



MILITARY OFFICERS CALL
Sun City Center Chapter
Military Officers Association of America
 P. O. Box 5693, Sun City Center, FL. 33571



Volume 33 Number 4 **APRIL 2018**



President's Message
Benny Blackshire, LTC USA (Ret)
 April 2018

Dear Colleagues:
 The combined meeting of MOAA, MOWW, and MFST at our March luncheon was a great success. We had over 120 participants and Navy Captain Tom Chaby gave an inspiring talk about the Warrior 2 Warrior program. Captain Chaby is a leading expert in veteran resilience and suicide prevention and the Warrior 2 Warrior program was established to assist veterans. At the end of his presentation all three of the organizations presented checks to Captain Chaby for the Warrior 2 Warrior fund.

Before we had lunch Elaine Davis, Community Foundation of Tampa Bay, presented MOWW a grant check for \$7,000 for the Youth Leadership Conference and our chapter presented Kelly Kowall, My Warriors Place, with a check for \$1,000.

This month our guest Speaker will be Hillsborough County Property Appraiser Bob Henriquez. He will be speaking about the high residential growth in the county and how they come up with home values for tax purposes. It should be interesting as we are all submitting our tax returns. See the adjoining column for more about our April speaker.

I want to take a moment to invite our new members to get involved in our chapter. Our membership committee is losing a couple of committee members and will need some new volunteers to work with them. It is a great way to get involved with your chapter and to support keeping our chapter strong. Give Jim Haney, our membership chair, a call if you are interested in joining the committee. We can always use some fresh ideas for our recruiting and retention.

A personal thank you to all who worked on getting our members to renew their memberships for 2018. We only had to send out 27 dues letters thanks to the great response we got in the membership renewing for 2018. We have quite a few members who continue to support our chapter even though they cannot attend the luncheon meetings. Their continued membership not only supports our local chapter, but also supports the efforts of MOAA National, which in turn is supporting our military, active, retired, and all veterans. March 31 was the date for removing members from the active roster for unpaid dues. However, members can be reinstated upon payment of their dues for the current year.

Wishing you all the best as we put the cooler days behind us.

APRIL SPEAKER

Bob Henriquez



A fifth-generation resident of Tampa, Bob was born and raised in that city and his great grandfather, Enrique Henriquez, was the last mayor of West Tampa before it was annexed into the City of Tampa in 1925.

Bob achieved academic success at Tampa Catholic High and Princeton University. At both schools, Bob learned the importance of teamwork as a starting offensive lineman on the football squads.

Soon after graduating from Princeton, Bob went to work for Hillsborough County's Streets & Addresses department to help enhance its 9-1-1 program. Later, he joined the county's Planning Commission to assist in growth management.

He was elected to the Florida Legislature as a State Representative and after four terms in office, Bob was appointed to head up the Pinellas and Pasco counties division of the Department of Children and Families. He served in that role for three years.

Interwoven with Bob's public service has been his tireless work molding the lives of young men as a football coach.

Bob served two stints as head coach at Tampa Catholic, from 1990-99 and again from 2005-2012. In 2007, TC reached the state championship game for the first time in school history and the Crusaders returned to that stage in 2009.

After winning the election of Hillsborough County Property Appraiser in 2012, Bob made the decision to step down as head coach at TC to focus his energies on the constitutional responsibilities of his office.

He now leads a new "team" with his same ambitions: to serve the public with fairness, professionalism and humility.

He will be speaking about high residential growth in the county and how they come up with home values for tax purposes.

\$15.00 APRIL LUNCHEON \$15.00
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Wednesday, April 4, 2018 (Florida Room) Carved
 Sugar Glazed Ham
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 Crab Stuffed Filet of Sole
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 Beverages: Decaf Coffee, Iced Tea, and Ice Water

March Luncheon



From left, Jim Haney, MOWW Commander; Benny Blackshire, MOAA President; Tom Chaby; Nancy Alguire, MFST President; Colin Howgill, MFST Chairman



Ed Socha — Tom Chaby — Charlie Collins

Former Seal presents national PTSD program to combined MOWW and MOAA luncheon

The Military Officers of America (MOAA) and the Military Order of the World Wars (MOWW) held a joint meeting in the Florida Room of the South Side Atrium on March 7, 2018. The featured speaker was Captain Tom Chaby USN (Ret), former Commander of Seal Team 5.

Tom spent over 12 years deployed to over 70 countries around the world leading special operations at every level. Shortly after 9/11, Captain Chaby deployed to Afghanistan leading a Task Unit of 50 SEALs and support personnel conducting special operations in support of the initial stages of Operation Enduring Freedom.

He serves his teammates today as the Co-Executive Director for Warrior-2-Warrior (W2W) where he has developed a national level program that synchronizes full spectrum resilience to reduce veteran suicide. Captain Chaby has established himself as a leading expert in veteran resilience and suicide prevention. Tom is a guest lecturer at the University of Pennsylvania and has been the keynote speaker at multiple summits focused on suicide prevention and resilience. He discussed the W2W program, that eliminates the stigma usually associated with PTSD treatment provided by psychiatrists and instead uses physical therapy rather than mental therapy as a door to accepted treatment by the warriors. There is no stigma attached to physical therapy and the veterans will enter the program willing.

Capt. Chaby was presented with donations from MOWW, MOAA and MFST. Warrior 2 Warrior is saving lives and saving families for these among our nation's greatest citizens. He collaborates with Fortune 500 corporations, sports teams and universities by bringing his experience and insights to help organizations grow.

Elaine Davis representing the Community Foundation presented MOWW with a \$7000.00 check for their Youth Leadership Conference (YLC) program and MOAA presented Kelly Kowall with a check for \$1000.00 for her My Warriors Place veterans retreat center.



