IN THIS ISSUE:

- President's Message
- November Dinner Topic: Flying Tigers Museum
- November Dinner Reservation Form
- Toys for Tots Collection
- Travel Sized Toiletries Needed by Homeless Veterans
- MOAA Logo Items Available
- End of Year Giving Ideas
- Holiday Dinner – A Time for Receiving
- JROTC Update
- Holiday Dinner Reservation Form
- 2022 Chapter Dues Form
- Chaplain's Corner
- MOD Pizza Day a Success
- MOAA National Hosts Annual Meeting
- Holiday Shopping at AmazonSmile
- Nogales Police Dept. Gets ESGR Award
- Mark Your Calendars
- 2021 Officers, Directors & Chairs
- Sponsors/Contributors
- MOAA National News

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Welcome back to all our winter residents. We hope you will be able to join us for one of our upcoming activities. Because of staff shortages, we have had to move our events for the rest of the year from Quail Creek to Grill on the Green in the Canoa Ranch development.

We also enjoyed a relaxed Mix & Mingle at the Elks Lodge in October—the brownies were super decadent!

The election of officers will take place at our Veterans Day dinner on November 11. I am pleased to present the slate of officers for the MOAA Board for 2022.

I will become the immediate past president and president of the Scholarship and Military Assistance Fund, replacing Jim Knox who has admirably served in that position for the past three years.

We are always looking for new members to join the Board to share ideas. We meet at Friends in Deed at 9 a.m. on the first Wednesday of the month.

If you have not yet renewed your membership, we hope you will soon. It is renewals that help us maintain our 5-Star Level of Excellence status. Dues form is on page 8 of this newsletter.

Stay healthy. I hope to see you all soon.

Joseph Longo 1st LT USA (Former)
2019-2021 Chapter President · Green Valley Chapter, MOAA
Flying Tigers Museum Will Be Topic of Talk at November 11 MOAA Dinner
Maj Gen Jim Whitehead and Peggy McGee, Treasurer/Public Relations Officer

The Green Valley Chapter will be hosting a dinner at Grill on the Green, 5800 S Camino Del Sol, starting a 5 p.m. on Veterans’ Day, November 11. Featured speaker is Major General James T. Whitehead Jr., Chairman of the Flying Tiger Historical Organization. (FTHO) located in Chongqing, China.

General Whitehead will describe the 15-year relationship between the FTHO and the grateful Chinese people that resulted in the development of the Flying Tiger Heritage Park & Museum in Guilin, China. The Park was developed as a memorial to record and preserve for history the remarkable story of the courage, dedication and sacrifice made by the American forces and Chinese patriots in the China Burma India (CBI) theater of WWII. This is a story that has been overlooked by far too many more Americans than Chinese. When reading the history of the war in the CBI Theater, it can be clearly said that “Never have so few done so much for so many with so little.”

The Flying Tigers was founded between the Chinese and Americans who were fighting against Japan in China at the peak of Pacific War in 1943. The Flying Tiger Heritage Park is a $4.5 million project built on 23 acres surrounding the Command and Operations Cave of General Claire Chennault at Yang Tang Airfield in Guilin, China. A part of General Joseph Stillwell’s former residence was turned into the Flying Tigers Museum. The project direction was continually directed and motivated by the FTHO statement “Honor the Past, Foundation for the Future.”

General Whitehead’s last military assignment was Assistant to the Director of the Air National Guard at the Pentagon from 1990-1993. He is a veteran of the Cuban Crisis, Cold War, Vietnam and was assigned to the Pentagon during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm. He has 32 years of senior level management experience in the areas of military, corporate and federal government.

As a USAF Command Pilot, General Whitehead flew many multi, single engine reciprocating and jet aircraft. In 1965 the General was selected for the U-2 program. He was the first African American U-2 pilot and the 132nd USAF pilot to achieve combat ready status. He retired in 1993 completing 41 years of military service.

