



# THE EAGLE



## THE MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA PENNSYLVANIA COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS

[www.pa-coc.org](http://www.pa-coc.org)

*STILL SERVING*



### NEWS AND VIEWS February 2014



### PRESIDENT'S CORNER

In December the PA War Veterans Council was made aware that the PA Department of Veterans Affairs would be receiving a shipment of books sent by the President of Korea as a gift to Pennsylvania's military veterans that had "boots on the ground" during the Korean War. Using all of the veteran's organizations would be the best way to distribute the books to living Korean War veterans. The veterans do not have to be a member of any veteran's organization to receive a book. There word that they served if all that is required. The hard bound book contains photos and information about the war but the majority of the book is dedicated to how Korea and its people have grown since the war,

Chapters have requested copies of the Korean War book for the veterans in their area and I have picked up the books at Fort Indiantown Gap for the central and eastern chapters. Pittsburgh Chapter picked up books for the western chapters. Contact Carmen DiGiacomo at (412) 563-1859 for pick up.

The books will also be available at the 5 April council meeting in State College.

Last month I commented on the previous past president going to Florida and we sent the Polar Vortex to make him feel at home. This month there are two past presidents in Florida and they are sending their answer to the Polar Vortex. Maximus left a pile of wet snow then Nika came through depositing sleet and freezing rain with another big storm coming up the coast in a few days. Guys, I was just joking, enough already.

The MOAA Council lobby team was active at the capital on January 28. Bill Harris and Nate Kline from Lehigh Valley, Alicia Blessington from Philadelphia, Bob Gray from Keystone Capital and national MOAA member Pat McGill of Pottstown dropped off a new veteran's brochure against Pay Day Lending to all senate offices. The brochure was developed by coalition partners with our input. The brochure is attached with the newsletter. The team targeted key senate

offices to find out where the senator stood on Pay Day Lending. We were able to visit with legislative staffers and find out that most were against the bill. Some still support pay day lending and the team found out that there may be an amendment or new bill coming this session. The team was told by staffers that our presence is vital to keeping the bill from moving. No one wants to go against veterans.

Regards,  
Bob Gray

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## **COUNCIL MEETING DATES**

**April 5, State College**  
**July 19, State College**  
**September 12, Pittsburgh Convention**  
**November 8, State College**

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## **PAY DAY LENDING UPDATE** **Bob Gray, Legislative Chairman**

Senate bill sponsors of SB 975 met away from the capital with lobbyists in December to work strategy to get Pay Day Lending passed. To respond to this activity the coalition decided to make an information drop to the senators to remind them we are still opposing the bill and any Pay Day Lending. On January 27<sup>th</sup> the faith based coalition members lobbied the senate. On January 28<sup>th</sup> the MOAA team followed up with a veteran's brochure against Pay Day Lending. Stay tuned for future news.

## **MOAA MEMBERSHIP NEWS**

Chapter treasurer's can now set up chapter dues renewal and new members payments by credit card direct to the chapter's bank. MOAA national has established the program with Pay Pal after chapters requested it. The program is at no cost to the chapter. Chapter treasurers must contact MOAA national to set up the account.

Chapters can now use an online form to send MOAA national the info on new members.

Just go to:

[https://fs20.formsite.com/moaaweb/2013ChapterRecruiting/secure\\_index.html](https://fs20.formsite.com/moaaweb/2013ChapterRecruiting/secure_index.html) and fill in the data.

Because monetary incentives for recruiting and retention are based on a Chapter's reporting strength, MOAA national suggests that Chapters refrain from signing up newly commissioned ROTC cadets and midshipmen for Chapter membership since they will most likely deploy away from the Chapter's location after graduation - so having these new officers on Chapter rolls will cause their retention numbers to fall, preventing them from competing for cash awards.

Chapter Secretaries are reminded to keep the chapter roster updated when a member passes. The passing of a member does not count as a loss for chapter incentives. Go to the Chapters and Council Management tab of the MOAA website. Page down the list, click on Forms and Guidelines, page down to MOAA TAPS Form and click. Fill in the member and chapter information and send. Click on this link:

[http://www.moaa.org/main\\_form.aspx?id=8518](http://www.moaa.org/main_form.aspx?id=8518)

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## **Chapter News**

### **National Gold Bar Program**

In 2014, through the [Gold Bar Program](#), national MOAA will again offer the gold bar sets to the chapters who work with the ROTC units in their area. National MOAA will provide up to 5,000 sets of free gold bars to chapters supporting ROTC commissioning ceremonies.

We now are accepting requests, which are filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Email [awards@moaa.org](mailto:awards@moaa.org) or request your gold bars by mail to MOAA, Attn: Council and Chapters Affairs, 201 N. Washington St., Alexandria, VA 22314.

MOAA national has requested the PA Council of Chapters to cover all of the ROTC schools in the state. Most schools were covered but the few remaining will be contacted for support in 2014.