Benny Blackshire presenting check to Kelly Kowall



Jim Haney accepting check from Elaine Davis, representing the Community Foundation.

W2W is a 501(c)3 organization raising funds to support the program. The website is www.warrior2warrior.org.

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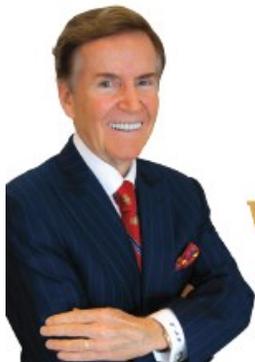


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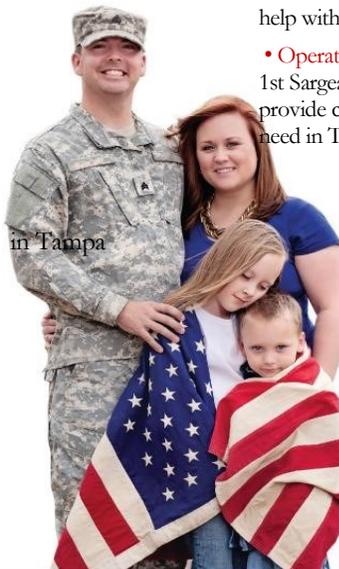


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The Many Ways MFST and YOU Help Military Families

- **Financial Assistance** in critical times of need
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- **Service Dogs** for veterans with PTSD and other traumatic injuries.
- **Homeless Prevention for Women Veterans:** help with rent, child care and licensing training.
- **Operation Warm Heart**, administered by the 1st Sergeants Group at MacDill AFB, who provide commissary vouchers for soldiers in need in Tampa.
- **Scholarships and Leadership Programs** for students from military families
- **Operation Helping Hand:** monthly support for military families of wounded servicemen and women at the James A. Haley VA Hospital .



**For more information, call
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mfst.us**

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Member of the Month

Houston Tucker, LTC USA (Ret)



Houston spent a career with the military; starting out in The Marines and retiring with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel from the Army. He served 22 years on active duty with a total of over 38 years including duty time in the Reserves. While serving in the reserve components, he had a civilian career in law enforcement; serving at the municipal and state

levels in several capacities. He has also served with the DoD as a future warfighting concept analyst at the Joint Warfighting Center, Suffolk, VA. He is a veteran of the Vietnam, Panama, and GWOT-Middle East conflicts.

Houston holds a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree, Political Science, University of Georgia; Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree - Municipal Governance, Kentucky State University; and Master of Science (MS) degree - Criminal Justice, Eastern Kentucky University. He is also a graduate of the US Army Command and General Staff College - Fort Leavenworth, KS; the US Army Defense Strategy Program, US Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA; and the FBI Academy School of Behavioral Sciences, Quantico, VA.

His military decorations consist of The Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Defense Meritorious Service Medal (2), Meritorious Service Medal (3), Joint Service Commendation Medal, and the Army Commendation Medal (2).

His organizations consist of being a Life Member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans; joining in 1992, and a member of the Military Order of the Stars and Bars. He is also a member of the Sons of the American Revolution. He is a member of several veteran's organizations to include currently serving as the Treasurer of the Association of the United States Army at MacDill AFB, and as a USO volunteer at the Tampa airport. He is a Master Mason, York Rite Knights Templar, and Grotto Prophet.

'Just breathing' is enough to spread flu



"People with flu," explains senior author Donald K. Milton, professor of environmental health at the University of Maryland, "generate infectious aerosols (tiny droplets that stay suspended in the air for a long time) even when they are

not coughing, and especially during the first days of illness."

The common belief is that flu is spread through coughs and sneezes from infected individuals and from touching surfaces contaminated with the virus.

However, the new study reveals that people with the flu can shed the infectious virus into the air around them just by breathing.

"So," Prof. Milton urges, "when someone is coming down with influenza, they should go home and not remain in the workplace and infect others."

He and his colleagues report their findings in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

Editor's note: Might consider a face mask when visiting the

doctor's office. Not a welcome study.

Scientists create new molecule to combat pain



Researchers from the University of Texas at Dallas have created an RNA-mimicking molecule that blocks the series of pain sensitization reactions that normally follow an injury.

Could this 'decoy molecule' help to create better drugs for pain?

They believe that what they have discovered about their "decoy molecule" will pave the way for a new class of drugs that prevent pain at the outset without risk of addiction

Editor's note: Now this is a welcome study!

MEMBERSHIP CORNER

The Membership Committee Chair is providing the following to update the Chapter membership regarding our Chapter LOE & MOAA rewards. Also, this article will list new Chapter members.

—# of Chapter members —197

—# of LIFE Members —118

—# of PREMIUM Members — 37

—# of BASIC Members — 20

—# of non-MOAA members — 22

New Chapter member(s) last month:

Mrs Mary Brickel, AUX

MAJ Mary LaFara, USAFR retired

Mrs Elda Miller, AUX

REMINDER: The Chapter reimburses \$100 to members upgrading to LIFE when LIFE certificate is presented to the Treasurer.

Sun City Center MOAA Website

Don't forget to visit our new website. The link to the website is: <http://moaaf.org/chapters/SunCity/> You will find much membership information, photos, calendar of events, past newsletters and more. If you would like to suggest topics for inclusion contact Jim Haney at jghaney1@gmail.com

Publisher/Editor

CAPT Frank Kepley, USN (Ret)

We need your input about member activities associated with MOAA and articles of interest to the military community.

Contact Frank at: dkepley@tampabay.rr.com 813-642-0801



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Frank Kepley, CAPT USN (Ret)

Broken Websites, Long Call Times Plague Tricare Following Changes



Long call wait times, dropped calls and error-riddled web pages have plagued Tricare's first few days under its new regional contractors, officials and users say.

