



Heartland of America Chapter

-- **We Never Stop Serving** --
-- **We Are One Powerful Voice** --
--- **for Every Officer at Every Stage of Life and Career** ---

***** **July 2020** *****



***July 4th is Independence Day
"Don't take it for granted"***

No MOAA dinner in July

Next *Scheduled* Dinner Meeting **AUGUST 19th**

(see inside back cover for details)

Check out our website at www.heartlandMOAA.us or call (402)339-7888

The Bulletin Board

Is the Newsletter of the Heartland of America Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America. Content is from members, MOAA's [Take Action](#), [Legislative Action Center](#), and other military-oriented sources. Material used is public domain or attributed as to source and copyright. Our editorial policy is the same [non-partisan policy as MOAA](#).

Lt Colonel Patrick L. Jones, USAF(Ret) Editor & Webmaster - (402)650-4457

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Number 7

July 2020

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Our Chapter Board is planning a dinner meeting at Anthony's on August 19th. It will be our first meeting since March when Jeff Cannon spoke to us about his plans for expanding the SAC Museum. Our dinner meetings for April, May, and June were cancelled because of the coronavirus. Approximately two years ago we decided to not have meetings in the months of July and January because of vacations, cold weather, and low meeting attendance. Our August speaker will be Don Burman, the director of the Veterans Affairs Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System. He is very knowledgeable, with

more than 30 years of health administration experience, and is an excellent speaker. It will be an enjoyable evening.

The coronavirus pandemic had a significant impact on reforms of the Pentagon's health system, delaying plans to reduce services for several months at 48 hospitals and clinics forcing additional reviews of civilian care in locations affected by the changes. The intent of the plan was to provide medical service to active-duty only. Non-uniformed beneficiaries would get their medical care through TRICARE. This plan is dependent on the availability of TRICARE providers to provide health care to these beneficiaries. The focus on the facilities would be to provide

medical care to active-duty personnel only and training to military medical personnel. The shedding of non-uniformed beneficiaries to the TRICARE network would result in outsourcing health care for at least 200,000 patients.

For the plan to work, the Defense Department is dependent on the availability of TRICARE providers to handle the additional 200,000 clients. Another part of the plan was to transition up to 18,000 medical billets, those no longer needed at the 48 hospitals and clinics, to fund an increase in warfighting specialties. Since this year's Storming the Hill was cancelled by the virus, MOAA National encouraged Chapters to hold virtual meetings with our congressional delegations. Jeff Mikesell, our Legislative Chairman, and I met with Senator Fischer and Congressman Bacon, both members of the respective Armed Services Committees.

Our message focused on the impact of the COVID-19 and that the plans to downsize military medical billets were based on analyses that were completed years before the current coronavirus emergency. Since civilian medical systems have little incentive to maintain the excess capacity to respond to a national emergency, the nation turned to the military and approximately 4,400 active duty military members deployed for COVID-19. We strongly recommended an updated analysis and it appears our effort was successful as DoD has acknowledged a pause in their plan to cut nearly 18,000 military medical billets to help fund an increase in warfighting specialties. While some medical specialties are no longer available at Offutt's Ehrling Bergrquist Clinic, it was not on the list of 48 medical facilities to be closed or reduced.

We want to congratulate Max and Carol Moore on their 60th wedding anniversary as reported in a recent Sunday World-Herald. It was a very nice photo and article of Max and Carol as they celebrated their sixty years of marriage. Max and Carol are regular attendees at our meetings.

Dan Donovan

d.donovan1@cox.net

402-339-7888

SecDef Proposes Getting Rid of Military Promotion Photos to Eliminate Unconscious Bias

(MOAA website, JUNE 18)

Defense Secretary Mark Esper said June 18 that the military was committed to rooting out racism in the ranks and serving as an example to the nation of an institution that values diversity and equality.

"More often than not, we have led on these issues. However, we are not immune to the forces of bias and prejudice -- whether visible or invisible, conscious or unconscious," Esper said in a video message to the force. "We know this bias burdens many of our service members, and has direct and indirect impact on the experiences of our minority members, the cultural and ethnic diversity of the force, and representation in our officer ranks. "These things have no place in our military, they have no place in our country," he said.

To bring about change, Esper said he met with senior officers and enlisted leaders on ways to promote inclusion and create equality of opportunity.

The military led the nation on ending segregation after World War II, Esper noted.

"We all agreed it is time to lead once again on this issue as America's most respected institution and as a globally recognized leader when it comes to building diverse winning teams and creating opportunity for all," he said.