Menu for the dinner can be found on page 3 of this newsletter. Cost for the meal is $30 with checks payable to GV MOAA.

Reservations can also be made by contacting Jack Bundy, at 951-760-8706 or jhbundyaz@gmail.com.

Deadline to sign up is November 3.

All military officers, active, retired, former, Reserve and National Guard and their spouses may attend so invite your eligible friends and neighbors to this informative presentation.

Video: greenvalleymoaa.org/photos-events →

It’s “A Veteran’s Voice” that commands the highest level of dignity and respect. (Video clip, updated 1:11 PM, Oct 24, 2019)
November 11, 2021 · Social 5PM · Dinner 5:30PM
(New location!) Grill on the Green · 5800 S Camino Del Sol, Green Valley

Please make your reservations by WEDNESDAY, NOV. 3rd

This reservation form may also be found on the GreenValleyMOAA.org website

Reserve _______ places          Cost: $______ ($30 per person)

MEAL CHOICES:

#1 Chicken Chardonnay: Lightly seasoned chicken breast topped with artichoke hearts, red grapes, served with mashed potatoes and sautéed seasonal vegetables

#2 Skewered Shrimp Scampi: Grilled shrimp topped with citrus butter, served with rice pilaf and sautéed vegetables.

#3 Vegetarian option by request.

A brownie for dessert is included with all dinner selections. Choice of non-alcoholic beverage.

Mail check and reservation form to:
MOAA of Green Valley · PO Box 1535 · Green Valley, AZ 85622-1535

Rank: __________________________ Name: (please print) __________________________

Member/Guest name:

Member/Guest name:

Member/Guest name:

Member/Guest name:

If you require a ride to the meeting, program or event please check here: ☐

Check # ________________________
Attn: GV MOAA Reservation

If you cannot get your reservation and check mailed timely, or if you have made a reservation and find you cannot attend, PLEASE CALL (leave a message if no answer): call Jack Bundy 951-760-8706 or email him at: jhbundyaz@gmail.com (**NEW EMAIL**). Your chapter is charged for all ordered meals even if they aren't served. Please bring a check or exact cash amount to the meeting.
Toys for Tots Collection

Your Chapter will be accepting donations for its annual *Toys for Tots* campaign at the dinner on November 11. Toys or other gifts for infants up to age 12 are needed. While the younger children prefer toys, the pre-teens like gift cards for fast food restaurants, Walmart, Target. Some pre-teen girls like make-up and nail polish too.

Those wishing to avoid a trip to a shopping mall may make checks payable to GV MOAA Scholarship and Military Assistance Fund. Then one check will be given to *Toys for Tots* from the Chapter to allow them to purchase items for which the need is greatest. For checks payable to MOAA S&MA Fund, your Chapter will be sending you an acknowledgement of your donation for tax purposes.

At the same time the MOAA Chapter is having its toy drive, the Semper Fi group at Quail Creek will also be collecting toys. The two groups will join forces when it is time to deliver the toys to the Marine Corps Reserve in Tucson in early December for distribution in time for Christmas.

If you are unable to attend the November 11 dinner and would still like to help, please contact our Chaplain, Robert Lewis at 520-481-6994 to arrange for pick-up or mail your donation to Green Valley MOAA, P.O Box 1535, Green Valley AZ 85622-1535.

Thanks for your support for the less fortunate children in our area.

Travel Sized Toiletries Needed by Homeless Veterans

If you will be traveling during the holiday season and have the opportunity to bring home some unopened shampoos, conditioners, lotions and soaps please consider donating them to the homeless veterans.

The VA can also use back scratchers, reading glasses, bottled water and snacks as well as Pods (regular and decaf coffee, hot chocolate and tea) to fit a Keurig machine.

Items may be brought to the November 11 and December 15 dinners.

MOAA Logo Items Available

We will be taking orders for MOAA polo shirts. Shirts come in red, white, or blue in both ladies’ and men’s styles. Because we get a quantity discount, final cost will be determined when we see how many we order but should be between $22 - $26.

