



MOAA

Military Officers Association of America

THE SEVEN SERVICES NEWSLETTER

March 2014

MONTGOMERY COUNTY CHAPTER

MARYLAND

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Daylight savings time is here...actual spring weather cannot be far behind! Let us all hope that we have seen the last of the trials and tribulations we have all endured thus far this year.

It seems that we may be in for a challenging spring...as you no doubt will agree with me if you have read the latest news regarding the 2015 proposed Defense budget.

Once again, it appears that the "low-hanging fruit" for Pentagon budget savings is any line item that deals with personnel costs.

Once again, it seems that the community of citizens who are wearing the Nation's uniforms, or who have worn them, are to be the "go to" source of funds for other Pentagon budget concerns. How many times do we go down this road as a democratic society? Are our elected representatives deaf to the advice they receive from our advocates among the military service organizations? When MOAA puts out the call for contacting Congress, be a "minuteman" and respond!

Things are not looking particularly positive in Annapolis for any of the income tax subtraction bills that have been introduced. While the members of the Maryland Retired Veterans Task Force are continuing to urge favorable action on this legislation, the Comptroller of the State, speaking for the Board of Revenue Estimates, has released a report that forecasts a State revenue deficit of \$238 million over the next two fiscal years. It does not take a Harvard MBA to see what this will mean for any piece of legislation that would appear to reduce revenue to the State. The legislature only looks at the minus side of the ledger; it never seems to look at the plus side for potential revenue gains.

FEBRUARY 19



Our speaker for our February luncheon meeting was our friend Phil Alperson, who is the BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure) Coordinator in the Office of Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett. This was the third time that Phil has joined us for a discussion of the status of BRAC activities in the county.

The discussion primarily centered on what is happening around the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) in Bethesda. Phil assured us that all the intersection projects being carried out by the Maryland Highway Administration are fully funded and will soon be passed the underground utility movement stage so that actual construction will begin this year.

He also discussed in some detail the approaches and solutions being considered concerning crossing improvements on Wisconsin Avenue at the Metro station, to include a pedestrian tunnel and high speed elevators. He cautioned that when the final contractor selection and approach decision is made, heavy congestion will be a fact-of-life along Wisconsin Avenue while construction proceeds. Access to WRNMMC will be a source of frustration for users, so he urged all users to allow for the delays that will be likely.

MARCH IS NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH

In observance of National Nutrition Month, here are some tips from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics about eating right for older adults. Remember, eating right doesn't have to be complicated!

1. Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.
2. Make at least half your grains whole.
3. Switch to fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt and cheese.
4. Vary your protein choices.
5. Cut back on sodium and empty calories from solid fats and added sugars.
6. Enjoy your food but eat less.
7. Be physically active your way.
8. Consult a registered dietician.

These are simple, almost obvious, suggestions, and often times the simple and obvious are the most effective. Do yourself and your loved ones a big favor and heed these suggestions for better health. Tricare will also thank you, since following these steps may well reduce your need for future medical care and its associated costs.



Attention Retirees

TRICARE for Life Pharmacy Pilot

The TRICARE for Life (TFL) Pharmacy Pilot will start in mid-February. The pilot requires TFL beneficiaries who fill prescriptions for maintenance drugs at a retail pharmacy to switch to either home delivery or a military treatment facility (MTF) pharmacy. If you are affected by the pilot, you will receive a letter from Express Scripts.

Who is affected by the TFL Pharmacy Pilot?

TFL beneficiaries who use a **retail pharmacy** to fill a brand name **maintenance drug** prescription are included in the pilot.

- A **retail pharmacy** is any pharmacy that is not part of a hospital or MTF. They include large drugstore chains such as CVS and Rite Aid, neighborhood “mom & pop” pharmacies, and pharmacies located in grocery or mass merchandise stores such as Safeway, Walmart, or Target.

A **maintenance drug** is any prescription you take regularly. You can view the list of [maintenance drugs included in the pilot](#) online.

