



THE EAGLE



THE MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA PENNSYLVANIA COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS

www.pa-coc.org

STILL SERVING



NEWS AND VIEWS October 2015

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Summer may be ending but we are facing another heat wave going into September.

September also brings students back to the classroom. Chapter presidents should have received notification from the MOAA Scholarship Fund of the students in their chapter area that were awarded \$5000.00 interest free loans and a \$500.00 grant or a \$5500.00 interest free loan. These interest free loans to students of military parents, officer and enlisted, are a welcome bridge to a degree with fewer interest bearing loans. I encourage you to send a letter of congratulations to each of them and invite them and their parents to an event at your chapter.

The Congressional recess is ending and your US congressmen will be heading

back to D.C. in September. There are vital military personnel issues remaining that affect all of us, some in the wallet from increased TRICARE fees and prescription drugs fees. In an interview from the Morning Defense on Politico with Senator Jack Reed, the ranking member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, D-RI, he explained that preliminary discussions among Committee leadership found they could not agree on personnel issues. Discussions will not start with other members of the negotiating committee until they are back in session. This is why it is important that we continue to contact our members of Congress and Senators to let them know what we support so that it will have an influence on the decisions made in the negotiations in committees.

Respectfully,

Bob Gray

Visit the Council web site:
www.pa-coc.org .

COUNCIL 2015 MEETING DATES

Council meetings will be held at the Carlisle Country Club in Carlisle, near Carlisle Barracks, south of Harrisburg off I-81 on Saturdays at 11:00 AM. Legislative meetings will start at 10:00 AM for spring through fall meetings.

January 17, April 25, July 25, and October 24 (officer elections).

All MOAA members are welcome to attend any Council meeting.

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The Military Officers Association of America is a nonpartisan military nonprofit organization that does not engage in partisan politics and works with all political leaders in moving military and veteran's legislation that will help the men and women who currently serve, the retired, their families and their survivors. The views presented in the Eagle newsletter are those of the editor and do not represent the opinions of the PA Council of Chapters officers, PA Council members or represent the views of MOAA's national officers, staff or Board of Directors.

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PENNSYLVANIA LEGISLATURE

Bob Gray, Legislative Chairman

The state budget is still at a standstill with the legislature and the Governor not being able to compromise on a budget. State legislators are now working on legislation while the budget negotiations are being conducted by their party leadership. Veteran's legislation is starting to move. The MOAA legislative team has been at the Capitol working to move veteran's legislation. The PA War Veterans Council Legislative Committee has been asked by the legislature to review legislation that would change the requirements to receive a local Real Estate Tax exemption. Current law requires a veteran to verify a 100 percent VA disability rating, have served during a time of conflict and show a financial need. Proposed legislation would expand disability eligibility from 10 percent to 100 percent and the veterans would receive a tax exemption equal to the percentage of disability he verifies. Other legislation would remove a requirement for service in a time of conflict to include others disabled through training accidents. There will be a joint House and Senate Veteran's Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee hearing on October 26th at the state capitol to hear testimony from veterans organizations and from the PA Department of Veterans Affairs to discuss the effects of proposed legislation on the program.

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Bills of Interest

Persian Gulf Bonus Extension Bill Passes

October 20, 2015

House Bill 175, the Extension of the Persian Gulf War bonus, passed the General Assembly on October 20th. The bill will be presented to the Governor for signature. The bill is retroactive back to August 31, 2015.

Once the bill is signed by the Governor then Veterans Affairs will begin processing applications received after the deadline of the original bill. Those applications will be processed in the date stamp order they were received.

Any veteran who was previously denied for the bonus may reapply. Some applications may have been missing one piece of information that could be obtained but the veteran did not pursue the information. Veteran's Service Officers are available in each county Veteran's Affairs Office and through Veteran's Service Organizations to assist veterans in filing for state benefits. New applications are required to reopen a claim. There is no charge to the veteran for a service officer to assist in completing the application and assisting in obtaining military records if the veteran does not have them available.

The bonus pays \$75 per month for qualifying, active-duty service members, up to a \$525 maximum. For personnel whose death was related to illness or injury received in the line of duty in Operations Desert Shield or Desert Storm, there is an additional \$5,000 available to the surviving family. Service members who were declared

prisoners of war may also be eligible for an additional \$5,000.

In each case, the service member must have:

- Served with the U.S. Armed Forces, a reserve component of the U.S. Armed Forces or the Pennsylvania National Guard.
- Served on active duty in the Persian Gulf Theater of Operations during the period from August 2, 1990 until August 31, 1991, and received the Southwest Asia Service Medal.
- Been a legal resident of Pennsylvania at the time of active duty service.
- Been discharged from active duty under honorable conditions, if not currently on active duty.
- Received the Southwest Asia Service Medal.

