



Mustang News



Vol. 30 No.1

Quarterly Newsletter of the National Order of Battlefield Commissions

Spring, 2009

To our special Band of Brothers and their Ladies:

I hope you are reading our Mustang News in good health and spirits. I feel sure you like I am looking forward to warmer days ahead. The cold months have been up and down here in the Carolinas. Springtime will be welcome by us all.

I want to thank our new Deputy Commander Thomas L. Andrews for stepping up from the Board of Directors to the position of Deputy Commander. I have served with Tom on the Board of Directors in the past. He is a good man and can handle the challenge of helping N.O.B.C. in the future. I will endeavor to work with him on behalf of our organization. Thanks again for your help Tom. Also I see good men with N.O.B.C. interest at heart on our Board of Directors. Thank you goes to Robert Clark, Wimpy D. Pybus both (3) year terms. Walter Duke Jr., John J. Witmeyer both (2) year terms and Virgil L. "Butch" Goewey and James L. Thompson each with (1) year left on the board. There are future Leaders of N.O.B.C. in this group of men. Thanks again brothers for your service.

In every organization there is a person that ties every thing together like a strong belt buckle. In our case it is Stan Schmucker. We owe our Administrative Officer Stan Schmucker special thanks for getting the word out on the vote

Commander's Message

by *Stephen Shivers*



needed to keep N.O.B.C. operational. I hope you all took time to respond to the mail out from Stan. I have spoken with Stan on several occasions to obtain the number of responses for this mail out. We need a two-thirds majority of positive votes. This will allow an amending of the N.O. B. C. constitution and by-laws. The changing of the number from 15 to 10 at an annual meeting in order to have a quorum may allow us to continue on into the near future. We also need an approval on the new Officers and Board of Directors. Stan tells me we are only five votes short for the 2/3 majority needed to pass the officer and board changes plus make the amendment to the constitution and by-laws. Stan informed me on February 12th. That our 2/3-majority vote was complete. I thank you for your vote of confidence.

Enclosed in this newsletter you will find a survey card. Please read over the card mark and write in as appropriate. We have always tried to have our annual meeting where one of the members recommended and was able to help at the site. Last year due to cost the Commander and I dictated the where and when of our annual meeting. Due to our dwindling numbers I need your thoughts on when and where. We need to work together so we can gain the best attendance possible. Keep in mind that starting in June to Labor day we have the normal peak time for vacation and travel. All rates will be higher during this time period. Please return these cards to me as soon as you can. The postage is pre-paid. Do not delay your response. We are already behind the power curve on planning for our 2009 reunion.

Board of Directors Member James L. Thompson suggested we meet in Lawton Oklahoma. He stated there was a possibility we could make use of near by Fort Sill for our reunion. This old Marine has never been to Fort Sill. Some of our Army members have told me it is a bear to get in and out of Lawton. The travel may require air and ground transportation. Please keep this in mind when thinking about your input.

One last thought we were all commissioned because we were willing to lead and fight. Lets not give up N.O.B.C. with out leading and fighting. I remain Semper Fidelis. Steve

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Walter Duke, Jr. (2)
John J. Witmeyer (2)
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James L. Thompson (1)

God Doesn't Hold Makeup Classes

This *Mustang News* should arrive as the Christmas Season is near. That and Easter are the periods when much of our nation becomes very aware of God. Unfortunately those are the only two times some people attend church all year! A recent report noted America has more unchurched people today than ever before—and Europe has far less attendance than we do.



Warren Schilling

In the sermon on the Mount, Jesus noted this same problem. Speaking of Heaven He said, "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow is the road that leads to life and only a few find it." (Matthew 7:13-14). Many in our society are on the wide road, even though they often say "follow the straight and narrow" unaware they are quoting the Bible! Tolstoy said "Everyone thinks of changing the world but no one thinks of changing himself." Jesus said, "Unless you change and become like little children you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven." (Matthew 18:3).

Low church attendance is bound to erode the foundational values of our society. With a clever partial quote from the Bible someone said, "The heavens declare the glory of God (Psalm 191)—but the streets declare the sinfulness of man! Remember, sin blinds

you from knowing you are doing wrong.

