



Houston Area
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~ Five Star ★★★★★ Chapter ~

President's Message...

June 2022 Issue

Greetings Friends,

Happy 247th birthday to the United States Army!

Over the last several months the Board as you know has been working with a web design company to completely overhaul our aging web site. We have also changed the domain from ".com" to ".org" to more accurately reflect the nature of our organization

and provide a more professional appearance and feel. Please take a look at <https://moahoustonarea.org/>. We will be adding the final content over the next several weeks. However, the overall template will give you a very good idea on what our site will communicate to our membership as well as others that visit it. Check it out. Major kudos to Frank Tricoli and Kathy Frank for spearheading this effort. If you have any questions or recommendations, please let Kathy and/or Frank know. Additionally, if you would like to submit anything for the website, please contact Kathy (kathyfrank23@gmail.com).



Our monthly lunch meeting will be June 25th at Kelly's County Cookin' in Meadows Place near Sugar Land and our speaker is NASA's LT Col Paul Konyha USAF (Ret). LTC Konyha is a Flight Director with the Flight Operations Directorate. Ret and don't forget.

Finally, tell your colleagues about our Chapter. We would love to have them join us.

Respectfully,

Rob
Robin P. Ritchie, COL, Infantry, USAR (Ret)



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June...Upcoming Chapter Events:

Saturday, June 25th, 2022 @ 11:30am-1:30pm

MOAA HA Chapter Meeting

Kelley's Country Cookin'

11555 W Airport Blvd

Meadows Place, TX 77477

RSVP to Rob Ritchie

Email: rpritchie@earthlink.net

Tuesday, June 28th, 2022 @ noon

MOAA HA BOD Meeting

Rudi Lechner's German Restaurant

2503 S Gessner Rd

Houston, TX 77063

Inflation Worries May Boost Biggest Military Pay Hike in 20 Years Even Higher

JUNE 08, 2022



This article by Leo Shane III originally appeared on [Military Times](#), the nation's largest independent newsroom dedicated to covering the military and veteran community.

Servicemembers are in line for their [biggest pay raise since 2003](#) next January, but lawmakers and advocates are questioning whether that will be adequate to keep military families in good financial health.

That's because the [formula used to calculate annual pay hikes](#) doesn't take into account issues like short-term inflation spikes. The Congressional Budget Office

has predicted a 6.1% jump in the consumer price index this year, but none of that extra expense is built into the military pay raise formula.

So, by the time troops see that extra 4.6% in their paychecks in seven months, their basic household expenses may have already ballooned to well above that rate.

"I believe that we should be able to get more flexibility and agility with military pay," said Dan Merry, vice president for government relations at the Military Officers Association of America.

[TAKE ACTION: [Urge Your Lawmakers to Pass a Fair Military Pay Raise](#)]

"This pay raise [proposal] is going to be woefully short of the inflation rate. And if we just address it in the annual authorization bill, it may not be enough."

The pay raise dilemma is expected to gain extra attention next week as the House Armed Services Committee unveils the first draft of the annual defense authorization bill, a sweeping military policy measure that contains language setting military pay rates.

The White House earlier this year proposed a 4.6% raise for troops, but House members have already hinted they may be looking at a significantly higher mark out of concern that pay levels may not be sufficiently robust to meet recruiting and retention targets.

[LATEST FROM MILITARY TIMES: [House Lawmakers Eye 4.6% Pay Raise for Troops in 2023](#)]

While the total military compensation package includes things like housing allowances and medical benefits, advocates have long argued that military pay plays a critical role in force health because it affects nearly every aspect of troops' financial lives.

Since 2006, military pay raises have been tied to the Employment Cost Index, a quarterly economic survey conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics that tracks growth in civilian sector employee compensation.

The idea behind the link was to ensure that military paychecks remain competitive with private-sector pay. Lawmakers have deviated up and down from that amount slightly over the last two decades, but have mostly stuck with the formula.

"The primary challenge here is that the ECI is backwards looking," said Seamus Daniels, associate director for defense budget analysis at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "So, they set the 2023 pay raise based on where the ECI stood in October of 2021. So, when it goes into effect, it's out of date at that point."

