on 23 JAN. "We have to be looking at all manner of pay and benefits as we move forward, and I wouldn't speculate with the commissary specifically." The proposed commissary cut comes as the latest potential funding

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blow to military pay and benefits. As part of a larger budget deal late last year, lawmakers approved a plan to cut the annual cost of living allowance raise for military pensions by 1 percent annually -- a move critics said would result in the loss of thousands of dollars for military retirees. The reduction will save \$6 billion over 10 years. A recent report from the Congressional Budget Office also suggested barring working-age military retirees from the TRICARE Prime health care system. Doing so would save an estimated \$90 billion over 10 years. Assuming the commissary program remains funded at \$400 million from 2017 forward, slashing DeCA's budget would save the Defense Department \$10 billion over 10 years.

Defense analysts in Washington, D.C., said the military is in a position where it has no choice but to trim the costs associated with personnel. The cost to services to pay for an individual Service member in its end strength has gone up by 60% when accounting for inflation since 2001, said Todd Harrison, a senior fellow at the Center of Strategic and Budgetary Assessments. Joyce Raezer, president of the National Military Family Association, which lobbies on behalf of military families, said closing the commissaries is a bigger blow to Service members than the retiree COLA cut because it impacts everyone, not just those who plan to make the military their career. "From the time they enter the military until they're buried at Arlington cemetery, it's a lot of dollars lost and it's dollars lost every year," she said. DeCA officials estimate that a family of four annually saves \$4,400 by shopping at the commissary. For every taxpayer dollar spent on the commissary system, Service members get \$2 of savings, according to official surveys. Raezer said the other cuts, including the retirement COLA reduction and the 1% annual military pay raise for 2014, make the commissaries even more necessary. "Do you want low morale? Do you want to put more of your junior families in a financial bind? Why do we want to take away something that's valued in a bigger way than the dollars you're putting into it?" Raezer said. Harrison said the services don't have any other choice than to target the benefits packages as personnel costs continue to rise. (See chart on page 11) He said the military has to choose between the benefits the Service members most value. It's disputed whether the commissary falls into that category. A recent survey by the CSBA found that officers value the commissary more than enlisted Service members.

Harrison said he expected the Veteran service organizations to lobby against any cuts to benefits to include the commissary. However, he said those lobbying efforts might come at the expense of future troops. "Even if DoD was able to stay at its current budget, it can't afford as large a force as it once had. DoD can then only afford a fraction of the force it had. If they're not addressed, it's going to cause the end strength to shrink," Harrison said. Golden said what is particularly worrisome about the new commissary cut proposal is the way in which the Pentagon planned it. Rather than wait for the congressionally mandated Military Compensation Reform and Modernization Committee to present its findings in May, or a DoD-ordered study from DeCA on closing the commissaries, officials are slipping major benefits cuts in now. "We need to let the systems in place work to evaluate the programs," Golden said. "We haven't gotten those, yet they're putting these proposals out there."

A group of military spouses known as the Keep Your Promise Alliance who have made a vocal and public opposition to the retirement COLA cuts said the commissary budget cut plan represents just another situation in which the needs and wishes of military families are being ignored. "The Alliance was created because military families don't feel like they have a voice," said Lori Volkman, a Navy Reserve spouse and spokesperson for the group. "When decisions about them are made without their input, it only reinforces that perception. The commissary situation is just another example."

Free/Discounted Tax Preparation for Military

HeatherSweeneyMilitary.com

Tax season is here again. And while filing for tax returns can be tricky for the average family, it can get even more complicated for military families. Thankfully, military personnel and their families have access to a variety of tax preparation and filing services for free. Whether you choose to file taxes yourself online or you prefer some outside assistance from a trained professional, there are a variety of free options to choose from.



Military Installation Tax Centers –

Most large military installations worldwide offer Service members and their families free income tax filing assistance through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program which is sponsored by the IRS. VITA sites have volunteers who are trained by the IRS to provide assistance with some of the more complicated military-specific tax issues, such as combat zone tax benefits. [Click here](#) to contact your local installation for more information about location of tax centers, hours of operation, scheduling appointments, and necessary documentation.

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Off-Base Services - Liberty Tax Service is offering Military.com members a new customer discount of \$35 off income tax preparation. [Click here](#) to print out the coupon and take it to participating Liberty offices with a valid military ID.

Online Tax Preparation

[Military OneSource](#) provides free access to the H&R Block at Home online tax filing service for military families. This service allows military members to complete and electronically file federal and up to 3 state tax returns. This is available for active duty Service members, National Guard and Reserve, and spouses. You must have a Military OneSource account.

[IRS Free File](#) is a program available to taxpayers whose Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) is \$57,000 or less. This program helps you find a Free File company that's best for you out of the numerous companies that participate and offers fillable forms when preparing your own tax returns.

[TaxSlayer](#) has a free military edition for active duty Service members to prepare federal and state returns online.