"In order to ensure that every Persian Gulf War Veteran from Pennsylvania receives this well-deserved benefit we encourage everyone to help us spread the word. Individuals who received a bonus or similar compensation from any other state are not eligible for the Pennsylvania program. For detailed instructions on how to apply, visit www.persiangulfbonus.state.pa.us.



Federal Bills of Interest

Veteran's Identification Card Act

U.S. Veterans Administration

WASHINGTON — On July 20, President Barack Obama signed into law the Veteran's Identification Card Act of 2015 (Public Law No: 114-31). The law directs the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to issue a veteran's identification card to a requesting veteran who is neither entitled to military retired pay nor enrolled in the VA system of patient enrollment. The law requires the card, among other things, to: (1) display the veteran's name and photograph, and (2) serve as proof that the veteran has a DD-214 form or other official document in his or her military personnel file that describes the veteran's military service. The law also directs VA to charge a card fee and states that the card shall not serve as proof of entitlement to any benefits. VA Hospitals have not received direction on when they will be authorized to start issuing the cards to veterans.

STOP THE 52% PREMIUM HIKE

Thousands of MOAA members are among the 7 million set to see a giant spike in Medicare premiums

Time is running out for lawmakers to fix the problem. Act now to send your elected officials a MOAA-suggested message.

[HTTP://ECHO4.BLUEHORN.COM/CT/72993605:7HDO-](http://echo4.bluehornet.com/CT/72993605:7HDO-)

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE GOVERNMENT DEFAULTS?

October 23, 2015

A possible government shutdown is yesterday's news – at least until Dec. 11, when the current continuing resolution expires.

That's all about keeping the government running.

The new looming crisis concerns the country's debt limit, which the Treasury Secretary says the U.S. will hit around Nov. 3.

Why is that significant?

Well, national spending exceeds revenue every year, and we have to make up the difference by borrowing – i.e., selling government bonds.

The amount America can borrow is limited by statute. So when we hit the debt limit, Congress must raise the debt limit to allow additional borrowing, or else America will default on its obligations.

There's a general consensus among government leaders, economists, and wall street insiders that a default would be very, very bad in many, many ways.

Our national credit rating would be hurt, which would mean higher interest rates on everything from student loans to credit cards, cars and mortgages.

The stock and bond markets would take a big hit, which means your 401(k)s, IRAs, and investments would, too.

Most of all, it could very well hit currently serving and retired military and federal civilians where it hurts most – in the paycheck.

Hitting the debt limit and defaulting doesn't mean all government payments would stop.

The country would still have money coming in...just not enough to pay all of its current obligations.

So who/what will still get paid and who/what won't?

Most observers believe bondholders would be first in line for payment. But then some level of priority would have to be established among Social Security, Medicare, active and retired federal workers and military, government contracts, Medicaid payments to states, student loans, etc.

At that point, it's all about the politics and the level of pain.

What payments are most vital to the country? Whose screams of pain will be thought most likely to get Congress off the dime and raise the debt limit? Someone, somewhere in the federal government is likely starting to make those assessments, just in case.

But nobody at this point can say for sure whether current troops, retirees, veterans, survivors, or Social Security annuitants will get paid or will see their checks held up during a default period. It's all possible.

There's no doubt the debt limit will end up getting raised one way or another.

MOAA believes strongly it must be done before we hit the last available day.

The consequences for the country are simply too dire to be playing Russian roulette with a national default.

Please send your legislators a MOAA-suggested message urging them to get this important job done.

- See more at: <http://www.moaa.org/Content/Take-Action/Top-Issues/Currently-Serving/What-Happens-If-the-Government-Defaults-.aspx#sthash.xmu6VfhO.dpuf>



Affordable Care Act Requires Verification of Essential Coverage

DFAS Retiree Newsletter October 2015

IRS Form 1095-B (for military retirees and annuitants):

This form provides information you will need to report on your income tax return that you, your spouse and individuals you claim as dependents had qualifying health coverage (referred to as “minimum essential coverage”) for some or all months during the year. Individuals who do not have minimum essential coverage and do not qualify for an exemption may be liable for the individual shared responsibility payment.

Military Retirees, Annuitants and Former Spouses -

The July 2015 Retiree Newsletter is ready for your review. It contains important information about reporting for the Affordable Care Act, auditing your account, updating your email addresses, and protecting your account from fraud.