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Inflation Worries May Boost Biggest Military Pay Hike in 20 Years Even Higher

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This year's pay raise was 2.6%, equal to what the federal formula said it should be based on economic conditions in fall 2020.

For junior enlisted troops, it means about \$670 more this year in take-home pay. For senior enlisted and junior officers, the hike equals about \$1,300 more. For an O-4 with 12 years service, it's more than \$2,300 extra.

Those are significant boosts, but might not be enough to offset higher gas and grocery costs seen by many military families in recent months. The Labor Department said the inflation rate for the 12-month period ending May 1 was 8.3%.

By the time the next pay raise kicks in, it, too, could be substantially below what servicemembers need to survive.

Lawmakers have approved a midyear pay raise in the past to deal with similar disparities. In April 2007, some enlisted and warrant officers received a second, targeted pay raise of 2.4% on top of the military-wide 2.2% raise that went into effect three months earlier.

[RELATED: [5 Tips to Start Strong at Your New Job](#)]

Both Merry and Daniels said that may be an idea for lawmakers to consider again this year, and in other years with significant inflation increases.

But doing that is expensive. An increase of just 0.5% can amount to more than \$3 billion in compounding personnel costs over five years, according to Defense Department statistics. Additional midyear pay boosts up that even more, since the subsequent year's pay raise builds on previous ones.

Beth Asch, a senior economist at the Rand Corp., said that may not target the military inflation problems as much as other options.

"There are contingencies already," she said. "The services have the authority to reprogram dollars to bonuses to deal with recruiting and retention problems. And there are policy levers they can use to make sure they have what they need to maintain readiness."

The other challenge in a midyear pay adjustment is congressional gridlock. Lawmakers over the past decade have rarely passed any of their appropriations bills by the start of the new fiscal year, (Oct. 1). A midyear pay raise would require a midyear influx of new money, and timely

action from lawmakers to ensure that military budgets aren't disrupted.

Still, Merry said he thinks Congress needs to look at a "wellness check" for military families' finances more frequently than just once a year. Last fall, the Defense Department boosted housing allowances for 56 markets with soaring rent rates. Merry said similar moves could be made to help with basic pay, too.

"Right now, with the ECI formula, it's 15 months before they can respond," he said. "It's not the state of the economy now."

Asch has noted the shortcomings of the ECI-based formula in past work as part of the Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation.

She and others have pushed for a switch to a formula based on the Defense Employment Cost Index, a new figure which takes into account private-sector wage research that accounts for workers' demographics, such as age and experience.

The next compensation review report could address the issue again. But that is due out in early 2024, after at least two more cycles of military pay raise debates have been completed.

Meanwhile, Asch said one of the reasons that Congress hasn't come up with solutions for the military inflation concerns is that the private sector hasn't fully addressed the issue either.

"Inflation takes a while to incorporate into the private-sector wages," she said. "As a military member, you could look and say, 'my pay raise isn't keeping up with my cost of living.' But on the other hand, if you jump to the private sector, it's not really catching up there yet either."

House Armed Services Committee officials are expected to unveil their military personnel proposals for fiscal 2023 next Wednesday. Senate Armed Services Committee members have a similar mark-up of their defense authorization bill draft scheduled for a week later. ★



SUPPORTING AND HONORING JROTC ACHIEVEMENT

By Daniel M. Gutierrez, Major, USA (Ret.)
June 7, 2022

One of the community outreach efforts of our chapter is to support and encourage the youth of our community. One way in which we do this is through the dedicated support of the JROTC programs in our area. Each year the chapter buys the MOAA medals and certificates for about 115 high school JROTC programs in the Houston area. These awards then must be mailed to various high schools in time for their award ceremonies in which they are presented to the designated cadets. When practical, some awards are presented in person by members of the chapter.

This year, however, the purchase of the MOAA JROTC medals was compromised. MOAA National lost its contractor/vendor for the medals and became engaged in a rather lengthy process to acquire a new vendor. This caused a major delay in being able to acquire the medals in time for the various award ceremonies. The certificates that accompany the awards were available and mailed to the schools.