"We are currently experiencing unusually high volumes of beneficiary inquiries to the Tricare call centers and regional websites," Tricare officials posted on the system's Facebook page late Wednesday. "We apologize for the unusual delays and are working to serve you more quickly. Consider logging on to the contractor's self-service portals at www.TRICARE-West.com and www.TRICARE-East.com to access your account information."

The call centers have been receiving more than 80,000 calls per day, a Tricare spokesman said Thursday. The centers are also having staffing problems due to severe winter weather on the East Coast, he said.

Officials with both Humana and Health Net said they are working to resolve the issues.

Excitement Builds for the New TRICARE Retiree Dental and Vision Plan



The FEDVIP dental program of offerings will replace the existing TRICARE Retiree Dental

Plan, which is currently provided through Delta Dental. That program will sunset Dec. 31, 2018.

Here's what will be offered. The retiree dental plan and the new addition of a vision plan will allow for beneficiaries to make a selection from among several dental and vision carriers with a variety of benefit options. For example, in 2018 the FEDVIP program lists 10 dental carriers and four vision carriers (Delta Dental is included) with comprehensive dental and vision insurance at competitive group rates.

Key facts:

- no wait period for most dental services;
- no annual maximum benefit for some dental plans;
- regional and national dental networks;
- no deductible for some vision plans;
- no limit on brands for frames or contacts for some vision plans; and
- discounts on LASIK offered by some vision plans.

Beneficiaries are encouraged to start getting information and pre-enrollment communications through the website set up just for this program. The website, www.TRICARE.benefeds.com, will be up and running

Feb. 1.

Editor's note: See page 13 for full page reference.

White House wants clearer rules, no caregiver benefits expansion in VA medical overhaul plan



WASHINGTON — White House officials want Senate lawmakers to set clearer eligibility guidelines for veterans considering private-sector care and to drop their current plans for an expansion of veteran caregiver benefits, according to a memo sent to congressional leaders this week.

They also want a plan to pay for the massive health care overhaul.

The comments come as legislation to overhaul the Department of Veterans Affairs health care offerings sits stalled in the House and Senate due to a series of budget and eligibility concerns. Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Johnny Isakson, R-Ga., had asked for the feedback from the White House in hopes it would serve as "a catalyst" to restart talks.

The administration memo appears to more closely back a legislative proposal from Sen. Jerry Moran, R-Kan., than bills advanced by the Senate committee or its House counterpart.

It calls for clearer eligibility standards for veterans to seek care outside the VA system, which has become the center of the fight between the dueling proposals.

The White House is backing direct standards for when veterans would be able to see private doctors at VA's expense, which Moran has said will establish clear rules on who can and who can't use community care programs. Other plans would allow VA officials more flexibility to interpret broad guidelines based on what they believe is best for patient care, which critics say amounts to limiting veterans' choices.

But in the memo, White House officials warned that exact eligibility rules "could inadvertently expand eligibility" and program costs.

VA Secretary David Shulkin has repeatedly pushed back against accusations that those policies amount to privatization of his department's responsibilities, insisting that the responsible future of veterans health care is a mix of federal and civilian systems.

But the cost of the Senate committee's Caring for Our Veterans Act — which give veterans in the VA system two walk-in visits at any private-sector practice without co-pay, among other community care options — is estimated at \$54 billion over five years.

VA teams up with CMS to improve fraud detection, investigation

The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) agreed to share its data, analytics and best practices with the Department of Veterans Affairs to help improve the latter's ability to detect and investigate fraud and wrongdoing in its programs. "The VA-HHS alliance represents the latest example of VA's commitment to find partners to assist with identifying new and innovative ways to seek out fraud, waste and abuse and ensure every tax dollar given to VA supports veterans," VA Secretary David Shulkin said.

Shulkin Makes Significant VA Progress but Much yet to be Done



VA in recent months has proposed an expanding network of federal facilities and private-sector practices with easier eligibility criteria, *easier payments for outside physicians* and easier funding lines to keep the program

operational. Lawmakers from both parties have signed on to parts of the plan in recent months, but it remains stalled in both chambers.

“Everything I am doing is trying to strengthen the VA system,” Shulkin said, repeating his promise that the steps are not designed to privatize VA. “I think the way to do strengthen the system and fulfill your mission is by working closely with the private sector.

Shulkin has made aggressive moves to align VA electronic medical records with Defense Department systems, to publicly post more information on VA operations, and to extend some emergency care services to veterans previously barred from department medical centers.

He also spearheaded Trump’s promised veterans complaints line, taking the campaign promise even further by working to have it staffed entirely by veterans.

Nine major pieces of veterans legislation passed through Congress last year, including new firing authorities for department workers that Republican supporters have coveted for years.

Editor’s note: I italicized the ‘easier payment for outside physicians’ as this is still a major problem. Veterans are still getting threatening calls from bill collectors.

In budget brinkmanship, death gratuities should be ‘essential’



There’s a fix that needs made: Lawmakers should follow the advice of Ken Fisher, chairman and CEO of the Fisher House Foundation, and make it clear that in any future federal shutdown, the mili-

tary’s \$100,000 death gratuity will be paid out in accordance with the wishes of the fallen service member.

Fisher’s foundation stepped up in 2013 to pay the benefit as the government went dark. It offered to do so again this time around. It’ll likely offer again, if necessary, next month. It shouldn’t be necessary. Ever.

Kudos to the foundation for trying to make things right, but if lawmakers can’t get out of their own way in the ongoing battle of budget brinkmanship, they can at least pass a bill that would make paying the gratuity an essential government function — maybe even more essential than other services that continue during the shutdown, such as the processing of lawmakers’ paychecks.

