

2021 | DECEMBER



THE BORDER BULLETIN

EL PASO CHAPTER OF MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA



Nationally Ranked Five-Star Chapter • MOAA Affiliate from January 23, 1956 • Our 65th Year

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EL PASO CHAPTER NATIONAL AWARDS

Levels of Excellence

Runner-up	2000 and 2001
Five-Star Chapter	2001 thru 2018
Communications Award Print Newsletter	
Five Star	2015, 2016, 2018, and 2019
Four Star	2017
Winner	2004, 2012, 2013 and 2014
Runner-up	2008 thru 2011
Communications Award Print Legislative Coverage	
Winner	2008, 2009, 2011 and 2012
Communications Award Website	
Five-Star	2015 thru 2019
Winner	2010 thru 2013
Runner-up	2009 and 2014

INPUT deadline for February 2022 Border Bulletin 3 January

The Border Bulletin NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

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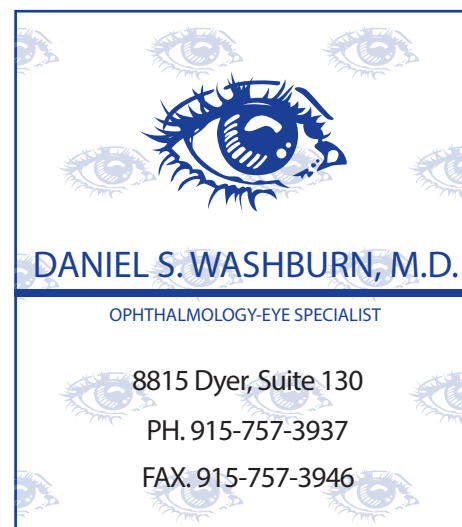
Statement of Publication

The Border Bulletin is the newsletter of the El Paso Chapter, Military Officers Association of America. It is published bi-monthly, even months, to inform the membership of issues and activities of interest to all. elpasomoaa.org is a non-profit entity within the State of Texas organized to represent the membership and to support the activities of the Texas Council of Chapters and MOAA National. Advertising contained on the website and in the newsletter and directory are not endorsed by the Chapter and does not represent any recommendation to the membership. Opinions expressed in articles contained herein are not necessarily those of the membership as a whole or the Chapter. Questions should be directed to the Editor, at the Chapter office.

The advertisements that appear in this publication/website do not reflect an endorsement by MOAA or the El Paso Chapter.

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Editorial Policy

MOAA national and the El Paso Chapter (a MOAA affiliate) are independent, nonprofit, and politically nonpartisan organizations.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

MIKE HESTER

RAD and will ensure it is a bang-up event.

Howdy Team! Hard to believe it is already the end of October and we are rapidly moving into the holiday months. Hope everyone is doing great and morale is high for you and yours!

On behalf of FT Bliss, I want to apologize for the cancellation of Retirement Appreciation Day that was originally scheduled for 30 Oct. The RAD was cancelled due to a new DOD COVID restriction that limits meetings on post to under 45 personnel. Unfortunately, the word came down in the eleventh hour and there was not much time to get the word out. Next year we will have much more input on the

On the MOAA front I want you to keep an eye out for the November issue of the El Paso INC paper. In it you will find a rundown on the MOAA Locklear scholarship. I am very proud of the efforts of many of our BOD and Foundation members to make this happen and it will ensure our MOAA scholarship runs in perpetuity. Speaking of the scholarship please do not forget about giving day, the more money we can pour into the scholarship the better off our organization and the students receiving the scholarship will be. You can find more info on our website at <https://www.elpasomoaa.org>.

This will be a busy few months with a couple of calendar changes due to the holidays. On Veterans Day 11 NOV 01 there will be a Veterans Day parade followed by some speakers at the Old Glory Memorial flagpole, come on out and enjoy the comradery of this great day. We will have our BOD meeting on 20 Nov 01 due to Thanksgiving and will follow it by our next lunch on 4 Dec. Our last BOD meeting of 2001 will happen on 18 Dec and then we will celebrate 2022! Hard to believe how fast time flies!

When you see our own Chief (R) David Garcia please congratulate him for being the El Paso Veteran of the Year! Great job Chief keep up the fire!

As always, we are looking for a few good men and women to assist the Chapter and Foundation. There are plenty of positions currently vacant or if you just want to help within your capabilities, please contact me any time mikehester65@gmail.com I guarantee we can put you to work! Also, if you have any gripes or complaints or even better, suggestions to make our organization better, please sling me your thoughts, feedback is a gift!

I hope to see you all at Veterans Day, I sincerely hope this note finds you and your families all doing great! But if you are not doing great remember to come up on the net and we will get you the assistance you need!

See you on the high ground soon!

Proud to serve!