Beginning in early April and extending to mid-May, ceremonies commenced. Some ceremonies were elaborate galas, some were military change - of- command ceremonies and some were award programs held in the school auditoriums. When possible, members of the chapter attended the award presentations to personally congratulate the recipients in the name of the MOAA.

MOAA mandates the awards be presented to cadets completing their third year of JROTC and who have demonstrated outstanding leadership, scholarship and commitment. The association and the chapter are committed to the development of the nation's youth as the future leaders of tomorrow.

★★★★★



Army Forms 11th Airborne Division Amid Focus on Arctic Warfare

JUNE 08, 2022

The 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, reflags to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 11th Airborne Division, at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, on June 6. (Photo by Rachel Napolitan/Army)

Editor's note: This article by Steve Beynon originally appeared on Military.com, a leading source of news for the military and veteran community.



The **Army** on Monday activated the new 11th Airborne Division in Alaska, a historic move that brings the service's 12,000 soldiers in the state under a single banner.

The change will bring the service closer to its mission in Alaska of mastering the frigid, inhospitable Arctic terrain. Previously, two of its brigades were loosely associated with the 25th Infantry Division, an element known for its specialty in jungle warfare. The new division has also folded in U.S. Army Alaska, which mostly served a headquarters role in the region.

As the Army reorients after decades of counterterrorism operations back to conventional warfare, it is anticipating that frigid environments will play a huge role in modern conflicts. Adversaries Russia and China have already laid claims to the Arctic Circle, where melting ice is freeing up territory, natural resources and new sea routes.

"They will be the experts for our Army, and we like to see the best in the world operating in this environment," Gen. James McConville, the Army's chief of staff, told reporters at a press conference Monday.

[RELATED: [Check Out the Unit Patch for the Army's Newest Airborne Division](#)]

The 11th Airborne will take center stage in that strategy, as commanders in the region refine doctrine and fit their troops with the gear they need to survive in extreme temperatures. Unlike other environments in which soldiers train, the environment itself is deadly -- sometimes dipping to minus-65 degrees Fahrenheit.

It isn't Alaska itself the Army is planning to defend. Any invading forces there would have to cross hundreds of miles of frozen terrain, a virtually impossible task for vehicles and a challenge for the sustainment of troops, including feeding them.

Commanders in the region have pointed to past conflicts as examples of why the Army needs a unit dedicated to fighting in the extreme cold, such as the Battle of the Bulge and the campaign in Italy during World War II, and much of the Korean War, where freezing temperatures were often as deadly as the enemy.

Commanders have told Military.com they aim for units there to be a prestigious force, having to carry more gear and thrive in more difficult conditions than other conventional units in the Army. Given the frigid climate, service planners have acknowledged Alaska isn't for everyone and have made moves to slowly make it more of a volunteer force, including allowing new recruits to pick Alaska as their duty station when they enlist.

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Army Forms 11th Airborne Division...

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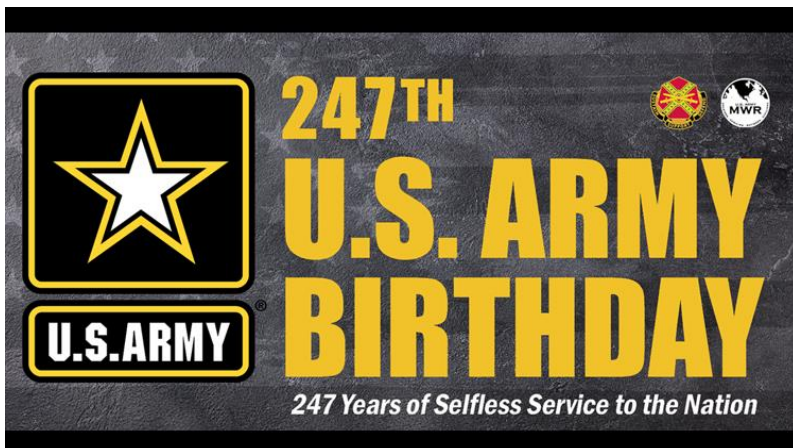
Most significantly, the new formation **eliminates a brigade of Strykers for the Army**, redesignating the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, to the 1st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 11th Airborne Division. The service will take Alaska's aging fleet of 320 Strykers and scrap some vehicles for parts, and update others to send to other units.