After impasse, senators to restart negotiations on VA Choice reform

The Choice program was created following the VA wait-time scandal in 2014, in order to get veterans quicker health care by sending them to private sector doctors. But lawmakers, veterans and VA officials have criticized the program as bureaucratic and complex, with arbitrary rules governing which veterans are eligible to receive non-VA

health care.

Shulkin attributed the funding shortfalls to the growing popularity of the program and the unpredictability of month-to-month expenses. According to the latest VA data, 36 percent of VA appointments in fiscal 2017 were made through the Choice program. More than 1 million veterans used the program, an increase of 35,000 from fiscal 2016.

The Senate committee voted in November to send a bipartisan bill, the Caring for Our Veterans Act of 2017, to the Senate floor. The approximately \$50 billion legislation offered more flexibility concerning veterans’ eligibility for private-sector care and included other provisions, such as a popular one to expand VA caregiver benefits to veterans injured before 9/11.

The committee voted 14-1 on the bill, with Moran as the lone holdout. He later introduced his own legislation with Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., that he said better lays out in what instances veterans can seek private-sector health care, instead of leaving those specifics up to the VA to decide.

It’s also faced numerous funding shortfalls. In August, Congress passed \$2.1 billion in emergency funding for the program just before its bank account was to run empty. The same thing happened in December, and Congress authorized another \$2.1 billion.

Congress has been negotiating reform to the Veterans Choice program for about a year, and Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin urged lawmakers to agree on changes by the end of 2017 – a deadline that came and went without consensus.

Editor’s note: As mentioned earlier, until they figure out how to insure timely payments to the Choice providers, this program will fail.

Here’s Why Veterans Groups Are Circling The Wagons Around Embattled VA Secretary Shulkin



Leading veterans service organizations met Tuesday to mount a joint response in the face of a troubling inspector general report alleging “serious derelictions” in expensing on the part of the Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin and his top staff during a Europe trip last July, multiple sources told Task & Purpose.

Since Feb. 19, the largest veterans organizations, AMVETS, Vietnam Veterans of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, The American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, and Paralyzed Veterans of America, have rallied around the embattled secretary, advocating for Shulkin to remain at his post.

Veterans groups are worried that privatization advocates are using the IG report to get their way. Veterans service organization officials have claimed that political appointees — some of whom were previously affiliated with Concerned Veterans for America, a conservative veterans advocacy group backed by the Koch brothers — have been pushing an agenda from within the VA for greater privatization.

That’s an accusation CVA is denying.

USA Today reported that the VA’s top official “received assurances” from the White House that his position at the department is, for the time being, safe.

Surface Navy boss: To fix the fleet, reduce commitments and give us more ships



The U.S. Navy's top surface warfare officer has said the military must ease the burden on the service if it's to fix issues that came to light after a pair of collisions that took the lives of 17 sailors last summer.

In prepared remarks delivered at the annual Surface Navy Association's National Symposium, Vice Adm. Thomas Rowden said his conversations with sailors in the western Pacific led him to believe that growing the fleet and reducing commitments are the two things that will get at the problem.

"They need help, and by help, they mean time," Rowden said of his sailors. "Time to maintain their gear, time to refresh their basic individual and team skills, and time to unwind. Time will only come from two things, or a combination of them: more ships and fewer obligations. It is hard to see things any other way."

It was a remarkable statement from a senior Navy leader coming from a culture that prides itself on rogering up to tasks — a tendency that drove several of the issues raised in Fleet Forces Command's comprehensive review. The Navy often cites that it has roughly the same number of ships deployed on a daily basis as it did at the end of the Cold War with a much larger fleet than it has today.

Admiral rejects plan to rotate forward-deployed ships home for maintenance



The head of the Navy's Fleet Forces Command pushed back Thursday against an idea to have all ships stationed overseas return to the United States every seven to 10 years for maintenance.

Speaking at the Surface Navy Association's annual symposium,

Adm. Phil Davidson said today's Navy fleet is too small to bring forward-deployed ships, like those stationed in Japan or Spain, home so frequently.

Virginia Republican and seapower committee chairman Rep. Rob Wittman had offered the idea on Wednesday during his speech at the symposium, a policy the Navy has not always followed through on.

Editor's note: The concept of not enough ships and too many commitments seems to be lost on Congress. A few more collisions ought to do it. And maintaining CR's

Why don't more people serve? The US is launching a commission to find out



The U.S. will launch a two-year effort to find ways to increase military and civic service among its citizenry, especially U.S. youth.

The effort will be spearheaded by an 11-member commission that will travel the country in 2018 and 2019

"to ignite a national conversation around service and develop recommendations that will encourage and inspire all Americans, particularly young people, to serve. Ultimately, the goal is for every American to be inspired and eager to

serve," the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service said in a press release.

The commission is also charged with reviewing current selective service registration requirements. Its members are tasked with issuing a final report and recommendations on how to increase civic and military participation by March 2020.

About 80 percent of new military recruits come from families with a history of service, but that number is dropping.

According to the Defense Department, 15 percent of young adults have a parent who served, a drop from 40 percent in 1995.

There's also a declining rate of family members who served who are recommending joining the military to their children.

In the late 1990s, more than 80 percent of service members recommended serving.

In 2017, only 40 percent of those serving recommended that path to their children.

One idea tossed out last summer to increase the number of volunteers was to bring back the draft. The overall quality of troops would grow, but costs would also increase.

Editor's note: It might help if the public did not continually read about skipped pay raises, inadequate training, and the lack of critical equipment.

Navy filing homicide charges for McCain, Fitzgerald commanders



The commanders of two warships that collided with commercial vessels in the west Pacific last summer, killing 17 sailors, will face negligent homicide and other criminal charges, Navy officials said Tuesday.