[TurboTax](#) offers discounts on its software that's customized for active duty military and reservists. Service members with pay grades of E1-E5 can get the software for free, while pay grades of E6 through all officer pay grades can get the software at a discounted price.

[Taxbrain](#) offers a 20% military discount when filing your tax return. Be aware the package price varies depending on answers to their questionnaire.

Necessary Documents

Filing your taxes requires a lot of documents and personal information so make sure to collect everything you'll need before you get started. The following is a list of some of those necessary records, but if you're getting outside help, it's best to call ahead to make sure you're not forgetting anything.

- Photo ID/Military ID
- Social security cards for you and each family member claimed on the return
- Wage and earning statement(s), such as Forms W-2, W-2G, and 1099-R
- Child care costs
- Investment income forms
- Receipts for charitable donations
- Receipts for deductible expenses
- Your bank routing numbers and account numbers for direct deposit
- Last year's returns

W-2 forms are usually available for military members by the end of JAN and can be downloaded from [MyPay](#) website.

[Minn. National Guard Continues Planning for Future Readiness Center in Stillwater](#) CassieHartMNNGPRESSROOM 22JAN



The Minnesota National Guard's future armory in Stillwater is continuing its mission to go beyond military duty. Congress approved funding for the [Readiness Center](#) off Highway 12 last week. The \$20-million project will provide some much-needed space for the National Guard. Right now, the Guard only has about half of the space it needs statewide. The City of Stillwater has big plans for the armory too. "A lot of space can be shared with the fire department, fitness rooms, the drill floor itself. We have classrooms they plan on using a lot," said COL Larry Herke of the National Guard. Three years ago the City of Stillwater bought 17 acres of foreclosed property for \$800,000 and they'll donate it to the National Guard. But Mayor Ken Harycki said the deal is a win for his city. The armory is expected to bring in 30 to 50 new jobs to the east metro. It is expected to be completed by late 2015 or early 2016.

[Mall of America Becomes 35th Minnesota Yellow Ribbon Company](#)

MNNGPRESSROOM

America's largest mall became Minnesota's 35th [Yellow Ribbon Company](#) on 17 JAN at a proclamation ceremony. The men and women of the Minnesota National Guard, other U.S. Forces, and their families, have earned our admiration and appreciation. They have also earned our continuing assistance," said Governor Dayton. "I thank Mall of America for joining over 250 Yellow Ribbon cities, counties, and businesses, which have committed to support our Minnesota heroes when they return home." "Yellow Ribbon Networks are extremely important and vital in connecting returning service members with

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employers and ensuring that our service members and their families realize that the leaders of the Minnesota National Guard and their community care for their well-being and are prepared to assist them," said Army MG Richard C. Nash, Minnesota National Guard Adjutant General.

Boeing, General Dynamics Reach \$400M Years-Old A-12 Settlement with Navy AndreaShalal-EsaReuters art23JAN

Boeing Co. and General Dynamics Corp., on 23 JAN, each agreed to give the U.S. Navy \$200 million in aircraft and services to settle an epic, 23-year legal dispute over cancellation of the \$4.8 billion A-12 stealth aircraft in 1991. The agreement resolves the last of series of legal cases spawned in 1991 when then-Defense Secretary Dick Cheney canceled the A-12 Avenger II program after it ran into major schedule delays and cost overruns in the 1980s.



At the time, the government demanded the companies pay back \$1.3 billion they had already received for work on the next-generation, carrier-based tactical airplane. The Justice Department announced the agreement, which was authorized as part of the 2014 defense authorization bill, noting that the U.S. government would not pay any money in connection with the companies' claims. The companies had sued the U.S. government in federal claims court to retain the money they had received, plus more than \$1 billion in additional amounts, plus interest. They argued that the government had wrongfully terminated the contract. "It's long been time to move on," said Virginia-based defense consultant Loren Thompson, noting that the dispute centered on the way that Cheney chose to terminate the program, not the actual cancellation. "What this illustrates is how one careless decision by a senior government official can cost taxpayers a huge amount of money."

The case dragged on for over two decades, spanning five trials and three appeals, including one to the U.S. Supreme Court, which in 2011 threw out a ruling that could have forced the companies to repay \$3 billion in contract fees and interest. It said the decision would make neither side happy. Navy Secretary Ray Mabus welcomed the agreement, under which the Navy will receive three EA-18G electronic attack aircraft from Boeing, and a \$200 million credit from General Dynamics toward its work on a new DDG-1000 destroyer.