[FROM MILITARY OFFICER MAGAZINE: What Does a Warming Arctic Region Mean for the Military?]

The new formation will not add any more airborne capabilities to the Army's bottom line with the former Stryker brigade redesignated as a light infantry brigade. McConville said those troops will instead focus on air assault operations.

The division **reintroduced the patch used decades ago by the 11th Airborne Division, but with an Arctic twist**. The original unit fought in the Pacific Theater in World War II and later tested out air assault tactics before it was deactivated in 1965.

That new patch will add an "Arctic" tab above the classic "airborne" tab seen with other units such as the 82nd Airborne Division. Previously, the Arctic tab was an award for completing an 11-day Arctic survival course in Alaska.★



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This We'll Defend

Support Adding Key Survivor Legislation to the FY 2023 NDAA

By: Mark Belinsky
JUNE 07, 2022

Each year, legislators use the must-pass National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) as a vehicle for smaller defense-related legislation to become law. MOAA has supported three survivor-related bills this session which make perfect candidates for NDAA inclusion, and which would make significant improvements to the lives of this important part of our wider uniformed services community.

As the FY 2023 is drafted and marked up, reach out to your elected officials and ask them to support these important bills, either via the links below or by using MOAA's toll-free line to the U.S. Capitol switchboard – 866-272-MOAA (6622) – to connect with your legislators' offices.



Photo via Architect of the Capitol
(www.aoc.gov)

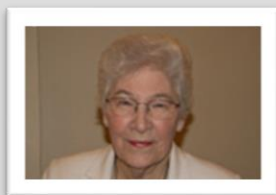
Supporting Families of the Fallen Act

- Bill numbers: [H.R. 3793](#) | [S. 2794](#)
- Status as of June 7: 14 House co-sponsors; [passed the Senate](#) on March 23.
- Legislative Action Center link: [Ask Your Lawmakers to Co-Sponsor the Supporting Families of the Fallen Act](#)

The Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) and Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI) programs provide a maximum coverage of \$400,000, a figure which has not been updated since 2005. With current inflation and the cumulative effect of 17 years without an update, it is time for SGLI and VGLI to catch up: The Supporting Families of the Fallen Act will increase this important coverage to \$500,000.

(Continued on Page 9...)

Surviving Spouse Corner:



Judith Thomas
Surviving Spouse Liaison
MOAA Houston Chapter
719-331-8485 (cell)
jthomas482@aol.com

Did you know...

- DFAS has a quarterly Retiree Newsletter that has a section for Surviving Spouses and Annuitants? If you are not receiving it, you can find the information at: www.DFAS.mil/retiredmilitary and look for "Survivors and Beneficiaries" in the menu.
- If you need to manage your SBP Annuity: www.DFAS.mil/managesbp
- Other questions: Ask DFAS at www.DFAS.mil/ASKDFAS
- There is a Survivor SBP Newsletter available through the Survivors and Beneficiaries section that you can download.

If you need help accessing the website or the information, please call me and I can help. Judith Thomas ★

Test Pilot's Second Act Features Cutting-Edge, All-Electric Tech

By: Kipp Hanley
JUNE 06, 2022

Col. Hank "Hog" Griffiths, USAF (Ret), may not have fulfilled his childhood dream of being an astronaut, but he's helping the Air Force reach new heights in aircraft technology.

As the chief of airworthiness, test, and safety for **AFWERX**, the MOAA member conducted a test flight of BETA Technologies' **ALIA electric aircraft** this spring. AFWERX, an arm of the Air Force Research Laboratory, is charged with quickly leveraging civilian technology into future operational capabilities in areas like electric-powered flight, autonomy, and manufacturing.

The plane Griffiths flew in March has a traditional takeoff and landing setup. However, BETA is also conducting testing on vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) aircraft, a capability highly sought after by the Air Force. BETA is one of several electric aircraft companies vying for the Air Force's business through AFWERX's Agility Prime program.

