



# MOAA

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

STEVEN COLE — SBCOLE@SBCGLOBAL.NET



As Americans, we celebrate American Independence Day on the Fourth of July every year. We think of July 4, 1776, as a day that represents the Declaration of Independence and the birth of the United States of America as an independent nation.

But July 4, 1776 wasn't the day that the Continental Congress decided to declare independence (they did that on July 2, 1776). It wasn't the day we started the American Revolution either (that had happened back in April 1775). And it wasn't the day Thomas Jefferson wrote the first draft of the Declaration of Independence (that was in June 1776). Or the date on which the Declaration was delivered to Great Britain (that didn't happen until November 1776). Or the date it was signed (that was August 2, 1776)

So what did happen on July 4, 1776?

The Continental Congress approved the final wording of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. They'd been working on it for a couple of days after the draft was submitted on July 2nd and finally agreed on all of the edits and changes.

July 4, 1776, became the date that was included on the Declaration of Independence, and the fancy handwritten copy that was signed in August (the copy now displayed at the National Archives in Washington, D.C.) It's also the date that was printed on the Dunlap Broadside, the original printed copies of the Declaration that were circulated throughout the new nation. So when people thought of the Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776 was the date they remembered.

Remember our Korean Veterans: July 27, (1953) Korean War Armistice Day.

Remember our Army Chaplains: July 29 is the anniversary for all of the Army Chaplain Corps.

**October 7<sup>th</sup> – Save the date!** Please join us in celebration of 50 years of the MOAA Greater Dallas Chapter.

**Where?** Maggiano's Little Italy on the East side of Northpark at US 75 and Northwest Highway.

**Costs?** Only \$50 per person.

**When?** Social hours starts at 1600 (hours), dinner at 1700 (hours), and the program from 1800 (hours) to no later than 1930 (hours).

We are honored to have **Lt Gen Dana Atkins USAF (ret), President and CEO of MOAA** as our guest speaker. Thank you for making The Greater Dallas Chapter of MOAA a great organization!

### MOAA-GDC receives 2016 Five-Star Level of Excellence Award



### UPCOMING EVENTS: August Luncheon Jeffery Milligan—Network Director for VISN 17.



Director Milligan will address the future vision and direction the North TX VISN-17 which recently started to head. Mr. Milligan will speak to the innovation and new update equipment that has been introduced into the medical and services department within the VA to better support and address critical needs for veterans.

See Page 4 for more information.



**Saturday October 7, 2017. 50th Anniversary Dinner.**

See Page 2 for early reservation coupon.



## PERSONAL AFFAIRS BY BEN COLE

Listen up, retirees! I recently received an article titled "RETIREE CHECKLIST: WHAT SURVIVORS SHOULD KNOW". This is a document that has been designed to provide retirees and their loved ones some help in preparing for the future. The checklist is not all-inclusive and should be used with other estate planning tools. You may have prepared such a document in the past, but please update

### 1. Create a military file.

- Retirement orders
- DD214
- Separation papers
- Medical records

### 2. Create a military retired pay file.

- Claim number of any pending VA claims
- Address of the VA office being used
- List of current deductions from benefits
- Name, relationship and address of beneficiary of unpaid retired pay at the time of death
- Address and phone number for DFAS:
  - Defense Finance and Accounting Service
  - U S Military Retirement Pay
  - Post Office Box 7130
  - London KY 40742-7130
  - (800) 321-1080 option #3 (for deceased members)

### 4. Create a personal document file.

- Marriage Records
- Divorce decree
- Adoptions and naturalization papers

### 5. Create an income tax file.

- Copies of state and federal income tax returns

### 6. Create a property tax file.

- Copies of tax bills
- Deeds and any other related information

### 7. Create an insurance policy file.

- Life Insurance
- Property, accident, liability insurance
- Hospitalization/Medical Insurance

### 3. Create an annuities file, to include:

- Information about the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) (Additional information regarding SBP annuity claims can be obtained from the DFAS-Cleveland Center office at 1-800-321-1080).
- Reserve Component Survivor Benefit Plan (RCSBP)
- Retired Serviceman's Family Protection Plan (RSFPP)
- Civil Service annuity