You may order by sending an email with size and color preference to *pjmcgee@cox.net* and pay when they are delivered.

Men’s shirts run true to size while the ladies run a bit small.

MOAA caps in Navy blue are in stock and sell for $15.

We will have the caps as well as sample shirts at the November and December meetings.
End of Year Giving Ideas
Peggy McGee, Treasurer/Public Relations Officer

As 2021 draws to a close, it is time to think about income taxes and end-of-year giving to perhaps reduce your tax obligation.

Some causes to consider

Scholarships for JROTC students at Sahuarita, Rio Rico and Nogales High Schools
Donations for both Sahuarita and Rio Rico can be made online while contributions to the JROTC program at Nogales High School should be mailed to 310 W Plum St., Nogales, AZ 85621. Please add ATTN: Lt. Col. Scott Roxburgh to ensure your donation makes it directly to the JROTC Program.

For Sahuarita High School, go to susd30.us and click on Community and then Tax Credit and then online payment. Type in JROTC. The form can also be printed using the same link and mailed in. Write in JROTC on the “Other” line on the form.

For Rio Rico High School, go to az-santacruzvalley-lite.intouchreceipting.com. Click on School and then Rio Rico High School. Click on Activity and scroll down until you get to JROTC Tax Credit.

Besides being a charitable deduction on federal taxes, a single person can get up to a $200 credit on their AZ taxes and $400 for married filing jointly returns. The AZ tax credit applies whether one itemizes or takes the standard deduction.

MOAA Scholarship & Military Assistance Fund
This enables your Chapter to continue to offer scholarships and assistance to military families and units like the 162nd Fighter Wing. Checks payable to MOAA S&MA may be turned in at the November 11 or December 15 dinners or mailed to MOAA, Green Valley Chapter, P.O. Box 1535, Green Valley, AZ 85622-1535. All monetary contributions will be acknowledged in writing.

Any of the local charities that support the working poor, e.g., Food Banks, Habitat for Humanity, Valley Assistance Services, Salvation Army, Friends in Deed. AZ tax credits up to $800 for those filing jointly and $400 for single filers are offered. This can be claimed in addition to the school tax credit.
Holiday Dinner Will Be a Time for Receiving
Peggy McGee, Treasurer/Public Relations Officer

*Here comes Santa Claus!* Or maybe it’s Diane Longo who will be bringing the gifts to share with all those in attendance. Our holiday dinner is the time that the Chapter presents a small gift to the members in appreciation for their support throughout the year. The money comes from your dues and not from our Scholarship and Military Assistance Fund.

To enable us to get home before it’s too dark, festivities will begin at 4 p.m. on December 15 at Grill on the Green, 5800 S Camino Del Sol. Dinner will be served at 4:30. The menu will be the traditional turkey dinner with mashed potatoes, gravy, dressing, green vegetable, and cranberry sauce with pumpkin pie for dessert. The same meal with ham instead of turkey will also be available. Vegetarian and gluten free options will be offered by request. Cost for the meal will be $30 with checks payable to GV MOAA.

You can secure your reservation by mailing in the form on page 7 of this newsletter. If you don’t get your application mailed in a timely manner, reservations can also be made by contacting Jack Bundy, at 951-760-8706 or jhbundyaz@gmail.com. **Deadline to sign up is December 8.**

JROTC Update
Marianne Rogers Faust, Director/JROTC Liaison

All the JROTC units in our area are actively involved again after a challenging, fragmented schedule last year. I will be highlighting some of the activities of the units in each future newsletter to let you know a few of the things they have been doing. Recently, the Army JROTC unit at Rio Rico High School received Hostage Rescue Training with the Santa Cruz Sheriff’s Department and the local EMTs. This was an important, relevant experience for the cadets. Also, many cadets participated in a clean-up of the Calabasas Cemetery, which is located in Nogales. The cemetery has an interesting history dating back to 1865 when the U.S. Army established Fort Mason at Calabasas. When the post was abandoned, local citizens continued to use the cemetery. Now the clean ups are primarily conducted by local civic groups. The cadets will also participate in an orienteering meet later this month. Orienteering is a competitive form of land navigation. Information on the activities of the other JROTC units will be shared in future newsletters.