Once completed, an aircraft like the ALIA could be flown unmanned to rescue a downed pilot in hostile territory, Griffiths said. These types of planes also could be used in firefighting, humanitarian aid, logistics support, and as passenger aircraft, among other scenarios.

BETA has orders in place for the aircraft with companies like UPS, United Therapeutics, and BLADE Urban Air Mobility, BETA spokesperson Lexi Pace said; Pace called Griffiths' flight test "the first in a series of milestones and tests that we'll conduct together throughout our partnership" with AFWERX Agility Prime.

[RELATED: [More MOAA Members in the Spotlight](#)]

In addition to its versatility, the ALIA is pollution-free, aligning with one of the Agility Prime goals of securing a "zero emission and runway independent aircraft."

"This is a huge win for the environment and will make air travel less noisy and cost effective," Griffiths said of electric aircraft technology. "It has been extremely fun and exciting to be at the beginning of this next revolution of flight and see how these innovative companies are tackling the physics of electric propulsion differently."

Griffiths said it took a team effort to make the test flight of the ALIA successful. He and his ground crew performed a lot of prep work and were in constant communication during the flight. Griffiths spent a week learning about the aircraft before strapping into the cockpit.

"Airplanes now are so highly instrumented," said Griffiths. "When we see space flights, we see control rooms where they are watching everything that is going on. When I fly, I have 25 of my friends watching and making sure all of the systems are operational and being monitored."

Col. Hank "Hog" Griffiths, USAF (Ret), AFWERX airworthiness test and safety lead, flies BETA's simulator in preparation for a test flight mission. (Photo by Brian Jenkins/BETA Technologies)



Cutting-Edge, All-Electric Tech...*(Continued from previous page...)*



The zero-emission ALIA electric aircraft could be used to deliver cargo or passengers, or as part of rescue operations. (Photo courtesy of BETA Technologies)

The ALIA is one of many planes Griffiths has tested since graduating from the Air Force Academy more than 30 years ago. In 2002, Griffiths finished Air Force Test Pilot School and went on to become a test pilot for the F-16 and F-35. He also served in a variety of leadership capacities, including safety-related positions at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, and Edwards AFB, Calif.

One of the highlights of Griffiths' military career was delivering an F-16 to Israel in 2005, where he saw firsthand the positive reception the U.S. received from the nation's government. First constructed in the 1970s, the F-16 remains one of the world's most popular military fighter jets.

Seventeen years after that trip to Israel, Griffiths is still flying planes that are turning people's heads.

"We consider electric flight as the third revolution in aerospace, and it will drastically change how we transport goods and people by air," Griffiths said. "Being a part of the AFWERX team has exceeded my expectations of what Chapter 2 of my career was going to be like." ★

Support Adding Key Survivor Legislation to the FY 2023 NDAA...*Continued from Page 6...*

Military Retiree Survivor Comfort Act

- Bill numbers: [H.R. 2214](#) | [S. 1669](#)
- Status as of June 7: 42 House co-sponsors, 7 Senate co-sponsors.
- Legislative Action Center link: [Ask Your Lawmakers to Support the Military Retiree Survivor Comfort Act](#)

When a retired servicemember passes, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service recoups their last month of retirement pay. This is frequently a terrible surprise for a new survivor and adds unnecessary financial stress to a grieving widow. The Military Retiree Survivor Comfort Act would allow survivors to avoid this immediate recoupment (and prevent surprise overdraft fees) and instead gradually repay the amount over the next 12 months or request debt forgiveness.

Caring for Survivors Act

- Bill numbers: [H.R. 3402](#) | [S. 976](#)
- Status as of June 7: 64 House co-sponsors, 12 Senate co-sponsors
- Legislative Action Center link: [Act Now to Improve Survivors' Benefits](#)

This important legislation would raise Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) to the same levels as other federal survivor programs. It would boost DIC to 55% of the compensation of a 100% disabled veteran, up from the current 43%; correcting this injustice is long overdue. The bill would also reform the so-called "10-year rule," which prohibits survivors from receiving DIC benefits if a 100% disabled servicemember dies of a non-service connected injury less than 10 years after receiving that disability rating. This bill would allow beneficiaries to receive a portion of DIC beginning at five years, with that amount gradually rising until reaching full compensation at the 10-year mark.

