



The Salute express



Monthly newsletter of the Portsmouth Area Chapter, an affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America, serving Portsmouth, Chesapeake, Suffolk, Smithfield & Franklin, Virginia, since 1983. Dinner meetings are held the 2nd Thursday of each month, July and August excepted, at Portside on the Coast Guard Base, Portsmouth, VA

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Gordon Nelson, Editor

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SENATE PUNTS ON TRICARE FIX

Despite a strong push from MOAA, the American Medical Association and others), the Senate failed to muster enough votes this week to repeal the flawed statutory formula that will impose a 21% cut in Medicare and TRICARE payments to doctors this coming January unless the law is changed.

On Oct 20, MOAA President VADM Norb Ryan Jr. (USN-Ret) was one of three major association leaders invited by Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) to speak at a press conference to highlight the importance of passing Stabenow's "Medicare Physician Fairness Act" (S. 1776) to protect against repeated cuts in 2010 and subsequent years.

"The current flawed formula for Medicare doctor payments puts every military beneficiary at risk, because military TRICARE payments are tied to Medicare's," said Ryan, speaking at the press conference in the U.S. Capitol building.

"Access to health care already is the single biggest problem for military beneficiaries of all ages," Ryan asserted. "The 21% cut to Medicare and TRICARE payments called for under current law would make that problem exponentially worse by causing large numbers of doctors to stop seeing elderly and military patients. The last thing troops in combat should have to worry about is whether their sick spouse or child can find a doctor to treat them."

Ryan said MOAA members already had generated more than 16,000 messages in the space of four days urging their legislators to support Stabenow's legislation.

Stabenow said she introduced her bill to get Congress "to rethink how we look at physician care and physician payments." She said Congress has acted to stop such cuts seven times in the past, but most have only been one-year fixes that necessitated reversing even bigger cuts the following year. "We need to stop the band-aid approach, be honest about [future budgets], and lay a foundation for real physician payment reform."

"I want to thank the Military Officers Association of America for their strong support," said Dr. J. James Rohack, President of the American Medical Association, "to preserve access and choice for seniors and military beneficiaries, now and in the future. Current law requires not only a 21% payment cut in 2010, but also a cumulative 40% cut over the next six years. With millions of baby boomers coming into Medicare eligibility in the next two years, we must repeal this broken formula." (cont. pg 4)

Chapter Happenings

NOVEMBER CALENDAR

- 01 Daylight Savings Time ENDS
Clocks fall back 1 hour at 0200
- 03 General Election Day
- 10 Admirals at Home today and tomorrow
- 11 VETERANS DAY
- 12 PACMOAA board meeting 1900
- 21 Grand Illumination Parade Norfolk
- 26 Thanksgiving
- 27 Winter Wonderland at Hunt Club Farm
Admirals at Home
- 28 Admirals at Home

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I hope you are enjoying your fall days! As a reminder, we retard our clocks one hour on Sunday, 1 November 2009 at 0200!

The first item of business is for me to inform you that our monthly dinner meeting for the month of NOVEMBER 2009 HAS BEEN CANCELED. This cancellation

was necessitated due to our normal date being given away for another event. You may recall that earlier this year I informed you we are "space-A" for using the Portside....which means, we can only reserve a date one month in advance. We did look at attempting to hold the meeting on another date or place, but we could not get enough membership to attend in order for the elections to be held according to the by-laws.

We will hold our elections at our meeting on 14 January 2010; we will publish information in the next newsletter regarding how to submit your ballot. If you have already submitted your ballot, the election committee will hold your ballot securely until all votes are counted. We will also hold our annual business meeting at that time and move the installation of Officers to our February meeting.

My apologies for canceling the meeting; we are looking at other venues to hold our meet-

ings and we will keep you informed if we find an alternative site. Of course, the membership will have a vote if we recommend changes.

Our December Christmas dinner meeting venue has changed as well. We will meet for dinner on Thursday 10 DECEMBER 2009 1800-2200 at the DRY DOCK, SCOTT CENTER ANNEX. We will have two entrée's to choose from with the meal served buffet style and a cash bar as well. We will also have a band playing Christmas music and a follow-on jazz ensemble for dancing, as well as a gift exchange. I hope you plan to attend this very special evening! Alice will be contacting you for your RSVP. As for the traditional gift exchange, all males should bring a male gift and females bring a female gift. Gifts should not exceed \$5.00.