Four destroyer Fitzgerald officers, including skipper Cmdr. Bryce Benson, will face charges of negligent homicide, dereliction of duty and hazarding a vessel for the June 17 incident that killed seven sailors off Japan, according to the Navy.

The three other officers, two lieutenants and one lieutenant j.g., were not identified in the Navy statement. Cmdr. William Speaks, a Navy spokesman, said that the process for deciding whether the officers will be court-martialed is "very early in the process."

Benson was only identified as the ship's commanding officer in the statement.

Cmdr. Alfredo J. Sanchez, who was in command of the destroyer John S. McCain at the time of the Aug. 21 collision near Singapore that killed another 10 sailors, will face the same charges, according to the Navy.

The Navy said in a release that the crash could have been avoided, adding that it "resulted primarily from complacency, overconfidence and lack of procedural compliance."

How homicide charges for two skippers will shake up the entire Navy

The Navy's decision to level criminal charges against the commanding officers of the destroyers Fitzgerald and John S. McCain is forcing the surface warfare world into a grim reckoning on how it operates, and even the prospect of the homicide charges will have an impact on the broader Navy community. Some in the surface world wonder if the Navy's decision will freeze skippers into indecisiveness, for fear that something going wrong will send them toward the same fate.

The Army Wants To Make Forward Observers Deadlier Than Ever With This Sleek New Targeting System



For months, Army officials have bragged that the branch's new Joint Effects Targeting System will boost the precision and lethality of forward observers by effectively "turning a howitzer or a Paladin into a giant sniper rifle." By the end of the year, every artillery platoon will find out if they were bluffing: After months of intensive testing, the Army plans on fielding the portable new JETS to U.S. combat troops downrange starting in September 2018.

Envisioned as a lightweight man-portable substitute for the bulky Lightweight Laser Designator Rangefinder, JETS relies on a unique assembly of advanced sensor technology to measure everything from distance to target to the rotation of the Earth, allowing forward observers to relay more precise targeting data up the chain of command than ever before. After months of testing and evaluations, PEO Soldier claims that the system can deliver targeting data precise enough to place a GPS-guided munition within a 10-meter target location at a range of more than 2.5 kilometers, eliminating the need for fire for effect and boosting the lethality on platoons on both the maneuver and indirect fire sides.

As a handheld, man-portable system, the JETS target locator handset weighs just five pounds, a huge departure to the bulky, tripod-dependent LLDR and a major boon for forward observers already weighed down by radios and other gear.

"They say the biggest weapons that FOs have is their radio because they can call in the most lethal weapons on the battlefield, from direct-fire munitions to artillery," Munn said. "JETS gives them the ability to not only call in those systems, but to do so more effectively and much quicker, and that will only make them more lethal."

Omaha couple plan D.C. Honor Flight exclusively for female veterans



Less than a year after vowing they were done organizing Honor Flights for military veterans, Bill and Evonne Williams of Omaha are planning one more.

This trip to the war memorials in Washington, D.C., is different. It's for women only.

The Nebraska Female Veterans Flight is for women who served in the European or Pacific theaters during World War II, in Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf War or in Afghanistan or Iraq. The tentative date is Sept. 24.

Plans call for 135 veterans to fly on one Sun Country charter aircraft from Omaha's Eppley Airfield to a Washington airport. Everyone aboard will be female, and news reporters and photographers, Bill Williams said.

Evonne Williams, president of the couple's Patriotic Productions, said female veterans deserve recognition and appreciation for their roles, whether on the battlefield or somewhere far behind the lines.

Bill Williams said no more than two dozen of the veterans on the Honor Flight trips were women. Veterans who served in combat were given preference on most trips.

The couple's last Honor Flight — the avowed final flight — took 653 Vietnam veterans on four airplanes last May. Among them was one woman. "It's imperative we find at least one woman from World War II — and Korea, too," Bill Williams said. "They're soemewhere in this state."

Editor's note: surprised the have not thought about this long ago.

Heroic Army working dog awarded posthumous medal



A U.S. Army dog that attacked a machine-gun nest during World War II was posthumously awarded Britain's highest honor for animal bravery.

Chips, a German shepherd-husky cross, was awarded the Dickin Medal for actions during a 1943 beach landing in Sicily.

According to the U.S. soldiers, Chips raced into an Italian machine-gun nest, attacking an enemy soldier by the throat and pulling the gun from its mount.

The medal was awarded by veterinary charity PDSA in a ceremony at the Churchill War Rooms in London. The award is named for Maria Dicken, founder of the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals.

Lt. Col. Alan Throop, who attended on behalf of the U.S. Army, said that shortly after the battle Chips was recommended for the Distinguished Service Cross, the Silver Star and the Purple Heart. But Army policy didn't allow animals to receive the medals.

Chips suffered scalp wounds and powder burns in the battle but survived the war, returning to his owners in Pleasantville, New York.

Editor's note: What a great story.

AMVETS says NFL censored its ad against flag protests

AMVETS officials are decrying "corporate censorship" from the National Football League for their decision not to run an ad in their Super Bowl program which criticizes league players' decision to kneel for the national anthem in protest of national equality issues.

The ad, which would have cost the veterans organization \$30,000, features the tag "#PleaseStand" with a picture of service-members saluting the American flag and information on how to donate to the congressionally-chartered organization.

Group leaders said NFL officials refused to include the ad in their Super Bowl publication, but did not issue a reason why. In a statement, AMVETS National Commander Marion Polk said the issue is one of fairness and respect.

Editor's note: But whatever you do, do not place a biblical reference on your uniform or eye shadow. #Tim Tebow. Big NFL fine.