Mike Hester

RETIREE PAY DATES FOR 2021

ANNUITANT PAY DATES FOR 2021

MONTH	DIRECT DEPOSIT DATES	MONTH	DIRECT DEPOSIT DATES
JANUARY	FEBRUARY 1	JANUARY	FEBRUARY 1
FEBRUARY	MARCH 1	FEBRUARY	MARCH 1
MARCH	APRIL 1	MARCH	APRIL 1
APRIL	APRIL 30	APRIL	MAY 3
MAY	JUNE 1	MAY	JUNE 1
JUNE	JULY 1	JUNE	JULY 1
JULY	JULY 30	JULY	AUGUST 2
AUGUST	SEPTEMBER 1	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER 1
SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER 1	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER 1
OCTOBER	NOVEMBER 1	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER 1
NOVEMBER	DECEMBER 1	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER 1
DECEMBER	DECEMBER 30	DECEMBER	JANUARY 3, 2022

EL PASO VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM PHARMACY

There are four convenient options for refilling prescriptions which can then be mailed directly to your home. Choose any process that is easy for you to use:

- Call the automated phone system at (915) 564-6100 ext. 6110 or 1-800-672-3782 ext.6110. Follow the directions to process your refill.
- Mail in your refill slips.
- Drop the refill slip in the mail-out box located in the pharmacy.
- Use the MyHealthVet Website: www.myhealth.va.gov

Please note, window service at the Pharmacy will be limited to new prescriptions only. So, for all refills, please use one of the 4 options listed above.

Location: 2nd Floor,
West Hallway.
Hours: Mon - Fri.,
8:00am-4:30pm;
Except Tues.,
9:00am-4:30pm

NEW MEMBERS

Mr. Timothy Jennings

RENEWALS

CW3 Chris Saindon
COL John McIlhenny
LTC Donald Hughes
LTC John Uxer
LTC Victoria Luminarias
COL Gary Mundy
COL Blake Wayman
MG James Maloney
Mrs. Eva Haggard
LTC Bruce Gramlich
COL Daniel Washburn
Mrs. Weibke Long
WO1 James Schreiner
Mrs. Reva Reel



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Vice-President LTC John Robbins, Ret.
Secretary CPT David Thackston
Treasurer LTC Dave Powell
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Chaplain Connie Sullivan
President, El Paso MOAA Chapter
Col (R) Mike Hester

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Outreach Foundation.

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Amazon donates.

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BUSINESS HOURS

M T W T F

LOBBY OPEN ONLY

2:00 - 5:00 p.m.

CONTACT US AT:

☎ 915.755.6089 📠 915.303.1561

📠 915.757.24.52

✉ northeastprinting@yahoo.com

📘 northeast printing



**Drive Thru
OPEN**

10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Lunch Menu DECEMBER

Country Fried Steak and
Creamy Gravy
Broccoli Almandine
Potatoes Au Gratin
Tossed Green Salad
Roll & Butter
Coffee & Iced Tea
MOAA Cake

Meeting Program

**Saturday 4 December
Underwood Golf Course**

Sequence of Events

1130 – 1145	Social
1145 – 1200	Opening Ceremony
1200 – 1245	Meal Service
1245 – 1330	Program
1330 – 1345	Door Prize Drawing
1345 – 1400	Closing Ceremony

**Please submit your Lunch
Reservations no later than
December 1**

Treasurer: MOAA
PO Box 6144
El Paso, TX 79906-0144

All dinner reservations
with payment to our
postal mail box

\$20 Per Person

**REMITTANCE
ENVELOPE ENCLOSED**

TEXAS DRIVER LICENSE, REAL ID AND YOU

Please be advised that beginning May 3, 2023, federal agencies will only accept Texas driver licenses and identification cards for official federal purposes - including air travel and entering federal facilities - provided the Texas driver license or identification card is marked REAL ID compliant. REAL ID compliance is indicated by a gold circle with an inset star located on the upper right of the driver license or identification card. For additional information regarding the REAL ID Act, please visit <http://www.dps.texas.gov/DriverLicense/federalRealIdAct.htm>.

Texas Department of Public Safety strongly encourages you to renew your license prior to May 3, 2023 to ensure that you have a REAL ID compliant card. If you already have a

REAL ID compliant card, as indicated with a Gold Star in the upper righthand corner, you do not need to take any action before May 3, 2023.

If you have any questions, please email realid@dps.texas.gov.

Fort Bliss offers Texas driver license services at 505 Pershing Ave, Room A154

Respectfully,
William L. Moore
Lieutenant Colonel,
US Army, Retired
Webmaster
<http://elpasomoaa.org>



Pharmacy

Main Pharmacy

(Bldg 7777 3rd Fl WBAMC) 5005 N Piedras St, El Paso, TX 79920.