Why Associations Matter LTCOLShaneOstrom,USAF(Ret)

I don't intend to be a shameless shill in this post. I actually intend to explain monetary issues behind Service and Veteran benefits that are of primary interest to you. Unfortunately, to provide the later I'll risk coming across as the former. I hear it all the time as I travel and meet people; "What good are you associations and why would I ever want to join?" My answer to their question provides a nice summary of the evolution of some of our military and Veteran benefits from a financial point of view. Here's my answer for the benefit of those who ask the above question and for those of you who also get asked this question and want to compare answers. First off, membership matters. Membership means power on Capitol Hill. Having 37 million members is why AARP gets attention. Here is a selection of benefits won through lobbying efforts since 2001 and the resulting financial impacts. This is why membership matters:

- **Tricare for Life (TFL).**
Tricare now acts as our Medicare supplement. Most beneficiaries rarely see a doctor's bill due to the Medicare-Tricare partnership. Compared to before TFL, substantial money is being saved on medical bills and by not having to buy a Medicare Supplement plan. Combined with the Tricare pharmacy plan, thousands of dollars are saved by retired veterans' families.
- **Post 9-11 GI Bill.**
For currently serving members, this education program can be transferred to family members. This program pays for tuition, fees, books and housing. This benefit is worth the value of a college degree and more.
- **Currently serving pay increases.**
We estimate currently serving members get 14% more income now versus what they would have received with no lobbying efforts. Higher currently serving income translates to greater retirement pay later.
- **Concurrent Receipt; Concurrent Retirement and Disability Pay (CRDP) and Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC).**
These programs restore earned Service retired pay due to years of service that used to be denied to retirees because they accepted VA compensation for disabilities. In other words, it replaces some or all of what the VA Waiver takes away.
- **Tricare Prime, Standard and TFL fee increases—or I should say Lack of fee increases.**
We aren't paying substantially higher fees for TRICARE Prime, Standard and TFL that the DOD would have us pay.

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- **Survivor Benefit Program.** Survivors are no longer denied benefits due to Social Security retirement eligibility. Survivors with the VA's Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) also get the Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA).

This is a short list of successes for us. The actual list of military and veteran issues is much greater. The issues related to the currently serving are of extra significance to us. That is because, for one thing, they have been bearing the brunt of the war efforts for the last dozen years. Next is because the senior officials in the DOD don't speak for the troops. The leaders look to find budget cuts by gutting the members' benefits rather than by finding efficiencies and implementing the reforms necessary within their bloated, ineffective bureaucracies. It's easier playing politics and taking the path of least resistance. After all, the troops won't (can't) disagree. Generally, associations say what the members in uniform can't say. We fight for people in uniform and their families. Many Service members won't join associations partly because of a lack of awareness in what we have accomplished for them or because of misguided loyalty to their leadership on issues regarding their benefits. This isn't throwing stones at anyone; it's just what it is. And we understand because we've walked in their shoes—their focus is their mission and organization, as it should be. We blame ourselves for not getting the real message out better.

The irony is that so many of the Service members think their chain of command is fighting for them. Yet the Service leadership has sought and won reduced pay raises, higher health care fees, reduced cost of living increases in retired pay, and they want to radically overhaul the retirement system to a TSP-based program and a greatly reduced pension benefit that won't be collected until old age. All in the name of a budget that they say is out of control because the troops want too much and cost too much. (See chart on page 11) Don't believe it. It's all "Tell me what you want to accomplish and I'll get you the data to back it up" wool over your eyes. And when I use the term "association", I'm not talking all Service/Veteran associations. It's buyer beware out there. Some are propping up the DOD establishment, so shop around wisely. How many more issues could be fixed if we had more solidarity? How much more damage could be prevented? If you wore a uniform, it's our duty as former leaders to speak up for those who can't speak.

Add Your Voice: Will you answer the call to leadership once again? Help MOAA stand up for those in uniform and strengthen our One Powerful Voice® on Capitol Hill! <http://www.moaa.org/>. (Use the form below to renew your membership, make a contribution or to join MOAA Basic and our Chapter.)

LTCOL Shane Ostrum, USAF (Ret) CFP, is in MOAA's Benefits Information and Financial Education Dept.

Membership Application/Renewal/Address Change - Minnesota Chapter - Military Officers Association of America

Mail this completed chapter application with a check to MCMOAA, PO Box 11466, St. Paul, MN 55111-0488

Regular Members: \$15 per year ~ **Associate Members: \$5 per year** (Associate Members are spouses or survivors of Eligible Members)

Name: _____ Rank: _____
(Print) First M.I. Last

Spouse: _____ E-mail Address: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

State: _____ Zip _____ - _____ Home Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Birthdate:((MM/DD/YEAR) _____ MOAA Member: Yes No

STATUS: Active Duty _____ Nat'l Guard _____ Reserve _____ Retired _____ Regular _____
 Former Officer _____ Spouse of an Eligible Officer _____ Surviving Spouse of an Eligible Officer _____

SERVICE: Army _____ Navy _____ Air Force _____ Marine Corps _____ Coast Guard _____ NOAA _____

USPHS _____ SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

For Official Use: Date Received: _____ Member No.: _____