[RELATED: [MOAA Premium and Life Members, Download MOAA's Survivor's Planning Guide](#)]

Unfortunately, the unofficial cost estimate for the Caring for Survivors Act gives lawmakers sticker shock at roughly \$20 billion over 10 years. This means MOAA needs your dedicated, long-term advocacy to help build co-sponsors in both chambers for this legislation.

Persistent Grassroots Engagement

Sending multiple emails, writing letters, and making phone calls to your representative and both of your senators has an iterative effect. They get tired of saying no.

Share the links and the toll-free number listed above with your extended network of family and friends. They do not need to be MOAA members to support these important advocacy initiatives. Be sure to use your own words and experiences when speaking with staffers and asking for their support. ★



Wisdom Literature and Life Itself

I have recently been reviewing wisdom literature and Scripture. Basically how the Scriptures came to be written and some of its history. Most faiths have Holy Scriptures forming the basis of both their faith and belief histories as well as the histories of their peoples. These Scriptures tell how their peoples came to be, how they acted, or were expected to act and how their faith was to be conducted. This month I reviewed Proverbs 8 in our Jewish and Christian Scripture. It reads:

Does not wisdom call and does not understanding raise her voice? On the heights, beside the way, at the crossroads she takes her stand: beside the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals she cries out: "To you, O people, I call, and my cry is to all that live. The Lord created me at the beginning of His work, the first of His acts of long ago."

We are currently living in a very complex age. Our educational and technical requirements are both very broad as well as quite specialized. Our politics are now so polarized that all of us have difficulty trying to navigate our daily understanding of what is happening and how it relates to our lives and our faith. But as all of us age we also recognize that these challenges have occurred before in our lives. Inflation is back, daily life is chaotic at times. Balancing our wants, needs and budget is still difficult for most of us. Integrating our faith and our lives seems still to be a mystery.

Our faith tends to have all of us look at our lives and challenges from a higher perspective. Our faith gives us the balance of looking at our beliefs, our God, Higher Power, or Divine Perspective, and finding comfort and strength in what our faith has shown us and how we have been guided by it. The Scripture above tells us that God created wisdom prior to Genesis 1:1.

Nearly all of us remember our parents telling us numerous times, "Use your common sense." As humans, we all are created in God's image. As such we are all endowed with the ability to think, act communicate, love and create far beyond that of the rest of creation. We have ventured into space, explored the depths of the seas and the heights of the mountains. We have cared for our families and communities and supported our government while it leads the world in supporting the world. Yet we, as many governments, have the capacity to destroy the world. Our faith calls that adverse side of humanity sin, "Missing the mark." Not only world destruction but also the little, selfish problems we create in our lives and the lives of others is still sin.

God, as Creator, created wisdom and as such has given the world faith. His plan as well as the plan of other faiths has shown us the destructive power of sin as well as providing us with the means of combating and reconciling sin. He has given us conscience, morals, guilt, dreams, understanding, science, psychology and the list goes on. When our parents tell us to use our common sense they are admonishing us to use and trust "our better angels. When our guilt calls us into question we will either speak to a friend, talk to God, work to reconcile, or ignore the situation. That is human. God in His love offers us the Holy Spirit and His love and forgiveness to work through that guilt and reconcile the situation.

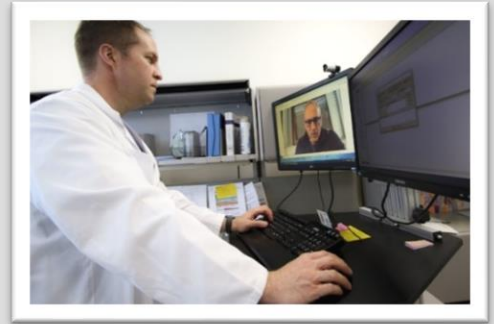
We've always expected ourselves, our colleagues and our families to do their best in their efforts and lives. God also expects the best from us. His forgiveness and love is always available when we come up short and ask for it. Wisdom tells us that we can call on our faith to search for and find right and just solutions for those problems. Our faith calls on us to have the hope and power it provides to choose the right courses of action.