915-742-2793

Freedom Crossing (PX) Pharmacy

1611 Haan Rd, Fort Bliss, TX 79906

915-742-9017

Soldier and Family Medical Clinic Pharmacy

2496 Ricker Rd El Paso, TX 79925.

915-742-1802

Mendoza Soldier Family Care Center Pharmacy

11335 Ssg Sims St, Fort Bliss, TX 79918.

915-742-1400

East Bliss Health and Dental Pharmacy

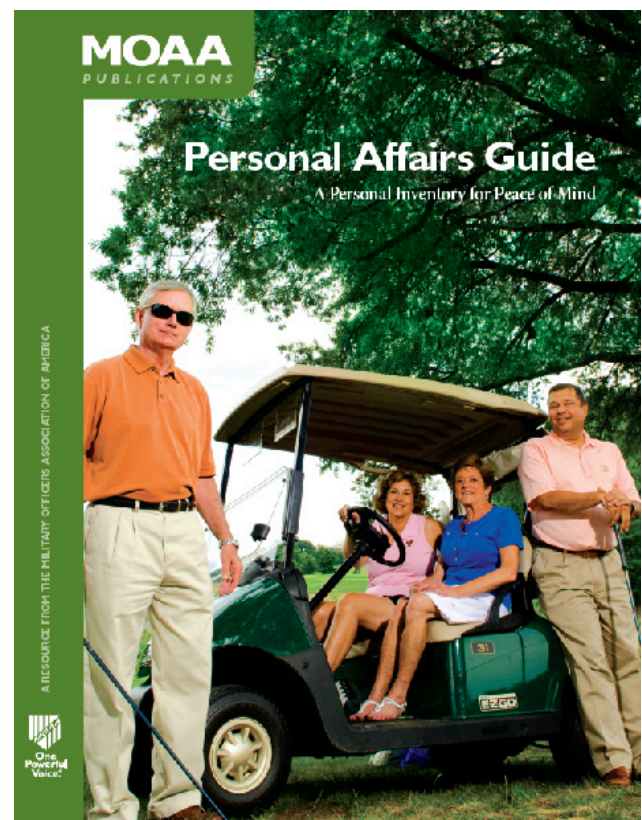
21227 Torch St, Biggs Field, TX 79918

915-742-9286

Special Drug Request

(Bldg 7777 3rd Fl WBAMC) 5005 N Piedras St, El Paso, TX 79920.

915-742-3645



Get yours today at MOAA.ORG; your family will Thank You!



CHAPLAIN CORNER

MRS. CONNIE SULLIVAN

Sometimes, some of us wonder why our loving God takes beautiful souls in the early and prime time of their lives. It seems, perhaps, that these special souls are too precious to be here in this life that has turned against God's guidance, principles and concepts (His Commandments).

There is so much evil now that, maybe, there is no place for such wonderful beings here, even though our hearts are broken of no longer having them with us. They are in a place of joy and happiness in the arms of our Eternal Father and in His loving care.

In our August Luncheon, I had the honor of sitting next to Sgt Major Locklear, a kind and very respectful man. In our conversation, he told me that he had been a paratrooper and I told him that my brother had also been one as well and that he died in an accident from a grenade that was thrown to the wrong side where my brother and three other soldiers were going by in a jeep and killed all four of them in Fort Bragg, NC. Sgt Major Locklear then told me of the death of his son in Iraq.

A few weeks later, I called him and asked him if I could write an article about his son. He told me that I could but that his wife would be able to give me better details of his son's death. When I met her, Mrs. Carmen Locklear, an absolutely wonderful lady who come to find out we both had so much in common, like our young years living



in the same area of town, was very kind in sharing her son's circumstance of his death.

When Mrs. Locklear described the kind of person her son had been, I was amazed because my

brother had been the same kind of individual, gentle, respectful, a loving brother and a very good and caring son to my parents. Yes, very special souls.

She said her son was also not only kind and respectful, a loving son to his parents too but was especially charitable, benevolent with Christ-like attributes of pure love. Her son, Sgt Velton Locklear III , died in 2006 in Iraq. On his second tour in Iraq , he arrived in Aug 25th 2006 and was killed Sept 23rd.

On that second tour, coming back from a mission, he decided to stay outside to fix the radio of the Humvee for the next group of troops that would be using the vehicle. His Sgt wanted him to come in to the barracks to rest but he wanted to stay and finish fixing the radio for his fellow soldiers that were to use the humbee on the next mission. He stayed outside until 5:00AM.

When he went in the barracks , there was a young soldier who was telling the Sgt. that he didn't want to go on the next mission because he was not feeling well, he was sick.

So Sgt. Locklear told the officers that he would go in his place. In the con-

voy while riding in the first humbee, the vehicle ran over an IED and he and the driver were killed in the explosion.

The emotional pain and agony of the parents and family, of course, cannot be described. Our organization , MOAA El Paso Chapter have a scholarship in his name.

It is these kind of soldiers that are the heart of our country. Our Heavenly Father knows our heart pains and sorrows; and even though sometimes we doubt, we need to trust in our creator for He and He alone knows why.

Inspite of our afflictions, tribulations and distresses, our faith needs to stay strong because

He is the only one that can sooth and heal that enormous pain; and by remembering that they are in a better place where there is but love and joy, we can have peace and tranquility in our souls with our Savior's help.