I would like to wish you and your family a wonderful and safe Thanksgiving! I will see you at the December dinner meeting; in the meantime please vote in the upcoming State of Virginia elections.

Stay well,
Dave

NOVEMBER SLATE

The candidates slated for the elections originally scheduled for this month are as follows:

SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT

LCDR Dolores Cherrington USN (Ret)

TREASURER

CDR. John J. Lyons USN (Ret)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CAPT Raymond V. Cicirelli USCG (Ret)

CDR Cort Wagner USN (Ret)

The same slate will be used for the January elections. The ballot does provide for write in nominees. Volunteers are always welcome!

MEET THE CANDIDATES

CDR CORT WAGNER USN (RET)

Cort is a graduate of Tufts University with a BA in History and Political Science. Upon graduation, he was commissioned an Ensign in the Navy. His service career involved 4 P-3 squadron tours (including an exchange tour with the Royal Australian Air Force), 2 years in OP-60 in the Pentagon, a nine month Federal Executive Fellowship tour with Stanford Research, a 3 year tour on the staff of CINCPACFLT and culminated with two tours as Commanding Officer of Recruiting Districts. He retired an O-5 in September 1993. His awards include 4 MSM's, one JSCM and numerous campaign ribbons. He also received a Masters degree in Public Administration from Golden Gate University, San Francisco, CA.

Upon retirement, Cort was a Naval Science Instructor for three years at Onate High School, Las Cruces, NM. He decided to change careers to become a financial advisor for Edward Jones. He relocated to Alameda, CA and opened a new office for Edward Jones which he served in for almost 4 years. Later, he served in a management capacity in the Edward Jones home office in St Louis, MO for 4 years. He relocated in September 2003 to his current office in Portsmouth, VA.

Cort is married to his lovely bride, Melody. Together they have 5 children and 4 grandchildren. They now reside in Suffolk.

CAPT RAYMOND V. CICIRELLI USCG (RET)

Ray graduated from the US Coast Guard Academy in May 1965 as an Ensign. Married Janice Lowe and then he went to Hawaii to serve on his first USCG Cutter. This was followed by a tour on an ice breaker in the Great Lakes.

Then he decided to make a career change (within the USCG) by going to ship inspection duty as part of the Marine Safety program. While here, he was given the opportunity to go to postgraduate school in electronics and he attended the US Air Force Institute in Dayton Ohio.

After graduating with an MS degree he was sent to USCG HQ in Washington DC in the electronics division for four years and then to another electronics post for 2 years. He (and his three children) was granted a compassionate transfer to Governors Island, NY due to the death of his wife in a car accident. He was head of electronics training for the USCG for 4 years then, followed by 2 more years in the third district. This is where he met his wife, Peg, and added two more daughters to his family.

He stayed at HQ for 3 years then to Wildwood, NJ for 2 years and back to HQ for 1 year and retired in Alexandria, VA. A year later Peg retired and they moved to Portsmouth, VA.

CDR. JOHN J. LYONS SC USN (RET)

After graduation with a business degree from Mt. St. Mary's College in Emmitsburg, MD in 1953, Jack attended OCS and Navy Supply Corps School. He served in supply billets afloat and ashore and was the Material Control Officer of the Norfolk Naval Shipyard at the time of his retirement. Post retirement he was Norfolk Port Manager for Prudential Lines. While in Portsmouth Jack has been active in Kiwanis and church related organizations at local and diocesan level. He is a charter member of PACMOAA and has been auditor of our accounts ever since. He served as president in 1987 and as a director several times.

Jack and Teddy attended Camden Catholic High School in New Jersey. They have four children (one also retired from the Navy Supply Corps) and four grandchildren.

LCDR DOLORES CHERRINGTON USN (RET)

Dolly is currently the PACMOAA Treasurer and Personal Affairs Officer. She is a New Jersey native, graduate of Lankenau Hospital School of Nursing in Philadelphia and served in the Navy Nurse Corps from 1971-1992 in clinical and administrative positions stateside and in Italy. Her husband, Hans Sachse, is also a PACMOAA member. They met in Naples, Italy.