*Note: Personal Affairs article continues on page 3.*



## 50TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER SATURDAY OCTOBER 7, 2017

**Mail Early Reservation for the October 7, 2017 50th Anniversary Dinner  
Social 4:00 PM — Dinner 5:00 PM — Program 6:00 to 7:30 PM**

# of Attendees \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mail Reservation to:  
MOAA-GDC Programs  
PO Box 515495  
Dallas, TX 75251

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**You will be contacted you in August for payments.**

Reserve online at [www.moaagreaterdallas.org/rsvp50th.html](http://www.moaagreaterdallas.org/rsvp50th.html)

## PERSONAL AFFAIRS BY BEN COLE CONTINUED

8. Maintain a listing of banking and credit information, in a secure location.
  - Bank account numbers
  - Location of all deposit boxes
  - Savings bond information
  - Stocks, bonds and any securities owned
  - Credit card account numbers and mailing addresses
9. Maintain a membership listing of all associations and organizations.
  - Organization names and phone numbers
  - Membership fee information
10. Maintain a list of all friends and business associates. Include names, addresses and phone numbers
11. Hold discussions with your next of kin about your wishes for burial and funeral services. At a minimum the discussion should include cemetery location and type of burial (ground, cremation or burial at sea). This knowledge many assist your next of kin to carry out all of your desires.
12. You could also pre-arrange your funeral service via your local funeral home. Many states will allow you to pre-pay for services.
13. Investigate the decisions that you and your family have agreed upon.
14. Once your decisions have been made and you are comfortable with them, have a will drawn up outlining specifics.
15. Ensure that your will and all other sensitive documents are maintained in a secure location known by your loved ones. Organizations to be notified in the event of a retiree's death:
  1. Defense Finance and Accounting Service, London, KY (800) 321-1080
  2. Social Security Administration (for death benefits) (800) 772-1213
  3. Department of Veterans Affairs (if applicable) (899) 827-1000
  4. Office of Personnel Management (for your military branch.)
  5. Any fraternal group that you have membership with: e.g., MOAA, VFW, NCOA, Reserve Associations, etc.
  6. Any previous employers that provide pension or benefits.

These actions are so important to your families and loved ones. Please do it immediately!!!

## SAGE SURVIVOR BY NANCY RUTHFORD SODEMAN

It is important that veterans and their spouses look for and plan for retirement, assisted living and memory care facilities so that do not burden their children when the time comes.

In reading the "Courier" newsletter from Air Force Village in San Antonio I am always reminded of this adage:

God does not promise days without pain,  
Laughter without tears,  
Sun without rain.  
But He does promise strength for the day,  
Comfort for the tears,  
And light for the way.

Our veterans and their families take to heart the meaning of these words and care for their loved ones with their heads, their hearts and heaps of money. They assess their circumstances and find ways to move on.

Many of them start out in a retirement community such as Blue Skies of Texas (formerly Air Force Village). If their loved one eventually needs care, especially if dementia sets in, they move the afflicted one on to assisted living at Freedom House. According to the newsletter, 1 in 8 people over 65 is stricken with this silent scourge. Yet the veterans and their loved ones keep loving and caring for the disabled and the fellow residents in the retirement community offer support and encouragement along the way.

Important to all facilities is makingsure that the new caregivers are well qualified. At Blue Skies of Texas, graduate nursing assistants work to become certified after passing the state exam and they stay on board to help in the six licensed health care services at Freedom House. These staff members take courses to advance; and a good portion of the staff become registered nurses, taking advantage of the Mary Opal Wolanin scholarship that is available to move up the nursing ladder.

Furthermore, the veterans and their families hold an annual Freedom Golf Tournament that has grossed \$137,000 so far over 22 years. These residents and their families round up sponsors and recruit many organizations who come to the forefront with time and money to make Freedom House a stalwart institution.