Report a Retiree Death

Monday - Friday:

0730 - 1700

915-568-5207

After Hours (Installation)

915-569-6950/6951

or visit:

<https://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary>

Armed Services YMCA – El Paso

Junior Enlisted Family Center

• Food Pantry • No-Cost Thrift Store • Baby Project • Soldiers Kits • Volunteering

Located on the corner of Sheridan and Cassidy at
2004 Sheridan Rd. Fort Bliss, TX



Donations

Duration Varies

JEFC Donations: Clothing, Shoes, Accessories, Toys, Nursing, Maintenance, Media, Electronics, Seasonal, Uniforms, Household, Furniture, Appliances, Sports Gear, Hygiene, Military Gear, Crafts and Books.

Food Pantry Donations: Non Perishable foods such as – Canned Vegetables, Canned Fruits, Bagged Grains, One box meals, Canned Protein, Breakfast items and Snacks.

Baby Project: Baby Wipes, Diapers, Baby Food, Baby Cereal and Formula.

Monetary Donations: Give online: www.asymca.org/donate-el-paso Donate over the phone: (915) 263-7164 Mail a check: 7060 Comington St. El Paso, TX 79930

Volunteering at the JEFC

Duration Varies

Offering active duty service members, military spouses and Fort Bliss Youth a positive opportunity to earn volunteer hours in their community. Volunteers can earn up to 52 hours a month during business hours to go towards school credit, promotion points or resumes.

Volunteer Requirements: - Current Physical - Must be registered in Amilia.

Ages 17 and under must be accompanied by parent or legal guardian.

To register visit: www.asymca.org/el-paso-sign-in

Baby Project

Duration Varies · Free to military E6 and below

Junior Enlisted military families in need are allowed one bundle of diapers, baby wipes and up to 10 baby food items per week during hours of operation while supplies lasts.

Hours of Operation: Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 10:30am - 2:30pm

Location: 2004 Sheridan Rd. Fort Bliss, TX

Emergency Food Pantry

Duration Varies

Military families in need can pick up a voucher for further assistance while visiting ACS, which can then be redeemed at our JEFC during our hours of operation.

Hours of Operation: Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and 3rd Saturday of the month from 10:30am - 2:30pm

Location: 2004 Sheridan Rd. Fort Bliss, TX

Army Community Services 2494 Ricker Road 915-568-0768

Shopping

Duration Varies · Free to military E6 and below

Free new and gently used items to Junior Enlisted E6 and below military families in need.

-Clothing, Shoes, Accessories, Toys, Nursing, Maintenance, Media, Electronics, Seasonal, Uniforms, Household, Furniture, Appliances, Sports Gear, Baby items, Hygiene, Military Gear, Crafts and Books.

Hours of Operation: Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and 3rd Saturday from 10:30am - 2:30pm

To register visit: www.asymca.org/el-paso-sign-in



El Paso Chapter
Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)
PO Box 6144
Fort Bliss, TX 79906-0144

Help Us to Help!

Dear El Paso MOAA Member,

Since its inception, in 2013 as a 501(c)3 philanthropic organization to fund and enhance MOAA activities, the **El Paso MOAA Outreach Foundation** has supported local Active Duty Military, Veterans and their families—including sponsorship of Military Unit functions and events. In the past three years, El Paso MOAA members have donated over \$ 20,000 dollars which were used to support Ft Bliss MWR ACS, SKIES Unlimited Child and Youth Services, Teams from the 1st Armored Division competing in the Battan Death March, YMCA funding for Jr Enlisted Food Bank, and other charitable activities in the El Paso military community. This year we also established our first Annual Memorial Scholarship program in partnership with the El Paso Community Foundation—the **Sgt Velton Locklear II Memorial Scholarship**.



This coming year we will again be helping those in need particularly those with hardships due to COVID-19 impact on our Community. Accomplishing our 2022 Goals largely depends on the generosity of El Paso MOAA members and Friends of the Chapter. This year our Outreach Foundation will again use as the first Tuesday after Thanksgiving as our annual fundraising outreach and we are writing you to solicit your continued support. This special day was created in 2012 as a simple idea: *a single day of generosity that encourages people to do good.*

Our goal is to raise \$10,000 for projects that your Foundation will use to support worthwhile causes in 2022. The Foundation expresses our sincere thanks for your previous generous donations. And we thank you in advance for your generous gifts on;

#GIVINGTUESDAY™

Our **Giving Day for 2021** will take place on **Tuesday, 30 November 2021**. You may donate online at: <https://www.elpasomoaa.org>, just click on the **Giving Tuesday Logo**, or by mailing your donation to : El Paso MOAA, P.O. Box 6144, Ft Bliss, Texas 79906.