Burn pits downrange caused lung disease in service members, court rules

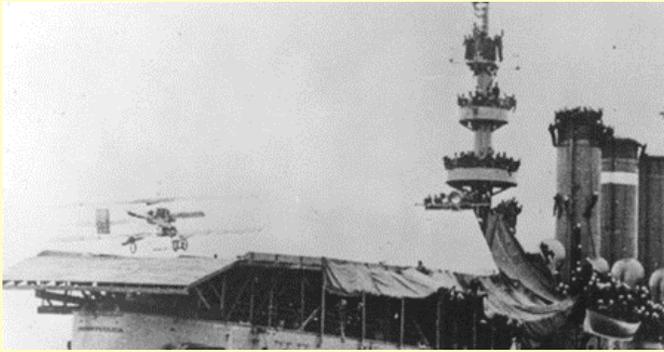
Service members and private military contractors who worked around "burn pits" downrange, and later suffered from lung and respiratory issues, may soon get a breath of fresh air.

A recent court decision by a judge under the U.S. Department of Labor's Office for Workers' Compensation Programs ruled that open-air burn pits are connected to lung disease.

The burn pits — where chemicals were released into the air from trash, abandoned hardware, and other waste being incinerated — occurred throughout U.S. military bases in Iraq and Afghanistan over the course of the wars there.

The ruling could be a boon for the tens of thousands of service members who signed onto the Veterans Affairs Department's Burn Pit Registry over the course of the conflicts in the Middle East.

How do you land a plane on a Navy ship in 1911? Carefully



On November 14, 1910, Eugene Ely demonstrated that an airplane could be launched from a ship when he flew a Curtiss Model D pusher off a platform built onto the cruiser Birmingham as it lay at anchor in Hampton Roads, Va. The demonstration nearly ended in disaster when Ely plunged to within feet of the water after clearing the deck, damaging his propeller but remaining aloft. (Ely, who couldn't swim, wore inflated bicycle inner tubes, just in case.) Two months later, on January 18, 1911, he landed the Curtiss biplane on a deck erected on the cruiser Pennsylvania in San Francisco Bay. His landing was aided by a tailhook—the first ever—and arrestor cables attached to sandbags.



Navy ship collisions prompt rare criminal charges



The Navy's decision to charge five officers with negligent homicide for their involvement in two fatal ship crashes marks a rare legal move that, if proven, could send them to jail for up to three years.

U.S. Navy officials and other experts struggled Wednesday to identify other naval accidents in recent history that triggered such a serious criminal charge, and couldn't point to a case that led to a negligent homicide conviction.

The Navy has laid out the charges that would be presented at what is called an Article 32 hearing, which will determine whether the accused will go to trial in a court-martial.

No doubt paving the way for the severe charges was the significant loss of life in the two collisions. The USS Fitzgerald struck a commercial ship off the waters of Japan in June, killing seven U.S. sailors; the USS John S. McCain collided with an oil tanker in coastal waters off Singapore in August, killing 10 U.S. sailors.

"What's different here is the loss of life," said Eugene Fidell, an expert in military law who teaches at Yale Law School. "The victims' families are obviously devastated by this, the Navy obviously feels it has an obligation to them as well to its own standards."

Editor's note: Some punishment is certainly warranted but I think considerable responsibility should rest on Congress' shoulders for not providing funding for critical training and equipment. But that will not happen. See below.

House Speaker warns budget fights have pushed military 'past the breaking point'



House Speaker Paul Ryan fears that budget cuts coupled with increased national security threats have "pushed our military past the breaking point," creating systemic readiness problems that are costing troops lives.

"Instead of upgrading our hardware, we have let our equipment age," he said in a defense policy speech at a Center for Strategic and International Studies event. "Instead of equipping our troops for tomorrow's fight, we have let them become woefully underequipped."

"In exchange for (troops') service, we make them a sacred promise. We promise that we will give them the tools they need to do their jobs safely and effectively. And today, quite frankly, we are letting them down. We are breaking that promise."

Editor's note: See preceding article. Everyone admits it, but no action to correct it appears to be forthcoming.

Russia moves toward creation of an Independent internet



Freedom on the internet has diminished over the years in Russia: people go to jail for posts on social media, there's a ban on VPN services and expanded data storage is hard to come by. And recent

moves by the Russian government indicate that further developments are yet to come.

Florida Council of Chapters Communiqué February 2018 Issue

See what the other Chapters are doing. The *Florida Council of Chapter's* newsletter, the "*Communiqué*" can be accessed by clicking on the link below. After you click the link and then click *Allow*, it may take a minute or so for the newsletter to pop up. It is worth the wait.

Apr2014.pdfhttp:www.moaafi.org/communique

Editor—Polly Parks. Send articles and photos to:

Polly Parks pparks@igc.org

Intense End-of-Life Care Found to Be Less Likely for VA Patients

Authors say results have important implications for the future of VA care, Medicare policy



Higher-intensity end-of-life care may be driven by financial incentives present in fee-for-service Medicare but not in the Veteran Affairs (VA) integrated system, according to a report published in the January issue

of Health Affairs.

Risha Gidwani-Marszowski, Dr. P.H., from the Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System in Menlo Park, Calif., and colleagues used indicators of overly intensive end-of-life care to compare the quality of care provided to veterans dying of cancer through the VA system and fee-for-service Medicare in fiscal years 2010 to 2014.

The researchers found that Medicare-reliant veterans were significantly more likely to receive high-intensity care, in the form of chemotherapy, hospital stays, admission to the intensive care unit, more days spent in the hospital, and death in the hospital. However, compared to VA-reliant patients, Medicare-reliant veterans were significantly less likely to have multiple emergency department visits. The investigators suggested that financial incentives may drive higher-intensity end-of-life care in fee-for-service Medicare but not in the VA integrated system.

Same-sex active-duty couple marries at West Point



WEST POINT, N.Y. — Two Army captains who met at West Point returned there to be married, in what is believed to be the first same-sex marriage of active-duty personnel at the storied New York military academy.