But things are encouraging at many of our schools. While most don't allow prayer in class or lunch rooms, hundreds in the nation have students who started what they call "Meet Me at the Pole."

Before school starts large numbers gather around the flag pole and pray before going to class. Many come from unchurched homes and are building close relationships with wonderful Bible believing friends and growing in the knowledge of God.

Obviously our societies have changed but God hasn't. Don't let your concept of God be too small. He is almighty and constant. He is everywhere present and is our ultimate salvation. We can't save ourselves. God stands above time, free from all temporal distinctions. In His being there is no succession, no beginning, no ending, no past, no future—all is Present to Him. He sees it all at once. Time itself is of His creation. God existed in eternity before He created Time and continues to exist outside of Time, constantly taking action in complete sovereign control of all that takes place in the world.

But let's face the truth that time is running our for us. We must make our salvation decision before our time runs out. God doesn't hold any make-up classes after we die.

Fall 2000

From the Hawaii Editor's Desk

by Bill "Scotty" Wynn



Mustang News

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TAPS

for Mustangs answering
their final muster:

- 187-Arthur V. Corley-OK
- 824L-Roy M. Duff-MT
- 454L-Eric Frank-CA
- 048L-Scheller L. Garlock-MD
- 510L-Bernard Jacobson-FL
- 1049L-George J. Koch-PA
- 223L-Valentine Larsen-TX
- 1055L-James M. Phipps-FL
- 139L-Thomas B. Pierce-NV
- 361L-Carl L. Pohlad-MN
- 377L-John J. Schreibeis-NC
- 483-Fred J. Webster-TX

Note: We depend on family members, friends and members to inform us of the deaths of our members. Please provide Stan Schmucker, Admin. & Fin. Officer, with pertinent information and details as soon as possible. Thank you.

Taps

There will be a great encampment
In the land of clouds today.
A mingling and a merging
Of our boys who've gone away.
Though on earth they are disbanding,
They are very close and near,
For those brave and honored heroes
Show no sorrow, shed no tear.
They have lived a life of glory,
History pins their medals high,
Listen to the thunder rolling,
They are marching in the sky!

--Artus Nottingham Chappus

New Life Member

1156L Thomas A. DeLuca
2 Warwick Way
Stafford, VA 22554
Co D 3d Bn 503d Inf
173d Airborne Bde (Vietnam)

Church Gossip

Mildred, the church gossip, and self-appointed monitor of the church's morals, kept sticking her nose into other people's business. Several members did not approve of her extra curricular activities, but feared her enough to maintain their silence.

She made a mistake, however, when she accused Elmer, a new member, of being an alcoholic after she saw his old pickup parked in front of the town's only bar one afternoon. She emphatically told Elmer (and several others) that everyone seeing it there would know exactly what he was doing!

Elmer, a man of few words, stared at her for a moment and just turned and walked away. He didn't explain, defend, or deny...he said nothing.

Later that evening, Elmer quietly parked his pickup in front of Mildred's house...walked home...and left it there all night.

You gotta love Elmer!



Vets Can Salute

**A newly passed act clarifies
that vets out of uniform may
salute the flag as the national
anthem is performed.**



*There's a way of transferring funds that is even faster
than electronic banking.
It's called marriage!*

Sam Kinison

Story One

World War II produced many heroes. One such man was Lt. Commander Butch O'Hare. He was a fighter pilot assigned to the aircraft carrier Lexington in the South Pacific.

One day his entire squadron was sent on a mission. After he was airborne, he looked at his fuel gauge and realized that someone had forgotten to top off his fuel tank. He would not have enough fuel to complete the mission and get back to his ship. His flight leader told him to return to the carrier.

Reluctantly he dropped out of formation and headed back to the fleet. As he was returning to the mother ship, he saw something that turned his blood cold. A squadron of Japanese bombers were speeding their way toward the American fleet. The American fighters were gone on a sortie and the fleet was all but defenseless. He couldn't reach the squadron and bring them back in time to save the fleet. Nor, could he warn the fleet of approaching danger.