Your 2021 El Paso MOAA Outreach Foundation Board of Directors

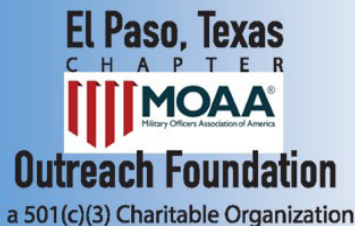
LTC (R) John R. Robbins Vice President/Acting President	LTC (R) Dave Powell Treasurer	Connie Sullivan Chaplain
COL (R) Lennie Enzel Director Veterans Activities	CPT (R) David Thackston Ambassador, Military Organizations	COL (R) Maureen Lofberg Director
COL (R) Mike Hester President El Paso MOAA Chapter		



**October
2021
Luncheon**







Giving Day 2021 is Giving Day 2021 is Here!!

Each year the **El Paso MOAA Outreach Foundation** raises funds for our coming year charitable projects on **Giving Tuesday, the first Tuesday after Thanksgiving—this year on 30 November 2021.** Outreach programs depend on El Paso MOAA Members and Friends support on this important day. This year more than ever many active duty and veteran charitable organizations and activities are in need of our help—please help us to help them.

Thanks to our Member generosity last year in addition to establishing our first Memorial Scholarship in partnership with the El Paso Community Foundation, charitable contributions were provided to Army ACS for direct payments to Soldier Families facing COVID problems, the Jr Enlisted Food Bank, Veteran's Court, and other Veteran programs. Additionally, your Foundation achieved MOAA National Grant awards to support the Ft Bliss MWR Resilience in Art and SKIES Youth Programs.

Our Success in 2022 will depend on

El Paso MOAA Giving Day

First Tuesday after Thanksgiving!

November 30th, 2021

<https://www.elpasomoaa.org>

**Please Don't
forget to
DONATE!!**

Foundation Donations can be made at:

<https://www.elpasomoaa.org>.

or

send your donation to the address below.

**El Paso MOAA Outreach Foundation
PO Box 6144 Fort Bliss, Texas 79906-0144**



elpasomoaa.org

El Paso Chapter
Military Officers Association of America
PO Box 6144
Fort Bliss, TX 79906-0144

BASIC MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENT

☒ YES! Sign me up as a **FREE** BASIC MOAA Member

Name _____

Branch of Service _____ Rank _____

☐ Retired ☐ Active ☐ Former

☐ Reserve ☐ National Guard ☐ Auxiliary*

☐ Graduation Year (Cadet/Midshipmen) _____

Email Address** _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number _____

To ensure deliverability of MOAA communications, please provide a personal email without a ".mil" domain if available.

We value your privacy. MOAA does not rent or sell its members' emails to third parties. If you include your email address, you will receive e-communications from MOAA as a member benefit. Visit www.moaa.org/email for details.

Date of Birth _____

Spouse Name _____

Your spouse has access to all of your MOAA member benefits.

*Surviving spouse of eligible officer

**Email address required for BASIC Membership

Chapter Name _____

M1300CJOIN

or

Chapter MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENT

☒ YES! Sign me up as an El Paso Chapter Member

Name _____

Branch of Service _____ Rank _____

☐ Retired ☐ Active ☐ Former

☐ Reserve ☐ National Guard ☐ Auxiliary*

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email Address _____

Phone Number _____

Unit _____

To ensure deliverability of MOAA communications, please provide a personal email without a ".mil" domain if available.

Date of Birth _____

Spouse Name _____

Your spouse has access to all of your MOAA member benefits.

☐ One-Year Hard Copy Membership \$20

☐ One-Year Electronic Membership \$15

☐ Multi-Year Memberships Contact Membership Chair

*Surviving spouse of eligible officer

M1300CJPRE

Method of Payment

☐ Check (please make payable to El Paso MOAA) ☐ Visa ☐ Discover ☐ MasterCard ☐ AMEX

Charge my card \$ _____

Card number _____ Expiration date _____

Signature _____

Dues to MOAA are not deductible as a charitable contribution for federal tax purposes.

Send to:
El Paso Chapter MOAA
PO Box 6144
Fort Bliss, TX 79906-0144

Add your own voice to the fight.



Why Plans to Merge Commissary and Exchange Systems Have Come to a Halt

By: Jen Goodale

Although not completely off the table, it appears plans to consolidate the commissary and exchange systems are far more costly than originally expected, according to a new report – one echoing concerns raised by MOAA and other military and veterans groups since early in the merger discussions.

The Aug. 23 report identifies miscalculations from the previous feasibility study and states the plan actually would cost an additional \$1.5 billion. In its conclusion, its authors say DoD now views the initial 2018 case study as “not feasible, and no longer supports consolidation.”

MOAA, along with several other military and veteran service organizations, expressed concern with the commissary-exchange merger since it

was introduced in 2018. After the case study mentioned above concluded strong support for consolidating the defense resale system, the FY 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) included a provision for the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to review DoD’s analysis, and the FY 2021 NDAA included requirements for further, expansive reporting.