The New York Times reported Captains Daniel Hall, 30, and Vincent Franchino, 26, both Apache helicopter pilots stationed at Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas, were married at West Point's Cadet Chapel on Jan. 13.

The men met at the school in August 2009, when Franchino was a freshman and Hall was a senior. Their first date was in February 2012 in Washington, some months after the "don't ask, don't tell" policy was repealed in September 2011.

That policy, in place since 1993, barred any gay person from disclosing their sexual orientation or talking about any same-sex relationship.

Air Force taps brigadier general to look into hypoxia, related issues



The Air Force has assembled a team to look into the rash of hypoxia and other alarming physiological events endangering the safety of pilots.

Brig. Gen. Bobbi Jo Doorenbos will head the Unexplained Physiologic Events Integration Team, the Air Force said in a release Monday. The panel will try to find ways to

eliminate those events or minimize their impact, the Air Force said.

A variety of aircraft have had problems with hypoxia and other physiological events in recent years. In November, Davis-Monthan Air Base in Arizona grounded 28 A-10 Warthogs after two pilots experienced hypoxia-like symptoms. Vance Air Force Base also grounded its fleet of T-6A Texan training aircraft for several weeks beginning in November after five pilots experienced hypoxia-like symptoms.

Some pilots have also reported hypoxia-like symptoms in the F-22 and F-35.

The Navy, too, has had its share of hypoxia-related incidents.

Lt. Gen. Chris Nowland, the Air Force's deputy chief of staff for operations, who set up the team said, "The Air Force takes UPEs very seriously. Results from investigations into these events are shared between Air Force organizations, other military services and industry partners."

Editor's note: When one considers the incredible technology and enormous amount of money that goes into these jets, it is difficult to believe they cannot solve this long standing oxygen delivery problem.

Flu killed more American soldiers in World War I than any single battle



The second flu wave of 1918 coincided with the Meuse-Argonne Campaign of World War I, according to the National Institute of Health (NIH). Over 1 million U.S. troops participated, and it was our largest front-line commitment of the war.

Statistics vary, but NIH reports that

26,277 American soldiers died during this campaign, the deadliest World War I battle for U.S. troops. However, the flu killed more U.S. soldiers than did any Great War battle: 15,849 U.S. soldiers in France and another 30,000 in state-side camps. That's 45,849 killed by the flu versus 26,277 killed at Meuse-Argonne — documenting that the flu was by far our most deadly battle.



Monthly Member and Board Meetings

Luncheon: Wednesday Apr 4 2018 11:00 am
Florida Room

Board Meeting: Wednesday Apr 25th, 2018 10:00 am
Trinity Baptist Church

Membership Committee Mtg. Club Renaissance
3rd Wednesday Apr 18th, 2018

More Active Troops Use Private Mental Health Care Over DoD's. Here's Why



Dissatisfied with the quality of care and worried about reprisals from their command, service members are extensively seeking mental health care outside of the military, according to a new article in *Military Medicine*, an Oxford University Press journal.

The article's authors concluded that military mental health professionals "must balance obligations both to patients and to the military command," and the authors argue, "that ethical problems of trust and confidentiality become barriers to care," according to an Oxford U.P. statement, provided to T&P ahead of the article's release. "Other barriers include stigma, a negative impact of seeking care on one's career, beliefs that care would not be effective, and lack of appropriate services."

The vast majority of respondents - 93% - cited poor quality of DoD mental health care as their reason for visiting a civilian mental health provider. Fear of reprisal accounted for nearly half of all respondents' eschewing military mental health experts, and mistrust of command accounted for 38%.

Editor's note: The term stigma, which was emphasized as a problem during the w2w presentation, is again recognized as a reason for avoiding the VA mental health programs.

The Best Effort To Fight Opioid Addiction May Be At This VA Hospital In The Center Of America's Epidemic



Data has revealed that 99% of all VA medical centers and hospitals saw a decrease in opiate prescriptions between 2012 and 2017.

But it's in Ohio, one of the states hardest hit by the drug epidemic, where the VA has the lowest rate of opioid prescriptions: 3% for the Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center.

In 2012, the VA began taking steps to reduce opioid addiction among veteran patients by adopting initiatives that decreased the number of prescriptions and medications dispensed — reducing overall opioid prescriptions by 41% over the past five years. Those steps involve non-drug treatment options for chronic pain, such as acupuncture, spinal manipulation therapy, chiropractic care, and yoga; non-opioid treatment options, in the form of anti-inflammatory, antidepressant, and anticonvulsant medications; and the careful monitoring of opiate prescriptions. To put it another way, it's not about just cutting prescriptions but offering alternative means to cope with chronic pain.

"There are so many things that can be done other than being on a pill — but if that pill is needed, a low dose is needed, then we make sure that other things are being added as well so that his function and quality of life can be improved," Dr. Ali Mchaourab, the chief of medicine at the Cleveland medical center said.

In 2016, illicit and prescription opioids were responsible for more than 42,000 fatal overdoses across the country.

"There's no way you can curb this problem by cutting patients off of medication," Mchaourab said. "We don't want them to feel judged because they're on opioids. We're successful because we want to provide them an alternative."

VA Secretary Apologizes For Surgery That Left Scalpel In Army Veteran For Years



Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin on Wednesday publicly apologized for a botched surgery performed four years ago that left a scalpel inside an Army veteran.

The scalpel was left inside Glenford Turner, a 61-year-old Connecticut resident, after a 2013 surgery at the West Haven VA, his lawyer told local news reporters.

Turner went back to the VA in March suffering from dizziness and abdominal pain, and an X-ray showed the scalpel inside his body. He underwent a second surgery to remove it.

