



The Sunflower Leaflet

Serving the Military Community of Johnson and Wyandotte Counties of Kansas Oct 2011

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CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

- o Mark your calendar for **Tuesday, Oct 18th**. Our Dinner - Meeting for the month will be held at the **Embassy Suites**, same time for the social (6:00 PM) with dinner starting at 06:30 PM.
- o This is an especially important chapter meeting. The board is proposing Chapter bylaw amendments to reflect our election of officers in April and installation in May.
- o Our quest speaker is Roy Shenkel who enlisted in the US Army Air Corps when I was 19 years old, in October of 1942. At the time he was working in the Sunflower Ordnance Plant. Roy became a right waist gunner on a B-17 Flying Fortress bomber and spent his 20th birthday in a Prisoner of War camp. He was liberated by Russian forces in Barth, Germany.
- o An entertaining night of fellowship is planned, so make your reservations early by email or a message on my cell phone (913-669-1699). The charge for the meal and gratuity remains at \$12.00 with a pay as you go bar.

Thanks and looking forward to seeing you on the 18th.

TREASURER/SECRETARY

Chapter funds remain at \$5,628.00 as of 30 September 2011.

There are 2 Chapter board vacancies. This is a great opportunity to get involved, so give us a call.

SUNFLOWER CHAPTER WEBSITE

The Sunflower Chapter's website is now operational. Karen McNellis volunteered to operate and update website information. The site was designed and developed by two Olathe Northwest High School seniors, (Lesley Poulter and Keegan McElroy). These inspiring young women took on the project as a computer class assignment for the Chapter. The site's internet address is: <http://www.sunflowermoaa.org/>



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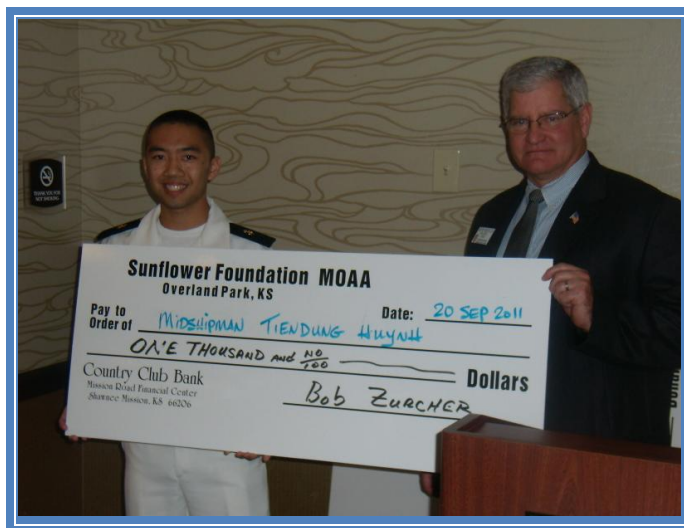
KU ROTC AWARDS PRESENTED ON SEPTEMBER 20, 2011

Three scholarships, worth \$1,000.00 each, were presented to KU ROTC winners at the Sunflower Chapter's September 20th scholarship dinner. Kevin McNellis made the presentations on behalf of the Chapter's Sunflower Foundation. KU ROTC representatives attending were from the US Army, CPT Erick Young; for the US Air Force, Lt Col Montaque Samuel; and LT Janet Broome for the US Navy. A surprise visitor was Mrs. Sonia Post who flew in from Virginia to celebrate with her daughter, Cadet Cassandra Post.

US Army ROTC
Cadet Garret Moe.



US Navy ROTC Midshipman
Tiendung (Tito) Huynh

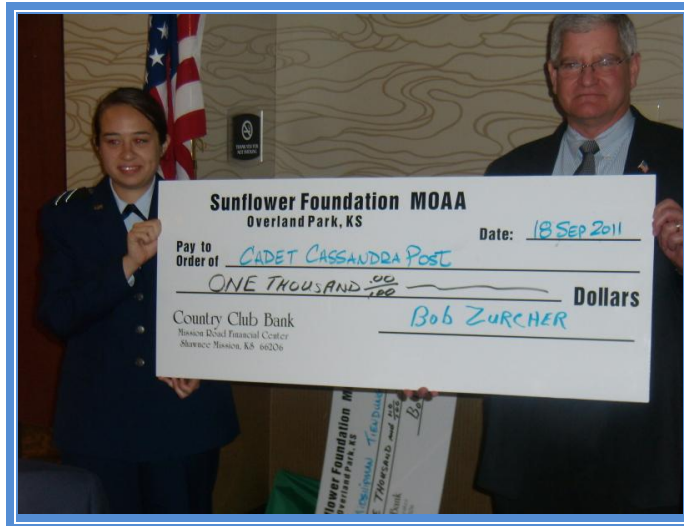




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US Air Force ROTC
Cadet Cassandra Post



HELP US LEARN...GIVE US HOPE

The Sunflower Chapter sent \$60.00 to Gary LaGrange. This amount was collected at the September 20th dinner from the 50/50 collection. He is still collecting and sending used school books, paper, pens, pencils, etc. to assist in reestablishing libraries for schools at all levels in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Africa. If you have any of these items contact Pat Murphy.