Once the pilot starts, these prescriptions must be switched to home delivery or a MTF.

Who is NOT affected by the TFL Pharmacy Pilot?

Please note that you may not be required to participate in the pilot if you use a generic drug for your maintenance medication.

Generally, prescriptions for generic maintenance drugs can still be filled at a retail pharmacy for only \$5.

Antibiotics, or other drugs you take for short time, are also not included in the pilot. TFL beneficiaries can still fill short term prescriptions at a retail pharmacy.

TFL beneficiaries who already fill their maintenance prescriptions at an MTF are not affected by the pilot. You will still be able to get your maintenance medications for free at your MTF, assuming they stock the drug you are prescribed.

How will I be notified if I am affected by the

TFL Pharmacy Pilot?

Express Scripts is mailing letters to all affected TFL beneficiaries on February 18. The letter will include details on your [options for switching to home delivery](#) including online, calling the customer service line, mailing a registration form, or asking your medical provider for assistance.

Do I have any options other than home delivery if I am affected by the pilot?

If you are [near an MTF](#), you might consider filling your maintenance prescriptions there for free. Please be aware that military pharmacies don't stock all drugs that TRICARE covers, so your prescription may not be available. If you are thinking about switching to an MTF, phone first to see if they carry your medication and ask how to transfer the prescription.

What happens if I accidentally fill a brand name maintenance prescription at a retail pharmacy after the pilot starts?

TRICARE allows two courtesy refills after the pilot starts:

- The first time you fill one of the selected maintenance medications at a retail pharmacy, TRICARE will cover the prescription, but you will get a second letter from Express Scripts reminding you to switch to home delivery.
- The second time you fill the maintenance prescription at a retail pharmacy, TRICARE will again cover the prescription, but you will get a third reminder letter.

If you make a third attempt to fill the prescription at a retail pharmacy, TRICARE will no longer cover the prescription. You will be responsible for 100% of the cost of that maintenance drug when filling it at a retail pharmacy.

To get more information or to sign up for email updates on the TFL Pharmacy Pilot, visit [TRICARE's website](#). Look for the blue box on the right side of the page to sign up for email updates.

Legislature's Vietnam Era Veterans Recognition & Governor's Reception

On Wednesday, March 5th, the Maryland General Assembly held separate recognition ceremonies in the House of Delegates chamber and the State Senate chamber in the Maryland State House, honoring veterans of all services from the Vietnam Era. Approximately 100 veterans and family members were ushered into each chamber to sustained standing ovations by the legislators. The Speaker of the House noted that he had never observed such a sustained ovation in his two decades of service.

In each chamber, a formal Resolution was offered, adopted, and made a part of the Legislative Record. Copies of those Resolutions are included with this newsletter. In the Senate chamber, Senator John Astle, the legislature's only Vietnam combat veteran, offered emotional remarks and remembrances, which preceded a prayer by Senator Richard Colburn.

Following the proceedings in the legislative chambers, those in attendance were invited to a reception in the Governor's formal Reception Room. After brief remarks by Secretary Edward Chow of MDVA, both Governor O'Malley and Lieutenant Governor Brown offered greetings and comments on the importance and significance of the day.

As the proceedings were winding down, the Governor asked if anyone would like to see his official office. Almost everyone took him up on the offer! He was very informal with the group, explaining the artifacts there, both personal and public. He noted that his desk was made from the old Wye Oak, at one time the largest tree in the state, dating back some 400 years.

Below are some photos of the event, one provided by chapter member Eric Richstein, who, along with your chapter president, were the only two chapter members to attend.