The Air Force JROTC unit at Nogales High School has welcomed their new Senior Aerospace Science Instructor. He is Lt Col Scott Roxburgh, USAF (Retired). Before arriving here, he led the AFJROTC program at Little Rock Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. He received his commission in 1994 through the ROTC program at the University of Arkansas. He served as a telemetry systems development engineer before becoming a navigator. He flew 2,000 hours in airlift and special operations versions of the C-130 Hercules. He retired from active duty in 2014. We look forward to meeting him at our awards dinner in May.

As we approach the end of the year, please consider giving a donation to our Scholarship & Military Assistance fund. Any amount will help us to continue to offer college scholarships to outstanding, talented JROTC cadets. Your generosity in the past has truly made a difference in the lives of many deserving, dedicated young people. Thank you!
December 15, 2021 · Social 4PM  Dinner 4:30PM
Grill on the Green · 5800 S Camino Del Sol, Green Valley
This reservation form may also be found on the GreenValleyMOAA.org website

Reserve _______ places  Cost: $_______ ($30 per person)

MEAL CHOICES:

#1 Traditional Turkey Dinner: with mashed potatoes, gravy, dressing, green vegetable, and cranberry sauce.

#2 Ham Dinner: with mashed potatoes, gravy, dressing, green vegetable, and cranberry sauce.

#3 Vegetarian and Gluten-Free options available by request.

Pumpkin pie for dessert is included with all dinner selections. Choice of non-alcoholic beverage.

Mail check and reservation form to:
MOAA of Green Valley · PO Box 1535 · Green Valley, AZ 85622-1535

Rank:  Name: (please print)  Meal Choice (#1, #2, #3):

Member/Guest name:
Member/Guest name:
Member/Guest name:
Member/Guest name:

If you require a ride to the meeting, program or event please check here: ☐

If you cannot get your reservation and check mailed timely, or if you have made a reservation and find you cannot attend, PLEASE CALL (leave a message if no answer): call Jack Bundy 951-760-8706 or email him at: jhbundyaz@gmail.com (**NEW EMAIL**).  Your chapter is charged for all ordered meals even if they aren’t served. Please bring a check or exact cash amount to the meeting.
2022 CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP DUES

This Membership Dues Form may also be found on the GreenValleyMOAA.org website

Chapter Dues: (Regular-$25; Spouses-$15)

Membership Dues $__________ Make check payable to: Military Officers Association of Green Valley (or GV MOAA).

PLEASE PROVIDE THE INFORMATION BELOW:

Name: ____________________________________________ New____ Renewal____

Rank: __________ Branch of Service: __________ National # ________________________

Spouse/Partner ______________________

Address: __________________________________________

City, State, Zip _________________________________________

DOB (Month/Day/Year): ________________________________

Phone: ( ) __________________________ E-Mail: _________________________________

Scholarship & Military Assistance Fund $__________ Donation.

Make check payable to Green Valley MOAA Scholarship and Military Assistance Fund or GV MOAA S&MA Fund. Dues may be paid at any meeting or mailed to Military Officers Association of America, Green Valley, Arizona Chapter, P.O. Box 1535, Green Valley, AZ 85622-1535.
Chaplain’s Corner
Robert Lewis, Chaplain

I have started noticing various holiday decorations, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc. being sold in stores and online. But before these events start to have our attention, this time of year to me, is the culmination of celebrations honoring our individual service birthdays (from June thru November). Some services celebrate with a bit more pomp and ceremony, but all deserve our thoughts.