METCALF AVENUE OF FLAGS

One last time for this year the chapter will work with the Overland Park Host Lions Club and display the nation's Stars and Stripes flag along Metcalf Ave. The date is November 11th, Veterans Day. We meet at NewComer's Funeral Home, (Metcalf & 82 Street) at 0600 to raise the flags and again at 1600 to retire the colors. Harry Malnicof will be leading this community activity. Please contact Harry for more information or to volunteer at harlo@everestkc.net or 913-649-7917.

MILITARY RETIREE PAY DATES TO CHANGE

CLEVELAND (September 2, 2011) – Paydays for military retirees and those who receive portions of retired pay are changing for September and December, as the Defense Finance and Accounting Service changes its pay schedule to comply with the 2011 National Defense Authorization Act.

The 2011 NDAA requires military retiree pay to be processed on the first day of the month. When that day falls on a weekend or national holiday, the pay date is moved to the previous business day.



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This year payments normally scheduled for Oct. 3, 2011 will be issued on Sept. 30, 2011 and payments normally scheduled for Jan. 3, 2012, will be issued on Dec. 30, 2011. For the calendar year 2011, this means military retirees will receive 13 rather than the normal 12 payments.

The 13th payday on December 30 falls within the 2011 tax year, which could affect the tax liability of some retirees and those who receive portions of their retired pay. Customers should speak with a tax advisor, the Internal Revenue Service or their state tax authority to determine if their tax withholding will satisfy federal and state income taxes when they file returns next year. DFAS cannot provide tax advice. For tax year 2012 and beyond, retirees will receive their normal 12 payments. This change affects regular retired pay, Concurrent Retirement and Disability Pay and Combat Related Special Compensation. The new rule also applies to retiree allotments, garnishments and court-ordered former spouse and child support payments. It does not affect annuity payments.

If retirees need to make changes to their federal or state tax withholding, the quickest and most secure way to do so is through **myPay**. Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, **myPay** enables eligible users around the world to make routine changes to their pay information, including tax withholding, that become effective within days.

Customers who cannot access **myPay** can change federal withholding amounts by completing a new IRS Form W-4 or W-4P, or change state withholding amounts using a DD 2866.

These forms can be found on the DFAS website (www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/forms.html) and should be mailed or faxed to the below address once completed:

Defense Finance and Accounting Service
U.S. Military Retired Pay
P.O. Box 7130
London, KY 40742-7130
Fax: 800-469-6559

PANETTA SAYS HE WILL SEEK TO PROTECT BENEFITS

On 19 August, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta sought to reassure currently serving troops that their benefits will not be slashed despite the widespread budget-cutting talks in Washington saying they would grandfather today's retirement pensions for current troops, even if the budget possibly forces changes for future recruits. Panetta claimed he had not been briefed on a recent draft recommendation from the Defense Business Board that urged the Pentagon to do away with the 20-year pension system in favor of corporate-style 401(k) savings accounts. The board's plan would alter the military retirement system for those troops serving today who have not reached the 20-year mark.

However, on health care benefits, Panetta said he supports the efforts to reform the TRICARE health system, which included raising some TRICARE fees on working-age retirees. AUSA and other Military Coalition members have written letters to Congress saying that retirement system changes could have wide spread detrimental impact. To read this article in its full, please go to: <http://www.armytimes.com/news/2011/08/military-leon-panetta-interview->



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[benefits-iraq-deployments-081911w/](#)

TRICARE EXPANDS RETAIL PHARMACY VACCINE PROGRAM

TRICARE is expanding the number of preventive vaccines covered at retail network pharmacies. TRICARE covers age-appropriate vaccines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, including the shingles vaccine, Zostavax. Since late 2009, TRICARE has covered seasonal flu, H1N1 flu and pneumococcal vaccines at retail pharmacies with nearly 300,000 vaccines administered to date. TRICARE officials strongly recommend that beneficiaries check ahead before making a trip to their pharmacy to make sure it's part of the TRICARE network and is authorized to offer the vaccines. The expanded program covers immunizations for measles, mumps, shingles and many other preventable diseases. To see the expanded list of vaccines available from authorized TRICARE retail pharmacies, please visit <http://www.tricare.mil/vaccines>.

WHITE HOUSE PROPOSED MILITARY HEALTHCARE CUTS

What exactly are the specifics of the President's plan to cut military health benefits?