SENATE OF MARYLAND



Resolution

*Be it hereby known to all that
The Senate of Maryland
offers its sincerest congratulations to*

Maryland Vietnam Era Veterans

in recognition of

*Maryland veterans of the Vietnam Era, and their families,
for their service and sacrifice on behalf of the United States.*

*The entire membership extends best wishes on
this memorable occasion and directs this resolution
be presented on this 5th day of March 2014.*



James V. St. John, Jr.
President of the Senate

Douglas J. Peters
Senator Douglas J. Peters
Sponsor

Senate Resolution No. 440

MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES



House Resolution

*Be it hereby known to all that
The House of Delegates of Maryland
offers its sincerest congratulations to*

Maryland Vietnam Era Veterans

in recognition of

*Maryland veterans of the Vietnam War Era for their service and
sacrifice on behalf of the United States.*

*The entire membership extends best wishes on
this memorable occasion and directs this resolution to be presented
on this 5th day of March, 2014.*



Michael E. Busch
Speaker of the House

Sylvia Siegart
Chief Clerk

Delegates Wilson and Minnich,
Sponsor

House Resolution #211

SEVEN SERVICES REVIEW

This issue — U.S. Marine Corps



Marines Train Republic of Georgia Troops

Two battalions from the Republic of Georgia completed a Mission Readiness Exercise aboard Joint Multinational Readiness Center, Hohenfels, Germany, Feb. 23. The MRE was the capstone event for the battalions before their deployment to Afghanistan.

Georgian Special Mountain and 23rd Light Infantry battalions have been training more than six months alongside Marines with Georgia Liaison and Georgia Training Teams in order to enhance and build partnership, and readiness capacity within forces.

“The intent of the MRE is to assess the two battalions against the standards required for their mission in Afghanistan; Georgian units, reinforced with some Marine Corps enablers, are expected to be capable of ‘owning battlespace’ in theater and as such are held to the highest standards,” said Col. Matt Baker, commanding officer of the Marine Corps Security Cooperation Group.

United States Marine Corps Forces Europe and Africa is the lead component for coordinating the GDP-ISAF program, while the Marine Corps Security Cooperation Group is the lead command with direct coordination responsibility for training the Georgian battalions with support from Training and Education Command and the operating forces. MCSCG also executes security cooperation engagement planning, education and training, and advisory support for GLTs and GTTs.

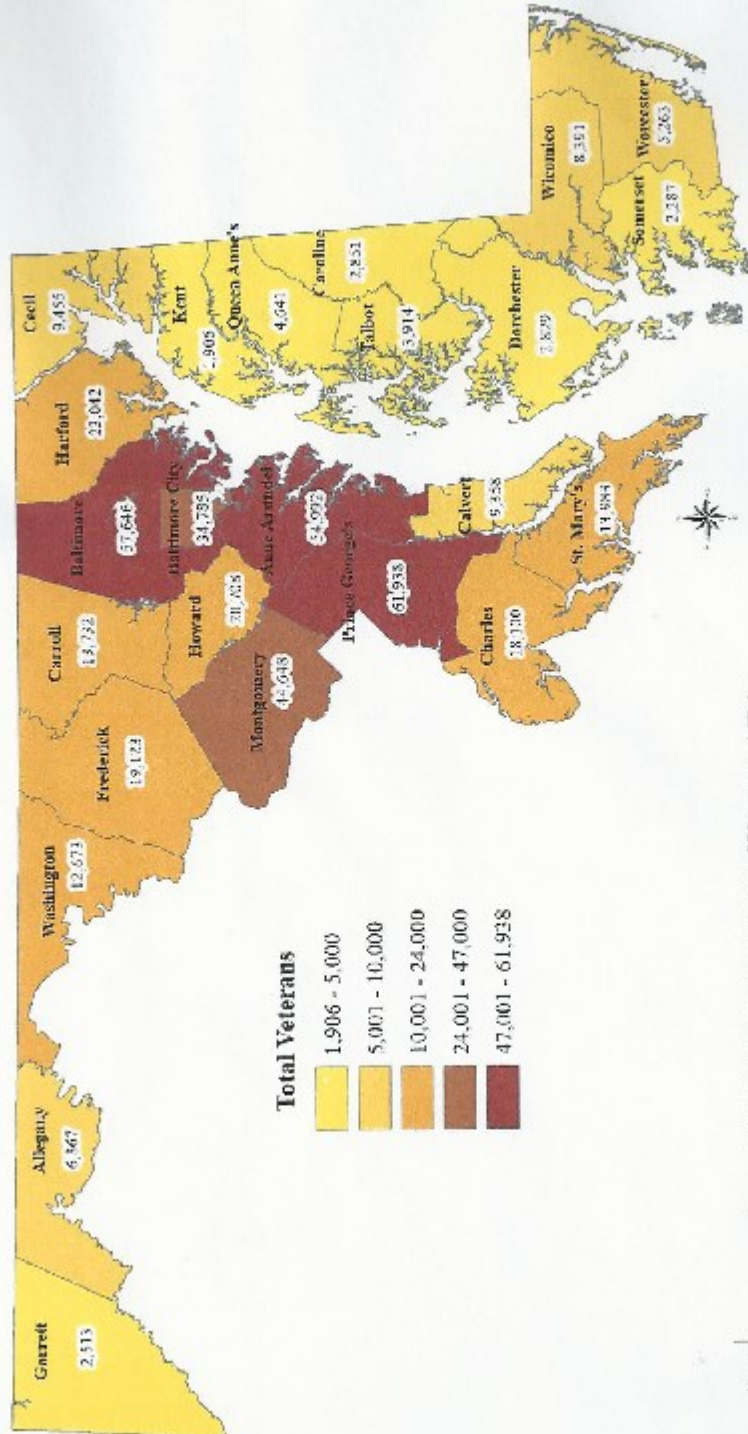
During the first five months of training conducted in the Republic of Georgia, Marines from the GLT were responsible for mentoring Georgian counterparts in their areas of expertise. The GLTs have also built trust and confidence within Georgian soldiers, as well as broke the cultural barrier in order to successfully execute the mission, while embedding within the Georgian battalions.