There was only one thing to do. He must divert them from the fleet. Laying aside all thoughts of personal safety, he dove into the formation of Japanese planes. Wing-mounted 50 caliber's blazed as he charged in, attacking one surprised enemy plane and then another. Butch weaved in and out of the now broken formation and fired at as many planes as possible until he finally all his ammunition was spent. Undaunted, he continued the assault. He dove at

the planes, trying to at least clip off a wing or tail, in hopes of damaging as many enemy planes as possible and rendering them unfit to fly. He was desperate to do anything he could to keep them from reaching the American ships.

Finally, the exasperated Japanese squadron took off in another direction. Deeply relieved, Butch O'Hare and his battered fighter limped back to the carrier.

Upon arrival he reported in and related the event surrounding his return. The film from the camera mounted on his plate told the tale. It showed the extent of Butch's daring attempt to protect his fleet. He had destroyed five enemy bombers.

That was on February 20, 1942, and for that action he became the Navy's first Ace of WWII and the first Naval Aviator to be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

A year later he was killed in aerial combat at the age of 29. His home town would not allow the memory of that heroic action to die.

And today, O'Hare Airport in Chicago is named in tribute to the courage of this great man.

So, the next time you're in O'Hare visit his memorial with his statue and Medal of Honor. It is located between Terminals 1 and 2.

Story Two

Some years earlier there was a man in Chicago called Easy Eddie.

At that time Al Capone virtually owned the city. Capone wasn't famous for anything heroic. His exploits were anything but praiseworthy. He was, however, notorious for enmeshing the city of Chicago in everything from bootlegged booze and prostitution to murder.

Easy Eddie was Capone's lawyer and for a good reason. He was very good.

In fact, his skill at legal maneuvering kept Big Al out of jail for a long time. To show his appreciation, Capone paid him very well. Not only was the money big, Eddie got special dividends. For instance, he and his family occupied a fenced-in mansion with live-in help and all of the conveniences of the day.

The estate was so large that it filled an entire Chicago city block. Yes, Eddie lived the high life of the Chicago mob and gave little consideration to the atrocity that went on around him.

Eddie did have one soft spot, however. He had a son that he loved dearly. Eddie saw to it that his young son had the best of everything, clothes, cars, and a good education. Nothing was withheld. Price was no object. And, despite his involvement with organized crime, Eddie even tried to teach him right from wrong. Yes, Eddie tried to teach his son to rise above his own sordid life.

He wanted him to be a better man than he was. Yet, with all his wealth and influence, there were two things that Eddie couldn't give his son. Two things that Eddie sacrificed to the Capone mob that he could not pass on to his beloved son, a good name and a good example. One day, Easy Eddie reached a difficult decision. Offering his son a good name was far more important than all the riches he

could lavish on him. He had to rectify all the wrong that he had done. He would go to the authorities and tell the truth about "Scar-face" Al Capone. He would try to clean up his tarnished name and offer his son some semblance of integrity.

To do this he must testify against the Mob, and he knew that the cost would be great. But more than anything, he wanted to be an example to his son.

He wanted to do his best to make restoration and hopefully have a good name to leave his son. So, he testified. Within a year, Easy Eddie's life ended in a blaze of gunfire on a lonely Chicago street. He had given his son the greatest gift he had to offer at the greatest price he would ever pay.

What do these two stories have to do with one another?

Butch O'Hare was Easy Eddie's son.

On The Lighter Side

Have ever wondered why Americans play pranks on one another on April 1st? The U.S. Information Agency tells us that in 16th century France, the start of the New Year was observed on April 1st. The New Year was celebrated in much the same way as it is today with parties and dancing into the late hours of the night.

In 1562, Pope Gregory introduced a new calendar, and the New year fell on January 1st. Communication traveled slowly in those days and some people were informed of the change years later!. There were some people, however, who hadn't heard or didn't believe the change in the date, so they continued to celebrate the New Year's Day on April 1st. These people were labeled "fools" by the population and were subject to ridicule and pranks.

One common prank was to send the "fools" invitations to nonexistent parties. The butt of these pranks became known as a "poisson d'avril" or "April

fish" because a young naive fish is easily caught. In addition, one common practice was to hook a paper fish on the back of someone as a joke. This harassment evolved over time and a custom of prank-playing continues on the first day of April. April Fool's Day has spread internationally with various countries celebrating the holiday in their own way.