He described the doctor who performed Turner's 2013 surgery as well-trained and said he is a faculty member of Yale University. Shulkin also said such incidents happen less often in VA facilities than other U.S. health care systems.

"While this is an extremely rare event, it happens in the country 1,500 times a year, and in the VA, it's happened 12 times," he said. "That's a rate in the VA much less than what happens outside, but that's no excuse."

VA procedure is to perform X-rays only after high-risk surgeries, Shulkin said. After this, he has considered expanding the practice to more surgeries.

House Speaker warns budget fights have pushed military 'past the breaking point'

(Military Times) House Speaker Paul Ryan fears that budget cuts coupled with increased national security threats have "pushed our military past the breaking point," creating systemic readiness problems that are costing troops lives.

Three more women to attempt the grueling Infantry Officer Course



Three more women are about to attempt the challenging 13-week Infantry Officer Course at Quantico, Virginia.

To date, only 35 women have attempted the notoriously challenging infantry school. Come the first week of April, that number will be 38.

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New TRICARE Retiree Dental and Vision Plan

Taken from MOAA newsletter 3/1/2018

January 26, 2018

This week, MOAA had an exclusive preview of TRICARE's widely anticipated new dental and vision plans. This new insurance option for certain beneficiaries is set to be offered starting Jan. 1, 2019. The newly designed option was included in the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act with the legislated start date of 2019. The later starting time is meant to allow for better planning and communication for this new plan, as it will be offered and administered through the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP).

Here's the rundown on who is eligible for what. All TRICARE retirees and their families are eligible for both the dental insurance and the vision coverage. Active duty military families are only eligible for the vision coverage.

The FEDVIP dental program of offerings will replace the existing TRICARE Retiree Dental Plan, which is currently provided through Delta Dental. That program will sunset Dec. 31, 2018.

Here's what will be offered. The retiree dental plan and the new addition of a vision plan will allow for beneficiaries to make a selection from among several dental and vision carriers with a variety of benefit options. For example, in 2018 the FEDVIP program lists 10 dental carriers and four vision carriers (Delta Dental is included) with comprehensive dental and vision insurance at competitive group rates.

Key facts:

- Eligible beneficiaries must choose their plan during TRICARE's open season, which is scheduled to be Nov. 12 - Dec. 10, 2018.
- There will be no automatic transition for those beneficiaries currently enrolled in the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program. Beneficiaries will be required to enroll for coverage.
- Enrollment and plan changes can only occur during the open season with the exceptions for those beneficiaries with qualifying life events (usually anything that necessitates a change in the DEERS system).

Here's the kind of coverage TRICARE beneficiaries will get with FEDVIP (besides more choices):

- no wait period for most dental services;
- no annual maximum benefit for some dental plans;
- regional and national dental networks;
- no deductible for some vision plans;
- no limit on brands for frames or contacts for some vision plans; and
- discounts on LASIK offered by some vision plans.

Beneficiaries are encouraged to start getting information and pre-enrollment communications through the website set up just for this program. The website, www.TRICARE.benefeds.com, will be up and running Feb. 1.

MOAA is working with the Office of Personnel Management, which oversees the administration of the federal employees benefit programs, to provide input on communication and feedback on the website, anticipate challenges, and brainstorm solutions for this newly available program for TRICARE beneficiaries.



MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

MOAA: The SCC Chapter of The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) membership is granted to Army; Navy; Marines; Air Force; Coast Guard; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Public Health; the National; Guard or Reserve components both active or retired; and former officers and Warrant Officers who were separated under acceptable conditions.

MISSION: The mission of Sun City Center FL chapter shall be to promote the purposes and objectives of the Military Officers Association of America; foster fraternal relation among retired, active duty and former officers of active duty, retired and reserve components personnel of the uniformed services and their dependents and survivors; provide useful services for members and their dependents and survivors and serve the community and the nation.

MEETINGS: A meeting is held monthly (except July/August) in the Atrium building in the Florida room at 11:00 a.m. and includes lunch and a guest speaker.

ACTIVITIES: Coordinate and sponsor Annual Memorial Day ceremony; provide awards and honorariums to outstanding JROTC Cadets; contributed to Operation Warm Heart and Helping Hand; contribute to My Warriors Place; provide funds for MOAA scholarships and participate in numerous community activities.

Additional information can be obtained by calling 813-642-0801 or e-mailing dkepley@tampabay.rr.com. You can also contact us by mail at Frank Kepley, 815 Freedom Plaza Circle, Apt 104 Sun City Center Fl. 33573.



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Military Officers Association of America
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A Year in Review: Teamwork and Modernization at VA Office of Information and Technology

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Information and Technology (OIT) released its 2017 Year in Review to celebrate the tremendous progress OIT has made in the past year toward creating a modern VA and an enhanced Veteran experience.

The Year in Review details OIT's pivotal shift from its transformation efforts of 2016 into a new era of modernization aimed at streamlining VA services and improving the Veteran experience.

"I know modernizing an agency of our size and geographic breadth is no easy task," said VA Secretary David Shulkin. "But it is not a task that is out of our reach. If we set bold goals and miss, we'll make much more progress than we would by setting smaller goals and exceeding them."

The Year in Review includes information on IT initiatives, such as VA's new White House hotline and REACH VET — initiatives designed to field requests for information and eliminate Veteran suicide through early engagement of at-risk individuals; and Lighthouse, a new tool that will enable Veterans to manage their own health experience holistically on a secure, streamlined and interoperable platform.

Other modernization efforts detailed in the report, such as VA's cybersecurity overhaul and improvement of the electronic health record offer a glimpse into the future of Veteran health care and benefits delivery.

The accomplishments detailed in OIT's 2017 Year in Review represent a departure from methods used in the past and signal a bright, innovative future for the standard of care for the nation's Veterans.

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