~ David Essells, USAR, MAJ, RET

New Rules for TRICARE Beneficiaries Making Telehealth Visits

By: Karen Ruedisueli
JUNE 15, 2022

An Air Force surgeon conducts a virtual health appointment via synchronous video on April 7, 2020. (Photo by Marcy Sanchez/Defense Department)



Telephone-only telehealth appointments will become a permanent benefit under TRICARE next month at the same time a waiver removing copays for all telehealth visits will end.

DoD issued a **Final Rule** addressing **TRICARE telehealth expansions** on June 1, terminating the cost-sharing waiver and installing the permanent benefit as of July 1. The waiver came in May 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, part of efforts by federal, state, and local governments to encourage individuals to stay home, avoid exposure, and to reduce possible transmission of the virus.

DoD will end the waiver given the availability of vaccines and the reduction of stay-at-home orders. Telehealth services remain a covered benefit, but TRICARE beneficiaries will have a copay or cost share for telehealth visits on or after July 1. You can find cost shares for your specific TRICARE plan and sponsor status using this **[online tool](#)**.

[RELATED: **[MOAA's TRICARE Toolkit](#)**]

The Final Rule also makes permanent TRICARE coverage for telephone-only provider visits. Audio-only telehealth visits allow beneficiaries to consult with providers who typically don't offer telehealth services and expand access to beneficiaries who don't have access to technology needed for video telehealth visits.

As part of its COVID-19 response, DoD also expanded the number of providers available to offer telehealth services by allowing reimbursement for interstate care – that flexibility was not addressed by the Final Rule and remains in place for the time being. MOAA has advocated for telehealth licensure flexibility, and we look forward to seeing the results of a **[DoD feasibility study](#)** requested by the House Armed Services Committee in the FY 2022 National Defense Authorization Act.

MOAA appreciates the temporary TRICARE flexibilities to address the impact of COVID-19 and understands these policies must be revisited. However, we remain concerned about mental health copays and fear the expiration of the telehealth cost sharing waiver will present a barrier to access to those receiving mental health care via telehealth.

We will continue efforts to reduce copays for both in-person and virtual mental health care, which was part of **[MOAA's 2022 Advocacy in Action campaign](#)**; please join us by **[contacting your elected officials](#)** and asking them to ensure military families don't encounter a financial barrier to accessing this care. ★



Perks Marketplace
To log in to Perks Marketplace, **[click here](#)**.

[Click here](#) to access the Perks Marketplace page and start saving!
Having problems logging in, or have other questions?
Email msc@moaa.org or call our Member Service Center at 800-234-6622.

Coast Guard's First Woman Leader Showcases the Services' Strengths, Priorities

By: Mark Belinsky
JUNE 13, 2022

Adm. Linda Fagan arrives for the Coast Guard change-of-command ceremony June 1 in Washington, D.C. (Photo by Saul Loeb/AFP via Getty Images)



The Coast Guard's June 1 change-of-command ceremony did more than install the first woman service chief in our country's history – it highlighted some of the priorities and challenges the service will face in the coming years, both externally and from within.

"The demand for the U.S. Coast Guard has never been higher," said [Adm. Linda Fagan](#), who took over as commandant from the retiring [Adm. Karl Schultz](#). "Tomorrow will look different, and so will we."

[WATCH THE CHANGE OF COMMAND: [USCG.mil](https://www.uscg.mil)]

As Fagan assumed command, she notably wore the shoulder boards of Commandant Adm. Owen Siler, who integrated the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. Women made up 8% of Fagan's Class of 1985; they make up 40% of the most recent class.

President Joe Biden highlighted some of the service's traditional duties during the ceremony, pointing out one-quarter of U.S. gross domestic product travels on American waterways, and that the service must continue its work combating everything from illicit drug trafficking to unregulated fishing.