Ryan signed MOAA letters to every senator on October 20, urging them to vote for S. 1776, but the vote failed after several senators expressed concern about how to pay for the bill, which would cost \$250 billion over the next 10 years.

After the failed vote, Senate leaders pledged to find a way to approve and fund at least a one-year fix before the end of December to ensure the 21% cut in Medicare and TRICARE payments won't go into effect.

The problem with this approach is that current law requires compounding annual cuts - forcing a 26% payment cut in January 2011 - so putting off a permanent fix only increases the cost of doing that later.

MOAA will continue to press for action, not only to reverse the scheduled cut for 2010 but also to change the underlying law that causes this annually recurring threat to seniors' and military beneficiaries' health care access.

BITTER BUDGET WINDS AHEAD

Congress' failure to include any concurrent receipt relief for disabled retirees in the Defense Authorization Act, despite President Obama's personal support, came as a shock -- and maybe a wake-up call for the military community.

MOAA Government Relations Director Steve Strobridge's October "As I See It" *on line* column views this bitter setback as an ominous sign of even tougher budget struggles in 2010 and future years.

NO COLA, BUT SOME MAY SEE \$250

The Bureau of Labor Statistics released the September inflation figure this week and confirmed what retirees already knew - there won't be any Social Security, retired pay, VA disability pay, or SBP COLA for 2010.

Because inflation for the full fiscal year actually declined by 2.1%, that means we'll start

2.1% in the hole in counting down the COLA for the January 2011 COLA, too.

On the brighter side, President Obama this week called for legislation to renew for 2010 the \$250 economic stimulus payment that Social Security annuitants and VA disability compensation recipients received earlier this year.

White House officials said the \$250 payment should not be viewed as a "substitute COLA". They pointed out that several other provisions of the 2009 stimulus package covered two years, and that it was appropriate to renew this provision for another year, recognizing that many seniors and disabled people were still struggling with the effects of large retirement savings losses.

Officials said it would take three or four months to issue the \$250 checks once Congress clears and the president signs the legislation. Assuming Congress acts before the end of the year, eligibles could see the \$250 checks in April or May.

They stressed that the eligibility would be for one \$250 payment. People who are eligible for both Social Security and VA disability compensation would receive a separate \$250 check from each of those agencies, but won't get to keep the full \$500. They'd have to pay back the extra \$250 when they file their tax return the following spring, just as people who received both payments in 2009 will have to pay back \$250 when they file their 2009 tax return.

□ MOAA

RETURN TO HOME REMEDIES OR VOICE YOUR CONCERNS

A recent MOAA email reported on a hearing held by House Budget Committee Chairman John Spratt (D-SC) on Oct. 19 to discuss projected defense budget cost growth in coming years. There was concern about the increasing cost of military personnel and health care. The following are some extracts from the email:

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Voice (Continued from page 4)

“Matthew Goldberg of the Congressional Budget Office said one reason for that is that military pay raises have exceeded those of private sector workers. (MOAA comment: a more balanced testimony would have reminded the committee that these pay raises were essential to recover from the adverse retention effects of capping military raises below private sector raises almost every year during the 1980s and '90s.)”

“One source of savings, said Goldberg, could be implementation of a truly universal electronic health record for both DoD and the VA.

He also said something could be done to give military beneficiaries an incentive to economize on their health care and "not go to the doctor for every minor problem." He observed that Congress hasn't allowed the Pentagon to increase retiree cost shares, saying, "It's very hard to get folks to control their utilization when they don't face a co-payment."

Albert Loew (I assume in response to Goldberg's suggestion that we “not go to the doctor for every minor problem”) emailed *The Salute* a list of alternatives for common complaints such as headaches, burns, sinus, flu, sore throat and UTIs.

Did you know that drinking two glasses of Gatorade can relieve headache pain almost immediately-without the unpleasant side effects caused by traditional pain relievers?

Did you know that Colgate Toothpaste makes an excellent salve for burns?

Before you head to the drugstore for a high-priced inhaler filled with mysterious chemicals, try chewing on a couple of curiously strong Al-toids peppermints. They'll clear up your stuffed nose.

Achy muscles from a bout of the flu? Mix 1 tablespoon horseradish in 1 cup of olive oil. Let the mixture sit for 30 minutes, then apply it as

a massage oil for instant relief for aching muscles.