The birthdays provide an opportunity to honor all of those that have served before us, remember those we served, and pray for those that are serving now and will be serving in the future. Having siblings that have served in the Navy, Air Force, Army and with two in the Marines, the fun of joking with each other was always entertaining in our family. But the tremendous respect we had for each other always trumped the fun. Our service was never easy and came with scars, both seen and unseen. But we all muddled through as best we could and were always proud to have served. In our current population, only one percent has served in the military. Stand tall, be proud, and regardless of your particular service, know that collectively we are in that top one percent!!

Because we are only one percent of the population, our volunteering for military focused organizations is critical. I have served in a number of veterans organizations and can testify to how a little effort can support a multitude of veterans and community. The MOAA, as an example, provides a variety of services from college scholarships for our local high school JROTC Cadets to Toys for Tots providing for children less fortunate than we. Our membership meetings are well attended and provide information on current military issues as well as veteran concerns.

This time of year we look for new volunteers to fill Board positions as well as new members seeking an opportunity to serve. Because we have supported so many different charities over the years, I’m sure you can find one to which to apply your talents. A few hours a month will make a big difference. Please contact any of the Board Members if you are interested in supporting any of our efforts. Service, regardless of the time spent, is good for the SOUL!!

1 Timothy 6:18 “Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share…….”

MOD Pizza Day a Success
Peggy McGee, Treasurer/Public Relations Officer

Thanks to all who enjoyed a delicious pizza at MOD Pizza on October 6 and told the cashier they were there to support our Scholarship & Military Assistance Fund. Each time we host a pizza day, MOD Pizza donates 20% of their food sales for the day to our Chapter.

The latest event brought in just over $100. We will schedule another MOD Pizza Day for some time in January. It’s a painless way to enjoy dinner and help a good cause, scholarships for cadets.
MOAA National Hosts Annual Meeting
Elliott Jones, 1st Vice President/Membership

After a two-year break necessitated by COVID-19, MOAA held its annual meeting October 15-16 in Washington DC. Over 100 chapters were represented at the meeting. There was a Chapters’ leaders’ round table session at which ideas were communicated relative to helping chapters grow so that they can fulfill their mission of serving. There was also a special session for surviving spouses.

The highlight of the conference was the awards ceremony where special recognition was given to three individuals and the Level of Excellence (LOE) Awards were presented to Chapters. Two of the three specially recognized awardees were from Arizona Chapters: Sharon Douglas, Surviving Spouse Liaison (Arizona Council of Chapters) and Col Lee Langley, Legislature Chair Award (Arizona Chapter).

The Arizona Council of Chapters as well as every Chapter in Arizona to include the Green Valley Chapter received the 5 Star LOE award. Our Chapter has received this recognition every year for the past 12 years. Your support and membership have enabled us to achieve this honor.

Thanks again for your support. And if you have not yet done so, please renew your membership for 2022 so we can keep the LOE streak going. The renewal form is on page 8 of this newsletter.

Our motto continues to be: 🌐️🇺🇸 mãi mãi

Holiday Shopping at AmazonSmile
Elliott Jones, 1st Vice President/Membership

We are being told holiday shopping may prove to be a challenge this year because of shipping delays and empty shelves in some retail stores. If you will be ordering gifts from Amazon, please make it through AmazonSmile so that our Scholarship and Military Assistance (S&MA) Fund can continue to grow. There is no cost to enroll in Smile Amazon. And when you enroll and designate MOAA as the charity to receive the funds, Amazon will donate a small amount of the total sales. If we all designate S&MA when we shop the numbers will add up. Learn how to participate, click THIS LINK.
Nogales Police Department Gets ESGR Award
Darren Venters, Transition Liaison

The Nogales Police Department (NPD) was named as a recipient of one of the 2021 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Awards. The NDP, along with 14 other recipients, was selected from 3,382 nominations received from Guardsmen and Reservists across the USA highlighting how their civilian employers went far beyond what the federal law requires to support citizen soldiers. Celebrating its 25th year, the Freedom Award began in 1996 under the auspices of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) program to recognize exceptional employer support. There had been 310 honorees to date.