The key to a successful Gold Bar Program really is about developing personal relationships between chapter members and ROTC department personnel. It takes time and effort to cultivate these relationships, and we appreciate your support in welcoming newly commissioned officers into the officer corps.

For Chapter Recruiting 2014, National has refined certain aspects and provided more tools for chapter leaders — like the one-page [Gold Bar checklist](#), which can make the administrative burdens of running a chapter a little easier.

National plans on conducting several webinars on various topics and posting them to the [MOAA Web Base](#). The webinars will never take the place of a one-on-one conversation, but they can serve as another tool for chapter leader to use at their convenience. Check out our webinar on the [Online Chapter Member Dues Join and Renewal Program](#).

## **ROTC/JROTC Certificates and Medals**

To request MOAA ROTC/JROTC award packages, please email the MOAA national ROTC/JROTC awards coordinator, [awards@moaa.org](mailto:awards@moaa.org).

We ask that you please plan ahead and submit your request at least 2-3 weeks prior to the date you need them. Please provide the following information in your email request:

- Your name
  - Chapter name
  - Number of ROTC/JROTC packages desired (please distinguish between the two as JROTC and ROTC certificates are different)
  - Mailing address you would like the order sent to (shipping to a PO Box is not available, please provide a street address)
- For a listing of award criteria for Army and Marine Corps JROTC units go to the link

below. See more at:

<http://www.moaa.org/rotcawards/#sthash.V7tLwKkd.dpuf>

## **Pennsylvania National Guard Conference – 2014**

The Pennsylvania National Guard Associations will have their 2014 conference in the Harrisburg area on April 25-26. All chapters are invited to attend to staff a recruiting and information table with prizes supplied by MOAA national. Participating chapters will share the \$200.00 payment from national. Contact Bob Gray at 717-774-0707 or email at [rl\\_gray@hotmail.com](mailto:rl_gray@hotmail.com).

## **Passed Legislation**

### **Act 10, Senate Bill 437/ Folmer**

This bill concerns the licensure of JROTC instructors thereby allowing the Department of Education to recognize the military science instruction certification. This legislation would allow those teaching JROTC to continue to provide instruction with a military science endorsement as an instructor provided the instructor has a documented 20 years of service. Act 10 signed by the Governor on February. 4<sup>th</sup>.

## **PA War Veterans Council Legislative Breakfast Scheduled**

The annual legislative breakfast is scheduled for March 11 in Conference Room 60 off the East Wing Rotunda, across from the cafeteria. The time is 8:00 AM – 9:45 AM. The War Council will send invitations to legislators that influence veteran's issues and funding for Act 66 service officer program and the DAV transportation network for transporting veterans to the VA. Office visits will be scheduled for after the breakfast with legislators supporting council legislative goals and who introduced bills supported by the council.



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# State Veterans Legislation

I attended a meeting January 6<sup>th</sup> at Fort Indiantown Gap, office of the DMVA Legislative Liaison, Gilbert Durand. The meeting included the president of the State Veterans Commission, John Brenner, and the majority and minority directors of the House and Senate Veterans Affairs & Emergency Preparedness Committees. The group reviewed pending veteran's legislation and determined if bills had a chance of passing by the end of March to be included in a Veterans package of bills. During the discussion it was determined that a veterans lottery ticket may be a possibility. There are other programs funded by the Lottery that are not for senior citizens. The past and current governors have browed money from the Lottery fund to balance the budget leaving an IOU.

New bills introduced that will be reviewed by the War Council Legislative Committee this month are:

## **Senate Bill 1136/Blake –**

Under the legislation, the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) would establish the program in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA). The DMVA would implement a program to identify homeless veterans and veterans at imminent risk of becoming homeless. PHFA would establish a housing ombudsman to advocate for homeless veterans in the housing market, including lease negotiations and credit counseling issues.

The DMVA may require a veteran to engage in activities such as counseling, health education, job training, or other self help programs as a condition of participation.

Financial assistance in the form of a rental voucher will be provided to the veteran. The amount of the voucher will be for a maximum of \$1,000 per month for 12 months to cover housing costs. A veteran will be able to file for an extension.

**Status:** Resides in Senate Urban Affairs & Housing 1/13/14

Bob Gray, Legislative Chairman

## **Senate Bill 1224/Vance**

An Act amending Title 51 (Military Affairs), in long-term care patient access to pharmaceuticals, further providing for assisted living residence and personal care home veterans to receive VA prescriptions and to be broken down into daily unit does by the facility staff.