TRICARE For Life:

- (a) Establish an annual enrollment fee of \$200 per person, starting in FY2013
- (b) Authorize the Secretary of Defense to increase that fee in subsequent years based on growth in health costs

TRICARE Pharmacy copays:

- (a) Switch retail copays from a flat dollar amount to a percentage of DoD costs. For FY13, that would be 10% of cost for generics and 15% of cost for brand names. The White House plan envisions further increases in subsequent years to 20% of cost for generics and 30% for brand names.
- (b) Leave generics at zero copay in the mail-order system, but increase the mail-order copay for brand names to \$20 and non-formulary medications to \$35 for FY13. The White House plan envisions increasing both of those to \$40 in subsequent years.

MOAA strongly objects to these proposals.

You can help by sending your legislators this [MOAA-suggested message](#).

MOAA MEMBERS SPEAK OUT ON RETIREMENT REFORM

MOAA relies on members to help get our message through to Congress and the administration using grassroots advocacy. In recent months MOAA members have more than lived up to that roll generating over a quarter of a million messages to Capitol Hill, the Pentagon, and the White House.



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This week, the Army Times [printed a letter to the editor](#) (second from the top) from MOAA President VADM Norb Ryan blasting proposals to severely cut retirement benefits for future service members. He reminded readers of how less drastic changes to the military retirement system in the 1980s and 90s proved devastating to retention and readiness.

Our members have echoed this sentiment on military retirement by generating more than 200,000 messages to their elected officials on this issue alone in the past two months. Members sent an additional 50,000 messages aimed at protecting against COLA and commissary cuts in the impending budget crunch.

It's great to see so many MOAA members pitching in to help preserve crucial military benefits that are essential to offset the challenges and sacrifice inherent in a military career, but we need to keep it up.

Please continue to send your elected officials [MOAA-suggested messages](#) reminding them of the importance of military retirement and other military-unique benefits, and ask your friends to do the same. We're entering an era of potentially massive budget cuts and we'll need every member to share their voice to protect earned benefits and preserve the all volunteer force.

PRESIDENT VADM NORB RYAN'S LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Your editorial did not mention that military compensation costs rose over the last decade because America spent the previous two decades whacking military pay, retirement and health care. When those cuts undermined retention and readiness in the '90s, Congress had to fix them.

Most Americans understand that it takes powerful incentives to induce top people to serve decades under conditions like those of the last 10 years. That great military benefit deal is available to any who meet the entry standards and pay the necessary upfront premium of decades of service and sacrifice. Few are willing.

You would cut benefits for those who serve and sacrifice the longest to pay more to those who leave early, and do not mention the retention-killing history of past, less severe cuts.

(Vice Adm., Ret.) NORB RYAN
President and Chief Executive
Military Officers Association of America

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MOAA ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS

Here are answers to several of the most common questions asked of MOAA's Member Service Center this week.

Question. I haven't seen any alerts recently about the status of efforts to prevent a 30% cut in Medicare and TRICARE payments from happening on January 1, 2012. Has that fallen off the radar screen?

Answer. Stopping that cut from happening remains a top MOAA priority, and we have an active alert on that topic you can use to send your legislators a [MOAA-suggested message](#). The Super Committee and potential threats to the military retirement and healthcare systems have been in the news, so we've focused on those for the last few weeks.

But the Medicare/TRICARE payment cut is another huge issue Congress must deal with in the next few months, and we must keep pressing legislators on that score too.

Question. What's the status of concurrent receipt and SBP/DIC offset repeal legislation?

Answer. Both issues have high numbers of Hill cosponsors, and you can see where your legislators stand on these bills by checking out page 33 of your October MOAA magazine. But with Congress focused on finding ways to cut hundreds of billions from the federal budget, prospects for progress is dwindling on any initiative to raise federal spending on anything in the short term, however meritorious.

There is a provision in the House-passed defense authorization bill to modestly improve compensation for SBP/DIC widows, and we still hope to have amendments on both issues added to the defense bill in the Senate. But we have to acknowledge the prospects of significant progress aren't good.

That said, you never get anything fixed if you give up, so MOAA will continue to keep highlighting these continuing inequities. Members can send their legislators a [MOAA-suggested message](#) asking them to support these key issues.

Question. Will there be a COLA increase in 2012? If so, how much will it be?

Answer. Barring some dramatic, unforeseen change, there should be a 2012 COLA of somewhere between 3.4% and 3.7% for Social Security, military retired pay, SBP, and VA disability compensation.



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We won't know what the final COLA number will be until the September Consumer Price Index figure is released on October 19.

Retirees should see the COLA in their January 2012 checks.

Many members have asked if Congress might act to cut their COLA amount in 2012. We think its likely Congress will seek some kind of COLA changes at some point in the months and years ahead as part of ongoing deficit-reduction efforts.

But at this time there's no legislation on the table that would affect the 2012 COLA, and any prospect of that happening before the December 1 COLA effective date seems remote.