“MOAA and our many partners have known for years that merging the exchanges and commissaries would reduce the benefits to military families and the quality of service,” said MOAA President and CEO Lt. Gen. Dana T. Atkins, USAF (Ret). “The previous business case analysis was flawed and documented in a GAO report in April 2020. MOAA remains committed to protecting the commissary and exchange benefit and is encouraged DoD has changed course. We look forward to partnering with the exchanges and commissaries to support outreach on the importance of this benefit to the uniformed community.” The GAO report and the updated business case analysis revealed three areas that were miscalculated or not

considered:

The 2018 analysis overstated savings of the cost of goods sold because the amount of overlap between products sold by the Defense Commissary Agency and those sold by the exchanges amounts to less than one-third of the total cost of goods sold. Original estimates for the development of new, common IT systems to operate the consolidated system only included approximately half of the actual costs. Initial reports failed to account for the costs associated with establishing a new headquarters location. In 2019, MOAA and 27 other members of The Military Coalition -- a group of organizations collectively representing nearly 5.5 million members of the military community -- sent a letter to the House and Senate armed service committees to express concern regarding moving too quickly on a commissary-exchange merger, the accuracy of the predicted costs, and the impact on military families if the merger proceeded without further review. We are pleased with the follow-on report and feasibility study which have steered DoD officials in a different direction.

Get Your Financial House in Order Thanks to This MOAA

Publication

By: Kevin Lilley

Automated billing, paperless invoices, and an array of other technological advances have made it easier than ever to keep track of your finances, or to start losing touch. If you’re not sure which account is paying which bill on which date, or you’ve lost a password to your investing app, or your cellphone or laptop (and all its bookmarks) meets an unexpected demise, the friendly technology designed to streamline your budget can become an enemy in short order.

Instead of looking for another app to organize the first dozen or so apps,

consider starting with MOAA’s Personal Affairs Guide. This publication – available for download as a PDF for Premium and Life Members at the previous link – goes beyond financial guidance, giving you a roadmap for keeping track of legal paperwork, service records, and much more. Yes, it’s designed to create peace of mind in the future, but filling it out has the benefit of clearing up many present-day financial concerns. Use the workbook to:

- Keep a running tab of automatic payments, including which account the payments come from.
- Track all your investment accounts, retirement funds, and annuities.
- List your credit card information and any other outstanding debts, including active payment plans.
- Put all your insurance information – a critical part of financial planning at any stage – in one place.
- Turn that messy notepad in your desk

drawer into an easy-to-read resource full of passwords, contact information, and other must-save data.

Having these materials in case of an emergency, or for use by your survivors as part of a comprehensive estate plan, may solve future problems before they happen. It also will allow you to take stock of your current financial situation: Are there dormant accounts you’ve neglected? Are you making automatic payments for services you don’t use? Do you have overlapping insurance products you don’t need? Knowing your financial situation is the first step toward improving it. MOAA members can access other financial publications at this link, and can keep up with the latest financial updates from MOAA at [MOAA.org/finance](https://moaa.org/finance).



DOC'S CORNER

DR. DANIEL WASHBURN.

I attempted to move away from writing about COVID but can't seem to get away from it. Vaccine booster shots recently became available, and a lot of people have asked me if they should get a booster shot or which one to get. So, I think an update on booster shots is pertinent. The following information is based on CDC guidelines as of November 1, 2021.

Your initial COVID vaccine shots are still very effective at preventing severe disease if you come in contact with the virus. However, ongoing research on the disease and treatments has shown that over time, the immune response from the vaccine gradually weakens and becomes less effective at preventing milder forms of the disease. Research has also shown that a vaccine booster shot rejuvenates the immune

response and should provide improved protection against the coronavirus including the Delta variant.

Johnson & Johnson: If you received the J&J vaccine, you are older than 18 years and it has been at least 2 months since your vaccine shot, a booster shot is recommended. CDC recommendations do allow for mixing of vaccine types. So, when you get your booster, you are free to choose between J&J, Moderna and Pfizer vaccine shots.

Moderna / Pfizer: If you received the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine and it has been at least 6 months since your second dose, a booster is recommended if you fall into one of the following categories: 65 years or older; 18 years or older and live in a long term care facility such as a nursing home or assisted living; 18 years or older and have an underlying medical condition such as diabetes, cancer, heart disease and many others; 18 years or older and live or work in a high risk setting such as healthcare, police/fire, education, correction facility, postal service, public transit, grocery store and others. Again, mixing of

vaccine types is approved so if you get a booster, you can choose between any of the 3 types available.

The booster shot is the same as the original vaccine except for Moderna, in which case the booster is half the original dose. Therefore, risks and side effects are the same for the booster as with the initial vaccine. If you have received the J&J or both doses of the Moderna/Pfizer vaccine, you are still considered fully vaccinated regardless of whether you choose to get the booster or not.

If you go in to get a booster shot, remember to take your vaccine card with you. Also, if you are traveling for the Holidays or otherwise, remember to take your vaccine card with you. Some parts of the country require proof of vaccination to attend public events.

I sincerely wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy & Healthy 2022!