"The first of April is the day we remember what we are the other 364 days of the year."

Mark Twain



A drunk staggers into a Catholic church, enters a confessional booth, sits down, but says nothing.

The priest coughs but the drunk continues to sit there. Finally, the priest pounds on the wall.

The drunk mumbles, "ain't no use knockin, there's no paper on this side either."

Who Packs Your Parachute?

Sometimes in the daily challenges life gives us, we miss what is really important. We may fail to say hello, please or thank you, congratulate someone on something wonderful that has happened to them, give a compliment, or do something nice for no reason.

CDR Charles Plumb, was a jet fighter pilot in Vietnam. After 75 missions, his plane was hit by a surface to air missile. He ejected and parachuted into enemy hands. He spent 6 years in a communist prison. He survived the ordeal and now lectures on lessons learned from that experience.

One day, when Plumb and his wife were sitting in a restaurant, a man from another table came up and said, "You're CDR Plumb! You flew jet fighters in Vietnam from the carrier Kitty Hawk. And you were shot down!"

"How in the world did you know that?" he asked.
"I packed your parachute," the man said.

CDR Plumb gasped in surprise and gratitude. The man shook his hand and said, "I guess it worked!" with a smile.

Plumb assured him, "It sure did. If it hadn't I wouldn't be here today."

Plumb couldn't sleep that night, thinking about the man. He kept wondering what he might have looked like in a Navy uniform, Dixie cup hat and bell bottom trousers. How many times I might have seen him and not even said good morning, how are you, because I was a fighter pilot and he was just a sailor.

He thought about the many hours the sailor had spent on a long wooden table in the packing room, carefully weaving shrouds and folding the silks of each chute, holding in his hand the life of someone he didn't know.

Now CDR Plumb asks his audience, "Who packs your parachute?"

Everyone has someone who provides what they need to make it through the day. His experience reminds us all to prepare ourselves to weather whatever storms lie ahead. As you walk through your life, recognize the people who pack your parachute.



IF by Rudyard Kipling

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowances for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, not talk too wise;

If you can dream - and not make dreams your
master;
If you can think - and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with triumph and disaster
And treat those two imposters just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with wornout tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: "hold on";

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtues,
Or walk with kings - nor lose the common touch;
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you;
If all men count with you, but none too much
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty-seconds' worth of distance run -
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And - which is more - you'll be a Man, my son!



Bob Evans

The Military Coalition (TMC) works using several subcommittees of the membership to develop letters to Congress and full-blown presentations to both the House and Senate on topics germane to the health of our armed services, active duty, retired and dependents. Case in point was a lengthy statement provided on February 25 to the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military

Personnel. The statement was developed by the body of The Military Coalition, but presented by three members. I have included the executive summary of the February 25 statement for your information.

I am sure you are aware that The Military Coalition has been exceptionally successful over the past decade in bringing about significant changes to the overall health of the uniformed services, on many fronts. Even though we (NOBC) are perhaps the TMC's smallest member in numbers of active members, we carry the same clout with our input and voting as members with active membership several orders of magnitude greater than our own.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wounded Warrior Care

DoD-VA Seamless Transition Oversight – It is of overriding importance to establish a permanent Joint Seamless Transition Office, responsible for managing, implementing, monitoring, and reporting to senior DoD, VA and congressional leaders on all aspects of the seamless transition process including, but not limited to:

- Joint, single separation physical;
- Consistent DoD/VA disability evaluation system;
- Bi-directional electronic medical and personnel records data transfer;
- Medical centers of excellence and operations/research projects; and
- Coordination of care, treatment, and information, including DoD-VA federal/recovery coordinator clinical and non-clinical services and case management programs

Disability Evaluation System (DES) –

- Bar “pre-existing condition” determinations for any member who has been deployed to a combat zone;
- Retain the 30% disability threshold for award of retired pay and lifetime family TRICARE coverage
- Ensure that any adjustment to the disability retirement system does not result in a member receiving less disability retired pay than he or she would receive under the current system
- Ensure that members electing accelerated disability retirement/separation are fully counseled on all possible negative changes in compensation, health care and other benefits, and give consideration to allowing a limited time to reverse a regrettable decision.