To access the newsletter, please click on the link below. You will find a list of topics for the newsletter, and you will also have easy access to previous newsletters after you click the link. The links to the newsletter were consolidated into one link for your convenience.

<http://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/newsevents/newsletter.html>

If you would like to contact us, please visit AskDFAS (<https://corpweb1.dfas.mil/askDFAS/askRA.jsp>).

Pennsylvania Military Community Protection Commission

MOAA members are aware that DOD has been pushing for Congress to initiate another Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) round to reduce infrastructure in light of the ongoing budget and force structure reductions.

The Pennsylvania Military Community Protection Commission (PMCPCC) was established by Executive Order 2012-12, September 17, 2012. Effective December 22, 2014, Act 161 codified and renamed the Commission to the Pennsylvania Military Community Enhancement Commission (PMCEC). The purpose of the Commission is to assist the Governor in the enhancement of the military value of and advocacy for all installations, organizations and defense related stakeholders in the Commonwealth. The Commission provides recommendations, policies, plans and processes along with implementing instructions to achieve this goal.

The Commission elected Lieutenant Governor, Mike Stack as Chairperson of the PMCEC. There are four members of the Pennsylvania Military Installations and Base Development Caucus (MIBDC) as members of the Commission. These individuals were appointed by their respective caucuses.

Currently, Senators Alloway and Blake and Representatives Readshaw and Miccarelli represent the MIBDC. Other members of the Commission are:

William Fallon – Admiral, Retired
Joseph Spielbauer, Colonel, USA, Retired

Senior Military Representative
Executive Director

<u>COMMISSIONER</u>	<u>REPRESENTING</u>
John Gray	Economic Development
Nancy Lescavage, Rear Admiral Upper, Retired	The Navy Yard
Ron Nelson, Major General, USMC, Retired	Naval Support Activity Philadelphia
John Wiercinski, Geisinger Health System	Tobyhanna Army Depot
George Schwartz, Brigadier General	Pennsylvania National Guard
Phyllis Campbell, Senior Executive Service, Retired	Defense Logistics Agency Distribution, New Cumberland
George Connolly, Captain, USN, Retired	Naval Support Activity, Mechanicsburg
Neal Delisanti, Colonel, USA, Retired	Carlisle Barracks, USA War College
Mike Ross, President, Franklin County Area Development Corporation	Letterkenny Army Depot
Chip Holsworth, Colonel, USAF, Retired	911 th Reserve Airlift Wing
Bill Pentecost, Lieutenant Colonel, USAR	316 th Sustainment Command

In order to focus our efforts associated with each of the installations/organizations six local defense groups have been established. They are:

<u>Defense Group</u>	<u>Installation/Organization</u>
Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation	The Navy Yard & Naval Support Activity Philadelphia
Blue Ribbon Task Force of the Northeast PA Alliance	Tobyhanna Army Depot
Lebanon County Commissioners	The Pennsylvania National Guard

Cumberland York Area Local Defense Group

Naval Activity Mechanicsburg
Carlisle Barracks/USA War College
Defense Logistics Agency Distribution,
New Cumberland

Team Letterkenny, Franklin County Area
Development Corporation

Letterkenny Army Depot

Western Pennsylvania Military Affairs Council

911th Reserve Airlift Wing
316th Sustainment Command

The primary objectives of these local defense groups are to:

1. Be an active organization that meets several times per year.
2. Identify opportunities to enhance the military and economic value of our resident military installations
3. Speak with one voice in articulating local interests, recommendations and opportunities
4. Coordinate efforts to enhance the military installation/organization, its military and civilian members, and their family members.
5. Conduct and implement the results of studies to enhance the benefits of installations/organizations to our Nation and to our Commonwealth.
6. To actively engage our Congressional Delegation and our State Legislature to assist in the enhancement of the military stationed in Pennsylvania.

Should you be interested in becoming involved with your local defense group you are encouraged to do so by providing your contact information to Peter Witmer at pwitmer@pa.gov.





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GLORIOUS INSULTS

“He is not only dull himself; he is the cause of dullness in others,” Samuel Johnson



PA COUNCIL OFFICERS 2014-2015 Term

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PA MOAA chapters have 1,894 members and another 10,591 MOAA national members live in PA and are not in chapters. That means our total PA membership is 12,485 and climbing. Thank you for staying involved!

The Eagle is published monthly by the Pennsylvania Council of Chapters, Military Officers Association of America. Its content does not reflect the official position of the DoD, any branch of the US Armed Forces, NOAA, USPHS, nor MOAA National. Please send articles and audio-visual submissions to the Editor, Bob Gray, at pacocnewsletter@gmail.com.