Sore throat? Just mix 1/4 cup of vinegar with 1/4 cup of honey and take 1 tablespoon six times a day. The vinegar kills the bacteria.

Cure urinary tract infections with Alka-Seltzer. Just dissolve two tablets in a glass of water and drink it at the onset of the symptoms. Alka-Seltzer begins eliminating urinary tract infections almost instantly-even though the product was never advertised for this use.

Harry Miller on the other hand thought it more propitious to hone both edges on the doubled edged nib of his pen and bring pressure to bear on decision makers to hear his case. On the same day that the House Budget Committee Chairman's hearing was in session, Harry sent the following:

“October 19, 2009

Hon. Gene Taylor
2269 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Taylor:

When we met several months ago during your visit to the Mississippi Coast Military Officers Association meeting, you told me you were responsible for ushering the TRICARE-FOR-LIFE program through the House of Representatives. As a beneficiary of this program I am concerned since I have learned from reliable sources that the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has recommended the program be downgraded and eventually discontinued because of its cost and “overuse.” This, indeed, is a fine way of expressing the Nation's gratitude to those of us who have devoted most of our adult lives in its service, oftentimes when our pay lagged far behind those of our civilian counterparts.

I invite this matter to your attention in the hope you will be in a position to forestall any of the changes the CBO has in mind, at least for the

(Continued on page 6)

Voice (Continued from page 5)

present and take measures to ensure the continuity of this beneficial program ad infinitum.

Such action on your part would go a long way in encouraging young people to enlist or accept appointments in the military and pursue military careers at a time when we have an all volunteer force, the services of which are crucial in pursuing the course of events in Afghanistan and other places.

I am certain we will be able to count upon your aggressive support in this important matter.

Sincerely,
Harry Philip Miller,
Captain, U. S. Navy (Ret.)”

Every PACMOAA member must decide how to respond to impending events that will have a great impact on their lives and to those who have served under their command. This is a challenge for individual action on your part to preserve your benefits. This challenge is best met by your letters, phone calls and emails. Do not forget that your family, friends and neighbors are free to express their thoughts on the issues in a similar manner. Remember one voice is not enough, unless backed by many.[]

A 9-11 PENTAGON STORY

This is a little-known (unverified, but sounds like the Marines) story from the Pentagon on 09/11/2001 forwarded to *The Salute* by Peg Cicerelli:

During a visit with a fellow chaplain, who happened to be assigned to the Pentagon, I had a chance to hear a first-hand account of an incident that happened right after Flight 77 hit the Pentagon. The chaplain told me what happened at a daycare center near where the impact occurred.

This daycare had many children, including infants who were in heavy cribs. The daycare su-

pervisor, looking at all the children they needed to evacuate, was in a panic over what they could do. There were many children, mostly toddlers, as well as the infants that would need to be taken out with the cribs. There was no time to try to bundle them into carriers and strollers. Just then a young Marine came running into the center and asked what they needed. After hearing what the center director was trying to do, he ran back out into the hallway and disappeared. The director thought, 'well, there we are—on our own.'

About 2 minutes later, that Marine returned with 40 other Marines in tow. Each of them grabbed a crib with a child, and the rest started gathering up toddlers. The director and her staff then helped them take all the children out of the center and down toward the park near the Potomac and the Pentagon. Once they got about 3/4 of a mile outside the building, the Marines stopped in the park, and then did a fabulous thing - they formed a circle with the cribs, which were quite sturdy and heavy, like the covered wagons in the Old West. Inside this circle of cribs, they put the toddlers, to keep them from wandering off. Outside this circle were the 40 Marines, forming a perimeter around the children and waiting for instructions. There they remained until the parents could be notified and come get their children.

The chaplain then said, "I don't think any of us saw nor heard of this on any of the news stories of the day. It was an incredible story of our men there."

There wasn't a dry eye in the room. The thought of those Marines and what they did and how fast they reacted; could we expect any less from them? It was one of the most touching stories from the Pentagon.

Remember Ronald Reagan's great compliment: "Most of us wonder if our lives made any difference. Marines don't have that problem."

AN INSPIRING STORY FOR VETERAN'S DAY

HAVE A SAFE AND GRATEFUL THANKSGIVING

THAT'S THE WRAP FOR NOVEMBER