To that end, Esper said he was standing up within the department a new "Defense Board on Diversity and Inclusion" which will be tasked to come up with a plan in the next six months to increase racial diversity in the ranks. In addition, the plan calls for a separate and independent body outside DoD to be called the "Defense Advisory Committee on Diversity and Inclusion in the Armed Services."

That new advisory committee would provide long-term guidance on racial issues, and would be modeled on the "well-regarded and successful Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services," Esper said.

Esper said he also had directed the Pentagon's uniformed and civilian leadership to present him with ideas for promoting diversity that could immediately be put in place. He suggested that a way to eliminate race as a possible factor in deciding on promotions might be by "removing photos from promotion, school, and command selection boards -- this is something I pushed as secretary of the Army as we worked to overhaul our personnel system."

In his message to the force, Esper described his own roots to convey that he had an understanding of the issues. "I myself am keenly aware of how diversity is inherent in the foundations of this country," he said, although historians have consistently pointed out the profound differences between immigrants to America and those brought here in chains. "I'm a second-generation American whose paternal grandparents emigrated from Lebanon around the turn of the last Century and whose Irish ancestors from my mother's side came to this country decades before them," he added. "Each saw America as a land of hope and equal opportunity."

Esper issued the message amid growing tensions between DoD and the White House on the use of military forces to quell civil unrest and the renaming of military bases now honoring Confederate leaders.

Esper has also expressed his regrets for participating in a June 1 photo op with President Donald Trump in front of St. John's Episcopal Church near the White House, after local streets were forcibly cleared of peaceful protesters.

Key Senate Panel Approves 3 Percent Pay Raise for Troops Next Year

(MOAA website June 10)

A key Senate panel on Tuesday approved a **3 percent pay boost for troops starting next January, with bipartisan support for the idea.**

The mark matches the expected pay boost prescribed under federal statute and, if approved, would represent the first time in a decade that troops have seen

consecutive years with salary boosts of at least 3 percent. This past January, military pay increased by 3.1 percent.

Senators included the 3 percent pay raise in the personnel section of the Senate Armed Services Committee's [annual defense authorization bill](#) draft.

If approved by the full committee — and it is expected to be later this week — the pay raise plan will match White House recommendations. The pay increase level is already publicly backed by several leaders on the House Armed Services Committee.

[RELATED: [Thrift Savings Plan Adds New Funds](#)]

In past years, that figure has been trimmed to help cut overall defense budget costs, with savings redirected to a host of other modernization and readiness efforts. But outside advocates have cautioned against such moves, saying lower-than-expected pay raises can hurt military families' finances and lower morale.

For junior enlisted troops, the proposed raise would amount to roughly \$860 more a year in pay. For senior enlisted and junior officers, the hike equals about \$1,500 more. An O-4 with 12 years service would see more than \$2,800 extra next year under the increase.

The final draft of the authorization bill — and the official pay raise agreement — isn't expected to pass until later this fall.

Personnel subcommittee Chairman Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., said his panel's draft section of the measure also includes increased incentive pays for military health care professionals, in an effort to continue recruiting those specialists amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Senators also approved temporary retirement eligibility relief to reserve personnel forced into difficult conditions by the ongoing pandemic. Details of that plan were not immediately released.

[RELATED: [COLA Increase for Veterans Benefits Passes House](#)]

The plans passed the subcommittee without objection, although several Democrats on the panel lamented that leaders refused to include several reform provisions related to military sexual assault, including eliminating the ability of appellate panels to overturn some convictions.

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y. and a vocal advocate on the issue, promised to keep pushing the issue during the full mark-up later this week.

Unlike the House Armed Services Committee, which holds the majority of its votes and debate in public view, the Senate Armed Services Committee each year holds the majority of its work on the annual defense authorization bill behind closed doors. Of the six subcommittees, only the personnel panel held its mark-up work this week in a public session.

Senate committee leaders have said the arrangement allows for quicker consideration of amendments and eliminates worries about shifting between classified and non-classified topics. But open government advocates have long criticized the practice, especially given the House committee's ability to achieve the same legislative goals without secrecy.