The NPD has shown outstanding support to its Reserve component employees while they were on military duty or on the job protecting Arizona’s southern international border. The department offers service members unlimited time, if needed, to decompress before returning to duty following activation. It also assists National Guard members deployed to the U.S. southern border by providing local information on hotels, restaurants, and service facilities. On occasion, its officers have even jumpstarted cars and located lost keys for deployed members of the Guard.

“The confidence and support received from the NPD to carry out multiple state activations during these tough times of civil unrest has contributed directly to the success of the 860th Military Police Company and Arizona National Guard,” said Army National Guard Sgt. Christian Perez. “As police officers we have the saying “I've got your six.” This meaning is defined by the NPD as their support while I lead my soldiers into multiple missions both stateside and out of state.”

Carlos Bon from Divine Flavor LLC and Brian Moore from DHS are both supervisors at two very different jobs in Nogales. Both were awarded the ESGR Patriot Award. This award recognizes supervisors and bosses nominated by a Guardsman or Reservist employee for support provided directly to the nominator. The Patriot Award reflects the efforts made to support citizen warriors through a wide-range of measures including flexible schedules, time off prior to and after deployment, caring for families, and granting leaves of absence if needed.

MARK YOUR 2021 CALENDARS

**January 19** – Luncheon Meeting
Social: 11:30am · Lunch: 12pm.
Location: Quail Creek Madera Ballroom

**March 18** – “Mix & Mingle”
POSTPONED, stay tuned for an update.

**May 4** – Dinner · Social: 5pm · Dinner: 5:35pm.
Location: Quail Creek Madera Ballroom.

**September 14** – Social: 11:30am · Lunch 12:00pm. Location: Dominick’s Restaurant, Green Valley.

**October 12** – Mix & Mingle 4:30-6:30pm. Location: Elks Lodge, Green Valley.

**November 11** – Social: 5pm · Dinner: 5:30pm. Location: Grill on the Green, Green Valley.

**December 15** – Social: 4pm · Holiday Dinner: 4:30pm.
Location: Grill on the Green, Green Valley.

**The Board of Directors meeting** is the 1st Wednesday of each month 8:30-10am at the Friends in Deed Building, Green Valley. Members are welcomed to attend... join us! There will be no Board meetings in June, July or August.
2021 Officers, Directors & Chairs
(Area code is 520 unless otherwise indicated)

President: 1LT Joseph Longo USA (Fmr) (509) 645-4993

First Vice-President and Membership:
1LT Elliott Jones USA (Fmr) (847) 366-6466

Second Vice-President and Programs:
CW3 Jack Bundy, USA (Ret) (951) 760-8706

Secretary: Maj. Gen. James Whitehead, Jr., USAF (Ret) 475-8033

Treasurer: COL Peggy McGee, USA (Ret) 207-6188

Immediate Past President, President, 501(c)(3):
LCDR James Knox, USN (Ret) (605) 941-0335

Past Member of National MOAA Board, Past President, Legislative Affairs:
CDR John Chernoski, USN (Ret) 625-3909

ESGR Representative:
Lt Col Dick Kosnick, USA (Ret) 867-8999

Surviving Spouse
Liaison: Nora Durham (714) 232-9277

Director, Personal Affairs:
CWO3 James Rundlett, USCG (Ret) (509) 389-4286

Chaplain: Robert Lewis, CWO3 USA (Ret) 481-6994

Director/JROTC Liaison:
COL Marianne Rogers Faust, USAF (Ret) (210) 861-9440

Historian: COL Marianne Rogers Faust, USAF (Ret) (210) 861-9440

Transition Liaison:
Lt Col Darren Venters, USAF (Ret) 490-4470

Public Relations Officer:
COL Peggy McGee, USA (Ret) 207-6188

Webmaster/Newsletter:
Marianne Cobarrubias, webmaster@greenvalleymoaa.org

Sponsors  A special “thank you” to our sponsors who support MOAA of Green Valley with a paid sponsor ad.
Military retirees, Disabled Veterans to See Largest Pay Raise in Decades For 2022

Military retirees and veterans receiving disability payments from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will see their paychecks go up by 5.9% for 2022, triggered by inflation and an annual adjustment to the federal Cost of Living Allowance (COLA).