Freedom House staff invest 39 hours of annual training while the state requires only 12 hours and this training is more intensive than many other like programs in the state of Texas. The veterans, their families and others they recruit all work very hard to make their afflicted members as comfortable as possible. They know that we must shift for ourselves with the help of heaven.

When you start the process of looking for a retirement, assisted living and memory care facility, consider the care, education and experience of the staff, the training available to the staff to stay current in their field and the financial stability of the facility.



## PROGRAMS BY BEVERLY THOMPSON

**August 22, 2017— Network Director VISN-17 Jeffery Milligan**

**We are excited to announce that our August speaker is Jeffery Milligan Network Director for VISN 17**

As the new Director, Milligan will discuss the future vision and direction of the North TX VISN-17. He was appointed to this position April 30, 2017. His duties encompass all of the health care systems in Texas, with the exception of Houston.

He will also speak about what changes and decisions have been made to improve wait/lag times for appointments to improve the military connect patient's experience by speeding up services, hiring new doctors, nurses and mental health providers.

He will speak to the innovation and new updated equipment that has been introduced into the medical and services department within the VA to better support and address critical needs for veterans.

He has been with VISN-17 for many years and has been behind many of the projects throughout Texas. His mission is to communicate better with the veterans and services given to them. He will review the records and standards of measures about how execution and care has improved.

Mr. Milligan served as Director of VA North Texas Veterans Health Care System in Dallas from 2011 - 2017. He served as Director at VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System in Harlingen, Texas, from 2008 - 2011, after also serving as Acting Director for South Texas Veterans Health Care System in San Antonio.

From 2005 - 2008, Mr. Milligan served as Associate Director of VA North Texas Health Care System Prior and previously was Acting Deputy Director for Central Texas Veterans Health Care System in Temple.

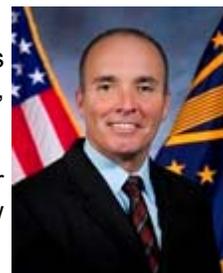
Mr. Milligan began his VA career in 1989 as a general engineer at the Nashville VAMC. From 1990-1993, he served as a Project Engineer and Assistant Chief Engineer at the Carl Vinson VAMC in Dublin, Georgia. In 1994, he was selected as the Assistant Chief Engineer at the Ralph H. Johnson VAMC in Charleston, South Carolina, and subsequently became the Chief Engineer, serving in that capacity for approximately five years.

He was the Administrator of the Austin Outpatient Clinic from 1999 to 2001 and served as Staff Assistant to the Director of the Central Texas Veterans Health Care System from 2001-2003, at which time he became the Acting Deputy Director for the Central Texas system.

Mr. Milligan holds a Master of Science degree in Health Care Administration from Baylor University and a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering from the University of Memphis. He is a graduate of VA's Executive Career Field Training Program (2005) and 2005 Leadership VA Class.

**The Park City Club 5956 Sherry Lane, 17th Floor Dallas, Texas 75225  
Social 11:00 AM — Buffet Opens 11:15 AM Meeting 12:00 Noon**

Please send your reservations early to ensure we can make an accurate and timely reservation count. Mail the reservation coupon to MOAA-GDC Programs, PO Box 515495, Dallas, TX 75251; email Dave Schafer [moaschafer@att.net](mailto:moaschafer@att.net) or reserve online at [www.moagreaterdallas.org/onlinersvp.html](http://www.moagreaterdallas.org/onlinersvp.html). You may also call Dave at (214)577-4107.



## LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY JULY 2017 BY JIM BROWN CONTINUED



### House of Reps wants to guarantee military pay equality

Military Times reported recently that House lawmakers want White House officials to either stop cutting back on military pay raises or change the federal rules governing how those rates are set. Members of the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) are expected to approve a 2.4 percent pay raise for troops starting next January. That is 0.3 percentage points above what the White House proposed in its budget plan last month.

This is the fifth year in a row where the Pentagon has recommended a raise below the Employment Cost Index, the statutory standard for pay increases. Last year was the first time in that stretch that lawmakers overrode the president's smaller pay hike request, arguing that years of trims had raised concerns about growing wage inequality between the military and private sector.