Daniel Washburn, M.D.
Former Chief Eye
Surgeon at WBAMC



SURVIVING SPOUSE LIAISON MRS. CONNIE SULLIVAN

This time of the year, Christmas Season, is such an enjoyable month because to some people, it's an opportunity to be with family, exchange gifts, a lot of eating delicious food,

especially pastries and quite a bit of partying; which is understandable because those type of activities are so much fun.

That kind of entertainment is the same for us believers; however, Christmas has an even more profound and special meaning because we believe that it is the coming to earth of our Redeemer and King, our Lord Jesus Christ.

We celebrate it mostly the same way but with a lot of reverence. He has a special place in our hearts; so all the decorations and beautiful lights have a special significance that elicits a feeling of hope and gratitude for our blessings that have to do with his birth since we believe that he came to pay for our sins.

And as wonderful as this occasion is, we have to remember that this time of year is not that joyful of a season for those who have lost their loved ones. Even so, the faith that some people

have, is what keeps them going in this life with the hope that they will see them some day when they also leave this life and will be with them in heaven.

This hope for better times to come, is embedded in every one's soul and heart and it helps us look forward to a much brighter future. In spite of the trials and tribulations that we have gone through this past year and a half, Christmas is a time to rejoice for the miracle that God has given us of life.

MERRY CHRISTMAS ! and may God continue to bless each and every one of us and keep us all safe and protected from harm, evil, the pandemic and disasters. May our Heavenly Father, the God of love and peace, also be with us especially in this wonderful Christmas Season.



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LEGISLATIVE

CW2 DAVE GARCIA, USA, RETIRED

Greeting Comrades,

I would like to first give my deepest thank for the chapter BOD for nominating me for El Paso County Veteran of The Year...And was blessed by a 5 -0 vote by the County Commissioners and veterans advisory committee to be selected as The 2021 El Paso County Veteran of the Year...And also thanking the chapter members for always being supportive and having me represent you as your legislation coordinator... There's a lot of work needs to be done... It seems our elective official have changed their agenda onto other priorities...due to the change of this administration...we have to be vigilant and alert on what's going on with legislation pertaining to our benefits and quality of life...or we will be forgotten...Working together with other VSO advocating for our benefits we will prevail...Thank you again for all your support...

NOTE: MOAA is asking every member to contact your elective official for the support on these legislation issues...Contact Congresswoman Escobar and Congressman Tony Gonzales to support these concerns... All this info is found on Moaa.org ... under Advocacy...Legislative Action Center this is just a few listed below there is more....

These important issues require your immediate attention. Send your elected officials a MOAA-suggested message today.

- **Urge Your Elected Officials to Support Comprehensive Toxic Exposure Reform Legislation** <https://takeaction.moaa.org/moaa/app/take-action?engagementId=511223>

Comprehensive toxic exposure reform is needed to ensure we avoid the problems faced by Vietnam veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange.

- **Urge Your Elected Officials to Fix the TRICARE Young Adult Coverage Gap** <https://takeaction.moaa.org/moaa/app/take-action?engagementId=511394>

MOAA continues efforts to build support for The Health Care Fairness for Military Families Act of 2021, H.R. 475 in the House, and S. 1972 in the Senate. These bipartisan and bicameral pieces of legislation would expand TRICARE eligibility to young adult dependents up to age 26, bringing TRICARE in line with commercial plan requirements.

- **Ask Your Lawmakers to Support the Military Hunger Prevention Act** <https://takeaction.moaa.org/moaa/app/take-action?engagementId=511409>

Food insecurity among junior servicemembers is not a new concern, but like many ongoing problems, it's been made worse by the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Military Hunger Prevention Act would establish a Basic Needs Allowance (BNA) for these servicemembers, helping them overcome financial difficulties and allowing them to concentrate on their duties.

Ask Your Legislators to Adjust SGLI and VGLI for Inflation with the Supporting Families of the Fallen Act Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) and Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI) coverage amounts have not been updated since 2005. This law would raise the level from \$400,000 to \$500,000 – a necessary move to preserve the value of this program in the face inflation. Ask your lawmakers to lend their support today.

These important issues require your immediate attention. Send your elected officials a MOAA-suggested message today.

- **Urge Your Senators to Support Legislation to Repeal the TRICARE Select Enrollment Fee** <https://takeaction.moaa.org/moaa/app/take-action?engagementId=511147>

Act now to urge your senators to support the TRICARE Select Restoration Act, which is an important first step to repeal the enrollment fee for grandfathered retirees.

- **Urge your legislators to support concurrent receipt** <https://takeaction.moaa.org/moaa/app/take-action?engagementId=510849>

Contact your representative and senators and urge them to support The Major Richard Star Act, which would provide concurrent receipt for servicemembers unable to complete 20 years of service due to combat-related injuries. Help ensure these men and women get their full service-earned retirement, as well as their disability compensation from the VA.

- **Support Health Care for Children of Disabled Veterans or Veterans Who Have Died Due to a Service-Connected Disability** <https://takeaction.moaa.org/moaa/app/take-action?engagementId=511108>

Did you know many adult children of veterans who are disabled or who died from a service-connected disability lose access to their parent's health well before the age of 26?