That annual adjustment has averaged around 1.5% for the last 10 years.

The adjustment rate was announced recently by the Social Security Administration. The VA is required by law to alter disability payment rates by that amount. While military retirement is not legally required to follow suit, the change is traditionally the same.

Retirement Pay Increase
For 2022, retired military members will see a $59 increase for each $1,000 of military retirement pension they receive each month.

Retirees who entered military service on or after Aug. 1, 1986, and opted for the Career Status Bonus (CSB/Redux retirement plan) have any COLA increases reduced by 1%, so they will see a smaller increase in 2022. They should see a monthly increase of only $49 per $1,000.

Survivors receiving Survivor Benefit Plan payments will see the same increase of $59 per $1,000 in their monthly payments.

VA Disability Increase
Disabled veterans will also get a bump. The average VA disability check will go up about $8.50 per month for those with a 10% rating, and $185.65 for those rated at 100%.

Other Federal Retirees and Beneficiaries
Military retirees and VA beneficiaries aren't the only ones who benefit from the COLA increase. Civil Service retirees and Social Security recipients also will see the 5.9% jump in their monthly checks.

For Social Security recipients, the monthly increase will mean an extra $91 per month for the average beneficiary.

How the COLA Is Determined
Each year, military retirement pay, Survivor Benefit Plan Annuities, VA Compensation and Pensions, and Social Security benefits are adjusted for the rate of inflation.

The Department of Labor determines the annual COLA by measuring the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which is a measurement of a broad sampling of the cost of consumer goods and expenses. The CPI is compared to the previous year; if there is an increase, there is a COLA. If there is no increase, there is no COLA.
The COLA affects about one in every five Americans, including Social Security recipients, disabled veterans, federal retirees and retired military members. Retirees saw a 1.3% increase in 2021. The COLA increase was 1.6% in 2020.

**NDAA Amendment Could Stop Proposed Arlington Burial Eligibility Changes**

A Senate floor amendment to the FY22 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) would delay proposed eligibility changes at Arlington National Cemetery until the completion of a joint DoD-VA report on the location of the next national cemetery to provide full military honors.

The House version of the NDAA includes the following language, championed by Rep. Lisa McClain (R-Mich.), which was approved by the House Armed Services Committee through unanimous consent thanks to your engagement:

*The committee is aware of upcoming changes in eligibility for interment at Arlington National Cemetery. The committee is concerned that veterans who previously qualified for in-ground burials at Arlington National Cemetery will be forced to choose between being cremated and being buried somewhere else. The committee directs the Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit a report to congressional defense committees no later than March 1, 2022, on potential locations of the next national cemetery.*

The language in the House version, while a positive measure, may not be strong enough to change the course of the federal rulemaking process. But an amendment to be submitted by Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) would direct DoD not to alter any eligibility criteria until the submission of a joint report from DoD and the VA to designate the next national cemetery that affords full military honors.

MOAA supports the language included in the Senate amendment and encourages you to show your support by contacting your lawmakers and urging them to ensure it finds a place in the final NDAA. Because time is short on the NDAA, a phone call is warranted: Use MOAA’s Capital Hotline – 866-272-MOAA (6622) – a toll-free line to the U.S. Capitol switchboard, to connect with your legislators’ offices. You can also visit our Take Action website to send a letter.

**Why Action Is Needed Now**

The reduction of the full military honors benefit for many will occur if Congress fails to intervene.