Congressman Mac Thornberry said he was disappointed to see the new administration follow the same pattern as Obama's. "If we're going to try and keep pay competitive, we ought to follow the formula."

Pentagon leaders have said the smaller raises can create significant savings for the military, which can be directed to other top personnel priorities like training and readiness. The proposed 2.1 percent raise is expected to save the department \$200 million next year and \$1.4 billion over the next five years when compared to the 2.4 percent figure.

Defense Secretary James Mattis has called current military wages "competitive" and said he is focused on finding the right balance for the defense budget. "For the enlisted ranks, we probably have a better benefits package than most places," he told lawmakers during a Senate hearing. "Not all of them. There are some out in Silicon Valley that can probably beat us hands down. But when you look across the United States, we're drawing in very high quality people because we are competitive."

Dana Atkins, president of MOAA, took exception to that analysis. "When it comes to the pay raise, his assessment of what constitutes "competitive" may be correct for the youngest enlistee who faces the prospects of a minimum wage or something close to it," he said. "However, for those currently serving among the other ranks, the difference of 0.3 percent and its cumulative effect starts to matter. It matters even more for those about to retire. For all those continuing to serve, we owe them the pay they deserve at least comparable with their civilian counterparts."

MOAA officials estimate the gap between military and civilian pay currently sits around 3 percent. If either pay raise becomes law, it will be only the second time since 2010 that troops have received a boost of more than 2 percent. The 2.1 percent mark translates roughly into \$600 more per year for most junior enlisted troops and another \$1,400 for younger officers. The 0.3 percentage point difference translates into about \$85 lost a year for the junior enlisted, \$130 for the senior enlisted and junior officers and \$240 for mid-career officers.

Congressional staff is expected to work through the summer on the budget issues, with a final plan not likely before the end of the year. The HASC has proposed a \$640 billion base defense budget authorization for fiscal 2018, \$37 billion above Trump's military budget. The plan still faces numerous hurdles before becoming law, not the least of which are congressional spending caps that limit defense spending to \$91 billion less than what House lawmakers are proposing.

### Veterans Affairs facing \$1 billion Choice program shortfall

VA Secretary David Shulkin has recently reported that an unexpected shortfall of more than \$1 billion in the Choice program would threaten federally paid medical care outside the VA for thousands of veterans in the coming months and that the department may need emergency funds. He said VA needed legal authority to shift money from other VA programs.

His disclosure came just weeks after lawmakers were still being assured that Choice was under budget, with \$1.1 billion estimated to be left over on Aug. 7. Shulkin now says that money will dry up by mid-August. He cited excessive use of Choice beyond its original intent of using private doctors only when veterans must wait more than 30 days for a VA appointment or drive more than 40 miles to a facility.

*Note: Legislative article continues on page 6.*

## LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY JULY 2017 BY JIM BROWN CONTINUED

The VA is already instructing its medical centers to limit the number of veterans sent to private doctors. Some veterans were being sent to Defense Department hospitals, VA facilities located farther away or other alternative locations “when care is not offered in VA.” It also was asking field offices to hold off on spending for certain medical equipment to help cover costs. The department is now more closely restricting use of Choice to its 30-day, 40-mile requirements.

The VA’s faulty budget estimates were a primary reason that Congress passed legislation in March to extend the Choice program beyond its Aug. 7 expiration date until the money ran out, which VA said would happen early next year. At the bill-signing ceremony with veterans’ groups, Trump said the legislation would ensure veterans will continue to be able to see “the doctor of their choice.”

The unexpectedly high Choice costs are also raising questions about the amount of money needed in future years as VA seeks to expand the program. Earlier this month, Shulkin described the outlines of an overhaul, dubbed Veterans CARE, which would replace Choice and its 30-day, 40-mile restrictions to give veterans even wider access to private doctors. He is asking Congress to approve that plan by this fall.