“This training has a huge importance to the success of our mission; we get to know the Afghani culture, their traditions and habits, without this training we would have a very big obstacle while performing operations in Afghanistan,” said Georgian Maj. Malokaz Chikovani, chief of staff for Special Mountain Battalion. “We would like to thank all the Marines for the training they provided, they have done everything to give us a capability and transferred their knowledge to set us up for success; the Marines advisors became more than just assistants, they became our friends as well.”

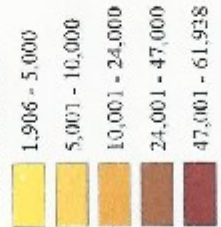
Here is a map that you may find interesting...note that Montgomery County has the fourth largest veteran population in the State.

Projected Number of Veterans in Maryland - 2014

Projected Veterans in Maryland: 435,657



Total Veterans



Source: United States Department of Veterans Affairs
Map prepared for the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs
by the Maryland Department of Planning



Upcoming Events

March 19 Dinner Meeting — Col. Bob Norton, USA(Ret)

“Your Benefits are Under Attack! MOAA Legislative Update

March 31 Chapter board meeting

April 16 Luncheon Meeting — Rear Admiral Joyce Johnson, USPHS(Ret)

“Disaster Response following Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, November 2013”

April 28 Chapter board meeting

May 17 Armed Forces Day

THURSDAY May 22 Luncheon meeting Speaker TBD

May 26 Chapter board meeting

June 18 Luncheon meeting Anne Coventry, Esq.

“Death and Digital Assets”

June 30 Chapter board meeting

Montgomery College Veterans Service Center

The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs has opened its newest service center, located at Montgomery College. The benefits specialist on campus is Mr. Marlon Brown, who can be reached at:

Montgomery College Service Center
51 Mannakee Street
Counseling and Advising Building, Room CB 103
Rockville, MD. 20850

240-567-5405

240-567-4361

Harken ye, to truth ...

"To be prepared for war, is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace."--

George Washington, First Annual Address

Here endth the lesson...let us all remember it