DoD must comply with language in the 2019 NDAA requiring a plan to continue ANC operations “well into the future” through an eligibility reduction. The change could be published soon and would reduce the full military honors benefit for many who have long had Arlington National Cemetery as their planned resting place. This would be especially hard-hitting for Vietnam veterans and their families.

MOAA and The Military Coalition (TMC), a group of 35 military and veteran service organizations (including MOAA) with a combined membership of nearly 5.5 million, are concerned proposed changes are service- and mission-discriminatory, and do not account for all-important military honors for those who would be forced to use a different...
cemetery -- there are 155 National Cemeteries administered by the VA, but only the DoD-run Arlington National Cemetery affords full military honors.

This shortsighted proposal also represents one more reduced benefit for those currently eligible and for future servicemembers.

MOAA and TMC each sent a letter to the armed services committees earlier this year outlining these problems with the proposed changes. Congress must intervene or risk quietly breaking a promise and reducing one more benefit. With the current eligibility standards, ANC will not run out of room until sometime after 2050, yet the proposed eligibility change still looms.

MOAA will continue to work with members of the armed services committees throughout the NDAA process. You can keep up to date on the latest NDAA developments at MOAA.org/advocacy-news.

Changes to VA’s Community Care Program Raise Concerns About Access

Veterans Affairs leaders are phasing out the department’s office in charge of community care programs, a move that some advocates are decrying as unfairly limiting veterans’ medical options but officials insist is only about efficiency and not sweeping policy changes.

Last week, VA officials said they would begin a multi-month process of “designing a new integrated access and care coordination model to better deliver seamless care.”

Connected to that, lawmakers on Capitol Hill received letters from VA Secretary Denis McDonough announcing that the Office of Community Care would be decommissioned in coming months, with its responsibilities shifted to a yet-to-be-established Office for Integrated Veterans Care.

“Implementation of these changes allows the Veterans Health Administration to continue its modernization journey and transformation to operate as a high reliability, veteran-centric organization,” the letter stated.

The issue of community care — where veterans can see private-sector doctors paid for by department funds — has been a contentious one within VA for years.

Former President Donald Trump made expanding outside medical access a key point of his 2016 campaign and presidency, pushing for more “choice” for veterans in where they received their health care.

But Democratic lawmakers — including President Joe Biden — have cautioned that too much use of private-sector doctors for core VA medical responsibilities could drain finances from the VA health care system and lead to “privatization” of the department.

In a statement to Military Times, Donald Koenig, special advisor to VA’s acting Under Secretary for Health for Integrated Veteran Care, said the goal of the new changes is not to hamper or dismantle the community care program.
“Nothing we are doing will change any appointments scheduled now or in the future,” he said. “We’re working to simplify, coordinate better, and make scheduling faster for veterans, whether for a VA provider or a community care provider. Our goal is to deliver the right care at the right time, that best meets our veteran’s health needs.”

Officials at Concerned Veterans of America (CVA) — longtime advocates of increased community care programs and critics of the VA health care system — see it differently.

They noted that VA also recently took down a web page devoted to explaining veterans’ options under the community care program, effectively limiting public information about how to enroll or schedule outside appointments.

“The administration does not like community care,” said Darin Selnick, senior advisor to the group and former Veterans Affairs advisor for the Trump White House. “If they are renaming and neutering offices and moving around access to the revenue, it feels like it is part of a campaign to get rid of it completely.”

Koenig said the Office of Community Care won’t be fully shut down until next spring, with a target now of March 2022.

About 3,600 employees will be transferred to the new integrated care office, while another 4,300 will be reassigned to the Veterans Health Administration’s finance office. No jobs will be terminated or physically relocated.

But Selnick said CVA has heard from numerous veterans and congressional offices about increased problems accessing the program and getting outside medical appointments. He said the decision to separate the financial and operational functions of the program could cause even more delays and confusion.

GV MOAA News contributors this issue:
Elliott Jones, Robert Lewis, Joe Longo, Peggy McGee, Marianne Rogers Faust, Darren Venters, and Jim Whitehead