### VA still planning to round down benefits

Veterans Affairs Secretary Shulkin is dropping plans to radically overhaul the Individual Unemployability benefit, a move that would save more than \$3 billion but strip up to \$20,000 annually from 210,000 elderly disabled veterans. Veterans praised Shulkin’s turnaround. But they failed to convince the White House to abandon plans to round down veterans’ cost-of-living increases.

“The round down is still an active proposal that we have,” Shulkin said. Rounding down the annual benefits hikes was VA policy from the late 1990s until 2013. White House officials have said returning to the move will save \$20 million in fiscal 2018 alone.

Carlos Fuentes, director of national legislative services for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, called it “balancing the budget on the backs of our nation’s veterans” at a Senate budget hearing. LeRoy Acosta, assistant national service director for Disabled American Veterans, said it will siphon off \$2.7 billion in earned veterans benefits over 10 years and “hurt our nation’s injured and ill veterans, their families and survivors.”

Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., helped change the round-down policy during his time as chairman of the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee. “I don’t think we should be nickel and diming veterans,” he said. “I mean, we’ve been through this for years. I thought we got rid of it, and it’s sad to see that it’s coming back.”

Shulkin says he plans on working with Veterans’ groups and Congress to find responsible reforms and savings to current benefits programs. Meanwhile, House appropriators have already begun moving their draft of the annual VA budget bill, without any mention of the round-down plans.

### Prevent Disproportional Health Care Cost Increases

The administration’s FY2018 budget request includes large increases to TRICARE fees across the board. These fee increases are a direct result of the repeal of the 2017 National Defense Authorizations grand-fathering clause. The intention of the grand-fathering was to keep fees where they currently are for beneficiaries in the service prior to 1 January 2018.

These fee increases are disproportional and do not reflect the service and sacrifice of the beneficiaries who have earned the health care benefit. Please send your legislators this MOAA suggested message to prevent these hefty fee increases from negatively impacting servicemembers and their families. <http://capwiz.com/moaa/issues/alert/?alertid=77639626>



### CHAPLAIN’S CORNER BY BEN COLE

Destructive punishment is not taught in the scriptures, but discipline is quite biblical. I guess we have known this all our lives, but we probably have departed from this philosophy many times. Perhaps we should have reviewed the words stated in Hebrews 12:11.....”No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”



# AUGUST 22, 2017



**Reservation for the August 22, 2017 Tuesday Luncheon Meeting**  
**The Park City Club 5956 Sherry Lane, 17th Floor Dallas, Texas 75225 Phone: (214) 373-0756**  
**Social 11:00 AM — Buffet Opens 11:15 AM Meeting 12:00 Noon**  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Person's at \$25.00 each    Check enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 payable to "MOAA - Greater Dallas Chapter"  
**Mail Reservation to:**  
**MOAA-GDC Programs, PO Box 515495, Dallas, TX 75251**

 (Spouse/Guest)

**Please print name's below exactly as you wish you name badge's to read:**

Need a ride? \_\_\_\_\_    If yes, your ZIP code \_\_\_\_\_    Give a ride? \_\_\_\_\_    If yes, your ZIP code \_\_\_\_\_

## CHAPTER OFFICERS—EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Greater Dallas Veterans Coalition representative: OPEN	

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 The MOAA-Greater Dallas Chapter is a nonprofit organization chartered on November 28, 1967.  
 Annual dues are \$20.00 for members and \$10.00 for auxiliary members.



Veterans Center of North Texas Veteran-Community Fellowship golf tournament was held on 24 April.



The Greater Dallas and North Texas chapters joined to be a Silver sponsor of the tournament. Pictured in the photo is CDR Jim Bass, USN Retired, of the Greater Dallas Chapter. The tournament enabled 53 veterans to network with persons from North Texas and DFW area businesses and government organizations.

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## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The following is the meeting schedule for the Executive Committee of the Greater Dallas Chapter of the MOAA.

Meetings are held from 9 am to 11 am at the Point Building, C.C. Young Retirement Community, 4847 West Lawther Drive, Dallas, TX 75214.

### 2017

15 July, 16 September, and 18 November

All Chapter members are welcome to attend any Executive Committee meeting.