Fagan embodies other key parts of the future of the service: Her 36-year career began as a deck watch officer on the USCGC *Polar Star* (WAGB-10), the service's lone heavy icebreaker, which was commissioned in 1976. The Coast Guard will tackle increasingly contested northern waters during her tenure.

[RELATED: [What Does a Warming Arctic Region Mean for the Military?](#)]

Service Families

Fagan and her predecessor also highlight another common thread of uniformed service – both have children serving in the Coast Guard. Ensign Eric Schultz graduated from the Coast Guard Academy in 2021, five years after Lt. Aileen Fagan.

[TAKE ACTION: [Tell Congress to Protect Our All-Volunteer Force and Maintain Our Professional Advantage](#)]

Although the tradition of service makes families intensely proud, the services have become reliant on this small group of families as the propensity to serve across the country is in decline.

Last month, Army Chief of Staff Gen. James McConville, whose children also serve, told Congress that 83% of recruits are coming from military families and that only 23% of the recruiting pool can meet the physical and mental standards for service.

[RELATED: [Here's Why Proposed Personnel Cuts Threaten the All-Volunteer Force](#)]

Retention becomes even more important when faced with such stark recruiting challenges. Fagan said her highest priority as commandant will be to "transform our talent management system" with an eye toward empowering those in service.

"This transformation is an investment in you," she told Coast Guard personnel during the change-of-command event. "Without you, steel does not move, lives are not saved, and our national prosperity and security is at risk. ... You have answered the call to serve. We will be the Coast Guard where you can perform your best and bring your best to the potential that is this nation." ★

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We need YOU...
to remain a
MOAA HA Member!



Debating whether to renew your chapter membership?

Talking to a potential new member?

Benefits to belonging to a chapter:

- Camaraderie and Connections: when you attend chapter functions, actively serve on a committee, or take a prominent leadership role, you forge lasting ties with other MOAA members.
- Community Involvement: Membership provide opportunities to contribute to your community in a variety of ways, from providing scholarships to local students, to supporting causes that support wounded warriors and their families.
- Legislative Advocacy: We advocate for the entire military community-all ranks. Members play a critical role in advancing legislation in both Austin and Washington, D.C. This grassroots advocacy is key to MOAA achieving its legislative goals.

Chapter dues reminders will be emailed/sent out in November to those members needing renewal. We are on a calendar year for our chapter dues.

Annual renewal is \$30 for one year, \$20 for each additional year paid with renewal. Surviving Spouse \$15 initial membership; \$10 annual renewal.

Membership Application on the last page!

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM

MOAA's Core Mission

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is the country's leading organization protecting the rights of uniformed servicemembers and their families. MOAA's constituents proudly hail from every branch of the uniformed services. To them, we have made the same promise that they have made to their country: Never Stop Serving.

MOAA's greatest mission is to improve the lives of those who serve and their families, which is achieved largely through the tireless advocacy efforts taking place in our nation's capital. For more than 90 years, MOAA has supported legislation that benefits the uniformed services community and has remained equally vigilant when fighting to stop legislation that threatens our livelihood. The larger our numbers, the greater our voice. For more detailed legislative actions see [MOAA | Take Action Center \(quorum.us\)](https://www.quorum.us)

Name: _____
(Please print) Last First Initial Rank

Branch _____ Status _____ MOAA Nat'l ID _____ *

Spouse's First Name: _____ Tel. for Directory _____

Home Address: _____

Email: _____

Dues: Regular Membership – \$30 first year; annual renewal \$30 (Discount for multiple years if paid with renewal: \$20 for each add'l. year **paid with renewal**)
Surviving Spouse – \$15 first year; annual renewal \$10 (same discount for multiple years)

Chapter Assistance Fund

\$100.00 \$50.00 \$25.00 Other _____

Make check payable to MOAA-HA and mail to:

MOAA-HA
PO Box 18372
Sugar Land, TX 77496



For more information, call COL Robin Ritchie, 713-818-0408

**If not a MOAA national member, another benefit of chapter membership is the opportunity to become a national MOAA member at the BASIC LEVEL for free! If you would like to do so, please indicate here:*

YES NO

Signature: _____