These important issues require your immediate attention. Send your elected officials a MOAA-suggested message today.

- **Urge Your Senators to Support Legislation Extending TRICARE Coverage to Certain 'Gray Area' Retirees**

The TRICARE Fairness for National Guard and Reserve Retirees Act (S. 829), introduced by Sens. Rob Portman (R-Ohio) and Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) and the House companion bill (H.R. 1997), introduced by Reps.

Bill Johnson (R-Ohio) and Dean Phillips (D-Minn.) would ensure these “gray area” retirees who qualify for retirement pay before age 60 are eligible for the TRICARE retiree benefit.

• Ask Congress to Preserve Arlington National Cemetery and Eligibility for 20-Year Retirees

Help MOAA stay in the middle of this important conversation – Contact your representative and urge them to designate in the FY 2022 NDAA the next national cemetery as ANC reaches capacity.

• Ask Your Lawmakers to Support the Military Retiree Survivor Comfort Act

Financial concerns and stress can be a terrible burden on top of an already stressful situation for a newly widowed spouse. For some, when they discover DFAS may take part or all of that last retirement check back, it can be an overwhelming event. The Military Retiree Survivor Comfort Act (H.R. 2214 and S.1669) will allow survivors to gradually repay the amount over the next 12 months and have an opportunity to request for debt forgiveness through DoD.

These important issues require your immediate attention. Send your elected officials a MOAA-suggested message today.

• Help MOAA Secure Health Care for Servicemembers in the Selected Reserve <https://takeaction.moaa.org/moaa/app/take-action?engagementId=511917>

The National Guard and Reserve play critical roles in our national defense and emergency response missions. In the past year, our nation has relied on the Reserve Component to assist with responses to wildfires, natural disasters, civil disturbances, the COVID-19 pandemic, and global operations. Yet, its members lack health care and dental coverage to maintain their readiness. The Healthcare For Our Troops Act would provide medical and dental care for Selected Reserve

members at no out-of-pocket cost, bringing their coverage in line with their active duty counterparts.

• Help MOAA Support the Representation for Exceptional Military Families Act <https://takeaction.moaa.org/moaa/app/take-action?engagementId=512138>

Progress continues on efforts to improve the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) with the introduction of the Representation for Exceptional Military Families Act.

• Ask Your Lawmakers to Support the Retained Skilled Veterans Act <https://takeaction.moaa.org/moaa/app/take-action?engagementId=508225>

This bipartisan legislation would end the so-called “180-day rule,” which imposes a waiting period on those leaving service before they can take on certain types of DoD civilian employment. Many of these jobs are empty as qualified applicants with security clearances are forced to look elsewhere to start their careers. Ask your representatives to help today.

COLA Watch

For more on MOAA's latest advocacy efforts, click here. To learn more about MOAA, including how you can join, click here.

The September 2021 CPI is 269.086, 6.2 percent above the FY 2021 COLA baseline. The average of the July, August, and September CPI figures is 268.421, a 5.9 percent increase. This figure is used to determine the annual adjustment to military retirement pay, Social Security, and other allotments.

The Consumer Price Index for October, the first of the new fiscal year, is scheduled to be released Nov. 10. The CPI baseline for FY 2021 is 253.412; the CPI baseline for FY 2022 will be 268.421.

The latest COLA news:

• Military Retirees, Disabled Veterans to See Largest Pay Raise in Decades for 2022 <https://www.moaa.org/>

[content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2021-news-articles/military-retirees,-disabled-veterans-to-see-largest-pay-raise-in-decades-for-2022/](https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2021-news-articles/military-retirees,-disabled-veterans-to-see-largest-pay-raise-in-decades-for-2022/)

• Could Congress Come for Your COLA? Here's Why MOAA Stands Ready to Fight <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2021-news-articles/advocacy/could-congress-come-for-your-cola-heres-why-moaa-stands-ready-to-fight/>

• What Recent Figures Could Mean for Your TRICARE Costs <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2021-news-articles/cola-update-what-recent-figures-could-mean-for-your-tricare-costs/>

• Why a COLA Spike Could Put Retirees' Pay Adjustment at Risk <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2021-news-articles/advocacy/why-a-cola-spike-could-put-retirees-pay-adjustment-at-risk/>

• Why COLA Is a Battle <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2020-news-articles/advocacy/retirees-heres-why-cola-is-a-battlefield-for-your-earned-benefits/>

Military Retirees, Disabled Veterans to See Largest Pay Raise in Decades for 2022

OCTOBER 13, 2021

Military retirees and veterans receiving disability payments from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will see their paychecks go up by 5.9% for 2022, triggered by inflation and an annual adjustment to the federal Cost of Living Allowance (COLA). <http://www.military.com/benefits/military-pay/allowances/cola-for-retired-pay.html>

We are advocating for H.R. 4732: Protecting Benefits for Disabled Veterans Act of 2021....

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