Resides in Senate VAEP Cmte 1/17/14

## **Senate Bill 1140/Boscola**

An Act amending Title 51 (Military Affairs), in the educational gratuity program for dependants of veterans who are deceased as a result of armed conflict and 100% disabled veterans as a result of armed conflict would change the current law for the educational gratuity program to increase the maximum educational gratuity from \$500 to \$1,000 and extend the number of scholastic years for which it is available to the student from 4 to 5. In addition, the maximum age through which the child would be able to receive the payment would be increased from 23 to 25, while the residency requirement prior to application would be reduced from 5 years to 1 year. Resides in Senate VAEP Cmte 1/17/14

## **HB 1164/Murt**

This legislation requires colleges, universities, and institutions of higher learning in Pennsylvania, to provide honorable discharged veterans and current members of the National Guard and the Reserve Component with priority registration. This will allow these man and women the opportunity to schedule classes earlier, thus maximizing their finite VA educational benefits. At present, priority registration is afforded to varsity athletes and other selected populations. Veterans deserve this same consideration. Our veterans in the Commonwealth face time restraints to finish their degree programs before their VA benefits run out. This legislation will allow our veterans more flexibility in the utilization of their well-earned benefits.

Status: Passed Senate Education Committee



## Northeast PA / Pocono Mountains Chapter



Pictured left to right; Joseph Albert, President, Lt Col USA Retired, Adelle Zavada, First vice president, Col USAF Retired, Joseph Kurey, Treasurer, Lt CDR USN Retired, Robert Schreiber, Secretary, CDR USN Retired, Bill Harris, PA Council of Chapters President, COL USA Retired Not pictured, George Kessler, 2nd Vice President, Lt Col USA Retired

Congratulations to the Northeast PA / Pocono Mountains Chapter on its reorganization and the hard work of Past President Bob Kutulis in coordinating with national MOAA Council and Chapter Affairs and contacting members in the area during start up well over a year ago. Bill Harris attended the meeting and congratulated the new officers. This was his last chapter visit on his state wide tour. You know he does kind of look like Kill Roy.

## York Chapter



Pictured left to right: President: LTC John Antonitis, USA-Ret. Vice President: COL Richard Fousek, USA-Ret. Secretary: LTC Gordon Weith, USA-Ret. Treasurer: Maj Robert O'Connell, USAF-Ret. Board Members: CW4 John Johnson, USAR-Ret. and CW5 David Arsenberger, USA-Ret.

Congratulation again to Bob Kutulis in his efforts working with national MOAA Council and Chapters Affairs and members in the York area. Area members were interested in reviving the chapter and getting involved with the community.

## TRICARE and the Affordable Care Act (ACA)

By Kathy Prout, vice chair, MOAA Auxiliary Member Advisory Committee

It is now the law that every American has to have health insurance coverage. How will the [Affordable Care Act](#) (ACA), commonly known as “Obamacare,” affect servicemembers and military retirees and their families and survivors?

The vast majority of active duty servicemembers and their families will see no will increase from \$176 to \$180 for the TRICARE Prime option, while the fees for the TRICARE Standard option will increase from \$152 to \$156 a month.

Those who are on the Civilian Health and Medical Program for the Department of Veterans Affairs, or CHAMPVA, also are covered completely under the ACA.

TRICARE For Life (TFL) meets the minimum standards under the ACA, however, the requirement that all TFL beneficiaries enroll in TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery begins Feb. 14. Part of the 2013 National Defense Authorization Act, this was a compromise to avoid tripling pharmacy copayments. All TFL beneficiaries must enroll in home delivery through Express Scripts for maintenance medications and remain in the program for a year, after which beneficiaries may opt out of the program. Express Scripts might issue individual waivers on a case-by-case basis.

change in their coverage as a result of the ACA. The only changes will be fee increases, which occur by law. TRICARE fees may not increase by more than the annual COLA. Military retirees under the age of 65 will see a COLA in their TRICARE fees. Annual TRICARE Prime fees will be \$273.84 for individuals and \$547.68 for families. TRICARE Young Adult monthly fees

Nursing home patients and those who use a military treatment facility are exempt. Enroll [online](#) or by calling Express Scripts at (877) 363-1303.

However, Congress and DoD have proposed fee increases for TRICARE and TFL. MOAA is against these proposed fee increases and is fighting the issue by [educating](#) Congress that claims that military health care costs are spiraling out of control are untrue. We all must remain vigilant to protect the health care benefits that have been earned through military service.

To keep abreast of this, visit MOAA’s [Web Base](#). You can take action by emailing a MOAA-prepared message to your senators and representatives. For those without Internet access, you may call MOAA’s Member Service Center at (800) 234-MOAA (6622) for help with any of your concerns. - See more at: [http://www.moaa.org/main\\_article.aspx?id=13465#sthash.72s3Af31.dpuf](http://www.moaa.org/main_article.aspx?id=13465#sthash.72s3Af31.dpuf)



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2014-2015 Term**

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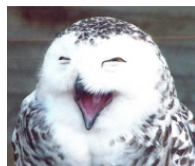
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***GLORIOUS INSULTS***

"Why do you sit there looking like an envelope  
without any address on it?" - **Mark Twain**



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