



Fort George G. Meade Chapter

Officers Call



Mar/Apr 2016

**Five Star Chapter Award 2009, 2010,
2011, 2012, 2013 & 2014**



Presidents Message

Join us at our next luncheon meeting on Thursday March 3rd when our guest speaker will be Alaina Matthews from the Ft. Meade Girl Scout Troop. You will enjoy and be blessed by what Alaina has to say.

Key bills impacting military retirement income are being debated in Annapolis. Senate Bill 293 (hearing held by the Budget & Taxation Committee on Jan 22nd), House Bill 738 and Senate Bill 660 are all good bills. Details of each are inside this newsletter. The Maryland Retired Veterans Task Force (MRVTF) favors SB 660. Now is the time to contact your state legislators and if at possible attend the hearings at 1PM on March 1st (HB 738) Ways and Means Committee and March 11th Senate Budget and Taxation Committee (SB 660) in Annapolis. If you intend to testify for these bills, please turn in 30 copies of your testimony by 11AM to the respective committee.

The chapter as of this writing is finalizing our Letter of Excellence package and will submit to National MOAA in Alexandria no later than 01 March. Unfortunately, our chapter continues to rely on a small group of dedicated individuals; we NEED more of our membership to become involved and take ownership. Our chapter has maintained the coveted 5-star LOE award for six consecutive years and hopefully will make it seven in a row this year for the work done in 2015. Unfortunately, the workload has been upon the shoulders of a few; we must recruit new members and motivate existing members to serve on key positions in the chapter and on the Board of Directors. I have sent out repeated calls for chapter members to volunteer for newsletter editor and for JROTC/ROTC awards coordinator and received zero responses. I urge you to step up and help your chapter to thrive and not just survive.

See you at Club Meade on March 3rd for a great program.

Andrew M Veronis PhD
Brig. Gen., USAF (Ret)

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TRICARE Fee Increases for 2016

TRICARE Young Adult (TYA) - the Military Health System's benefit plan which covers adult children between the ages of 21 and 26 - increased premiums as of January 1. The following chart shows the new rates, and the (hefty) percentage increase.

The TYA program is required to charge its young adult beneficiaries premiums that cover the full government cost of coverage. Unlike most other insurance plans in the country, TYA is legally not able to spread its costs over the larger pool of insured beneficiaries. This year's premiums represent - for the first time - the actual cost of providing care to the TYA population. The result for military families, many with more than one child who needs coverage, is that they are paying much more than their civilian counterparts. MOAA will be seeking ways to ease this increasingly unfair cost burden.

	2015 Annual Premium	2016 Annual Premium	Annual Change (\$)	Annual Change (%)
TRICARE Prime	\$2,496	\$3,672	+\$1,176	+47%
TRICARE Standard	\$2,172	\$2,736	+\$564	+26%

The next chart shows the increases in prescription drug costs. It illustrates how much various copays will change on Feb 1 under the TRICARE pharmacy program, as required by the FY2016 Defense Authorization Act.

2016 TRICARE Rx Rates

	2015 rates	2016 rates
Retail (30 day supply)		
Generic	\$8	\$10
Brand name	\$20	\$24
Non-formulary	\$47	\$47
Mail-Order (90 day supply)		
Generic	\$0	\$0
Brand name	\$16	\$20
Non-formulary	\$46	\$49
MTF	\$0	\$0

USO BWI Magazine/Book Drive

2016 deliveries to the BWI USO include magazines: 103, paperback books: 12, snack food donations: \$52.50.

Commissaries Under Attack Again

The Military Coalition led by MOAA fought long and hard in 2015 to save commissaries. In November the Pentagon conceded that its proposals to cut funding for commissaries would result in a “significant cut in savings to patrons,” and that the “only way to make ends meet would be to raise prices.” A DoD spokesman said that while substantial commissary reforms are still planned and necessary, the DoD “is committed to preserving the current level of savings to commissary customers.”

It turns out that the Administration’s new defense budget proposal calls for cuts of \$221 million from the amount of money that was appropriated for the commissary system last year. While no details about how or what DoD plans to cut in commissaries, there is concern. Are these management efficiencies or will they result in higher prices and reduced quality and service? Stay tuned.

Maryland Legislature is in Session – military tax bills pending

Senate Bill 293 (SB0293) if passed would increase the exemption on military retired pay in Maryland to \$15,000 from 10,000 for those 65 years of age and over. It was heard by the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee on January 22nd. The bill was sponsored by Senator Douglas Peters, District 23 Prince Georges and Anne Arundel County and has 28 cosponsors. This bill is cross-filed with House Bill 0738 (HB738) in the House of Delegates and is sponsored by Delegate CT Wilson of District 28 Charles County. Currently there are no co-sponsors on the house version. HB 738 will be heard by the House Ways and Means Committee on Tuesday March 1st in the House Ways and Means Committee in Annapolis.

Senate Bill 660 (SB0660) would exempt 100% of military retirement pay from Maryland State Income Taxes. It will be heard in the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee hearing room on Friday March 11th at 1300. There are 13 cosponsors of this bill along with its sponsor Senator Sailing of Baltimore County, District 6. Currently there is no house version of this bill. Now is the time to contact your legislators and express your desire to see either of these bills pass although SB 660 is the preferred bill recommended by the Military Retired Veterans Task Force (MRVTF). The rationale is we want to retain working age military retirees in Maryland, allowing the state to earn tax revenues from their second career income as well as that of their spouses. Unfortunately most retired military personnel are opting to retire in other military tax friendly venues such as Texas, Florida, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, New Jersey, and even New York state because their military retirement income is not taxed or they do not have state income taxes (TX and FL).

What should I do now: Call, e-mail, or write your Deletates and State Senator and ask for their support on these bills. Ask your fellow military retirees and your neighbors to do the same. Finally if at all possible be present in Annapolis on the days these bills are being heard by the Senate Budget and House Ways and Means Committee.

The Fort George G. Meade Chapter of
The Military Officers Association of America
P.O. Box 743
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www.mdmoaa.org
MOAA Luncheon Meeting

Thursday March 3rd, 2016 at Club Meade

**Speaker is Miss Alaina Matthews, Girl Scout Troop
767, Girl Scouts of Central Maryland (GSCM)**

*Bring a friend or prospective
member to the meeting!*

Cost: \$17.00 per person.

Join us at the Club Meade at 6600 Mapes Ave on Ft Meade. Menu: Philly
Cheesesteak, tomato soup or baked fish, and cheesecake. (Please specify your choice-
Cheesesteak or Fish)

Name(s) _____
Total Reservations _____ Check enclosed for total amount _____
Phone number: _____ e-mail: _____

Please mail reservations and checks payable to FGGM/MOAA to:

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Reservations required by Sunday February 28, 2016. If you make reservations but are a no-show for
the luncheon payment will still be required to the chapter.