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(Heartland Chapter members must also be a National MOAA Member)

Membership: Initial or Renewal

Annual local dues \$20.00 \$10.00 (new ones after 1 July) Aux. \$5.00

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Brief Bio: (entered service: branch: assignment summary: Interesting career anecdotes:

Signature _____ Date _____

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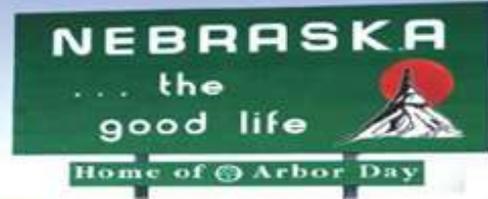
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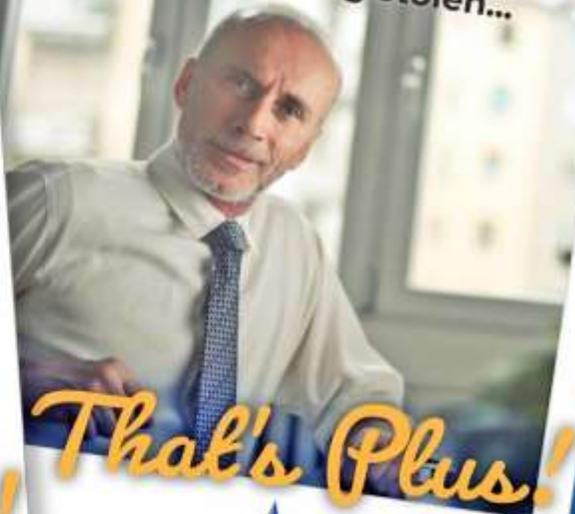


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May They Not Be Forgotten:

I mean the men and women who have answered the call and paid the ultimate price so that we and future generations could have the freedoms so cherished by human beings. We must ever be vigilant and prepared to defend our way of life against those who would deny it. Callous politicians, power hungry egotists, corrupt individuals, adversarial religions, and even our latest self-oriented generations pose grave threat to the preservation of what many take for granted. Every citizen should take a few moments from time to time and reflect on the benefits we have in our country. They should give thanks to those who have served and preserved our way of life.



Hopefully, they will also pledge to do their part to keep it so. – PLj

Wandering Mind of An Old Retired Guy



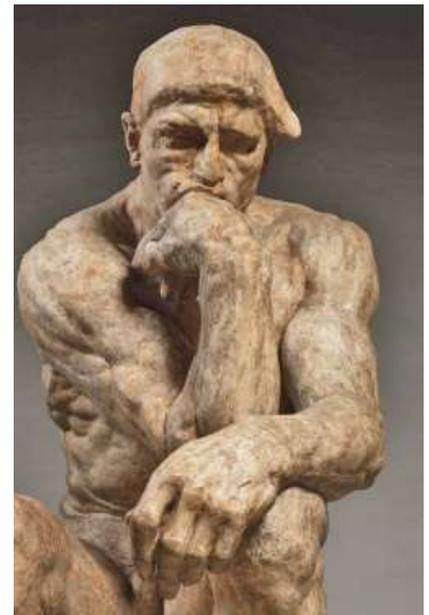
**Time is a limited commodity....
Use it wisely and to do good things.
As Rodin's Thinker seems to be a good
example of giving serious thought before
taking action..... we can use this Covid-19
isolation to do the same..... remember....**

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YOUNGEST YOU'LL EVER BE,**

SO ENJOY THIS DAY WHILE IT LASTS."



Next Scheduled Dinner is August 19th

July Dinner is Cancelled

(The following is reprinted..... hoping for ideas & doers)

An email from Ron & Sharon Russell:

I hate to run from a fight. I'd like to take this virus on and risk meeting, but, so far, the possible risks to our older MOAA folks are too high. I wish there was a way to have a virtual meeting for our members to reassure them that "we'll be back!" However, doing that in a real-time video teleconference is likely too hard at the moment. Perhaps our tech smart folks can think of a way.

Sharon and I did a drive last month with hundreds of others, up and down Main Street in Plattsmouth. We had a chance to see the faces of our friends and family as we slowly drove by, greeting each other, in sort of car parade. It was fun and it showed a "fighting spirit" that this sly virus was not going to win the war. People find a way to interact.

If we did a drive by MOAA meeting in a big parking lot like those in our empty shopping centers or even at Anthony's, we could at least see each other and say hello, showing we aren't beaten! We could organize this during our regular monthly meeting times. Oh well, just a thought. --Ron and Sharon

Reply from PJ, editor:

Great idea.... my Serenaders have had 3 ZOOM meetings now that had 17 participants... nice to make "live" contact again.. The auto honking, waving, etc., that Ron mentions reminds me of my old high school Friday and Saturday nites when we would all cruise the square and teen hangouts and do the same thing.... FUN – FUN – FUN !!!

Lets float such an idea to our members... (I will put the idea in the NL to see what happens) – Pat

**(Maybe a parking area near a great eating place with curbside pickup...
..... Kinda like a tailgate party??)**

Share your ideas folks.... pj

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