Continuity of Health Care Coverage –

- Authorize medically retired members with a severe service-caused disability to retain active-duty-level TRICARE eligibility for themselves and their eligible family members for at least three years to protect against “falling through the cracks” of unforeseen health coverage changes;
- Establish common DoD and VA protocols for diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation for TBI conditions;
- Either exempt severely disabled military retirees from paying Medicare Part B premiums until age 65 or authorize a special DoD allowance to reimburse them for the cost of such premiums; and
- Waive DoD preauthorization/referral requirements for active duty members referred to VA polytrauma facilities for care.

Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

– TMC recommends:

- Priority efforts to deliver information online and by other means to servicemembers and family members concerning availability of providers, confidential options for counseling, and virtual counseling/advice;
- Special outreach efforts to provide such services and resources, including through VA facilities, to Guard and Reserve members and families who don't live near military facilities.

- Priority efforts to publicize and deliver on-line and other information to private sector providers on the unique needs of military and veteran patients and family members, including contact points for discussion/consultation with military/VA providers;
- Accelerated implementation of pre- and post-deployment screenings, particularly for Guard and Reserve members who may be leaving active duty;
- Increased research on the impact of combat stress and TBI on family members, particularly children;
- Increasing destigmatization efforts, with emphasis at unit levels to actively encourage affected service members, veterans, and family members to seek help and recovery, and thus increase effectiveness and military readiness;
- Increasing availability and publicity of drug and alcohol counseling options;
- Pursuing aggressive medication reconciliation and management programs to protect against inadvertent overmedication and adverse reactions; and
- Requiring TBI and mental health assessments for members who have been deployed to a combat zone as part of any disciplinary process prior to a decision concerning non-medical separation.

Caregiver and Family Support Services -

- Authorize compensation, training and certification, and respite care for family members forced into service as full-time caregivers, whether the member is in active duty or retired status;
- Authorize health care coverage for full-time caregivers
- Establish a central clearinghouse or one-stop resource center to provide the wounded, caregivers, families, and others access to information, requirements and resources about DoD and VA health care, disability, and other applicable systems; and
- Extend on-base housing eligibility for up to one year to medically retired, severely injured service members and their families.

Active Forces

End Strength -

- Sustain planned Army and Marine Corps end strength growth at all costs;
- Resist budget-driven (rather than requirements-driven) manpower reductions for the Air Force and Navy; and
- Seek a 2010 defense budget of at least 5% of Gross Domestic Product.

Military Pay Comparability — Sustain military raises of at least .5% above the Employment Cost Index (ECI) until the current 2.9% shortfall is eliminated.

Military vs. Civilian Total Compensation Comparisons — Reject proposals to “civilianize” military comparisons that, by their nature, cannot similarly calculate the dramatic differentials in military vs. civilian working conditions.

REDUX and the 15-Year Career Status Bonus - The Coalition believes the REDUX/Career Bonus authority should be repealed. For the shorter term, recognizing the significant budget hurdles to that objective, the Coalition urges the Subcommittee to require the services to exert more effort to educate members on size of the future retired pay loss incurred in choosing that option.

Family Readiness and Support -

- Accelerate increases in availability of child care to meet active and Reserve component requirements;
- Direct DoD to report on the extent of reallocation of approved funding for support programs and the attendant impact on military families; and
- Continue pressing the Defense Department to implement flexible spending accounts to enable active duty and Selected Reserve families to pay out-of-pocket dependent care and health care expenses with pre-tax dollars.
- Correct the new paternity leave authority to cover all seven “uniformed services”

P.L. 105-85), who were inadvertently omitted from this benefit;

Access to Quality Housing – Continue efforts to extend the single-family detached house standard to members in grade E-8 and subsequently to grade E-7 and below over several years as resources allow.

Post-9/11 GI Bill - Support a technical correction to ensure uniform applicability to all seven uniformed services.

Permanent Change of Station (PCS) Allowances – Continue efforts to upgrade permanent change-of-station allowances to better reflect expenses imposed on servicemembers, with priority on shipping a second vehicle on overseas accompanied assignments and authorizing at least some reimbursement for house-hunting trip expenses.

Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Programs –

- Oppose any initiative to withhold or reduce MWR appropriated support for Category A and B programs or reduce the exchange dividend derived; and
- Ensure needed access to exchange, commissary, family support, and other quality of life programs at gaining and losing installations involved in BRAC/rebasing.

National Guard & Reserve

Retirement Age Credit –

- For the near term, the Coalition places particular priority on authorizing early retirement credit for all qualifying post-9/11 active duty service performed by Guard/Reserve servicemembers and eliminating the fiscal-year-specific accumulator that bars equal credit for members deploying for equal periods during different months of the year;
- Ultimately, there should be a reduced age entitlement for retired pay and health coverage for all Reserve Component members — that is, an age/service formula or outright eligibility at age 55; and
- Repeal the annual cap of 130 days of inactive duty training points that may be credited towards a reserve retirement.

Special and Incentive Pays — Ensure equitable treatment of Guard and Reserve vs. active duty members for the full range of special and incentive pays.

Guard/Reserve GI Bill –

- Restore basic reserve MGIB benefits for initially joining the Selected Reserve to the historic benchmark of 47-50% of active duty benefits;
- Integrate reserve and active duty MGIB laws in Title 38 to ensure proportionality is maintained in any future benefit changes; and
- Provide academic protections for mobilized Guard and Reserve students including: academic standing and refund guarantees and exemption of Federal student loan payments during activation.

Retiree Issues

Concurrent Receipt – The Coalition’s continuing goal is to eliminate the deduction of VA disability compensation from earned military retired pay for all disabled retirees. In pursuit of that goal, the Coalition’s immediate priorities include:

- Correcting the statutory Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) formula to ensure the intended compensation is delivered; and
- Expanding current authority for Concurrent Retired Disability Pay to members forced into medical retirement before attaining 20 years of service.

Proposed Military Retirement Changes – Reject retirement plan changes such as those proposed by the 10th Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation that would “civilianize” the military system without adequate consideration of the extraordinary demands and sacrifices inherent in a military vs. a civilian career.

Disability Severance Pay – Amend the eligibility rules to include all combat- or operations-related injuries, using same definition as CRSC. For the longer term, the Coalition believes the offset should be ended for all members separated for service-caused disabilities.

Survivor Issues

SBP-DIC Offset – Repeal the SBP-DIC offset (or at a minimum, authorize substantive phased increases in the Supplemental Survivor Indemnity Allowance toward that ultimate end) and:

- Authorize payment of SBP annuities for disabled survivors into a Special Needs Trust;
- Allow SBP eligibility to switch to children if a surviving spouse is convicted of complicity in the member's death;
- Reinstate SBP for survivors who previously transferred payments to their children at such time as the children attain majority, or upon termination of a second or subsequent marriage.

Final Retired Pay Check – Authorize survivors of retired members to retain the final month's retired pay for the month in which the retiree dies.

Health Care Issues

Full Funding for the Defense Health Program – Restore any reduction in TRICARE-related budget authority that may be included in the FY2010 budget, and continued full funding for Defense Health Program needs.

Protecting Beneficiaries Against Cost-Shifting – Require DoD to pursue greater efforts to improve TRICARE and find more effective and appropriate ways to make TRICARE more cost-efficient without seeking to "tax" beneficiaries and make unrealistic budget assumptions.

TMC Healthcare Cost Principles – The Coalition most strongly recommends Rep. Chet Edwards' and Rep. Walter Jones' H.R. 816 and Sen. Frank Lautenberg's and Sen. Chuck Hagel's S. 604 (from the 110th Congress) as models to establish statutory findings, a sense of Congress on the purpose and principles of military health care benefits, and explicit guidelines for and limitations on adjustments.

- Active duty members and families should be charged no fees except retail pharmacy co-payments, except to the extent they make the choice to participate in TRICARE Standard or use out-of-network providers under TRICARE Prime.
- For retired and survivor beneficiaries, the percentage increase in fees, deductibles, and co-payments that may be considered in any year should not exceed the percentage increase beneficiaries experience in their compensation.
- The TRICARE Standard inpatient copay should not be increased further for the foreseeable future. At

\$535 per day, it already far exceeds inpatient copays for virtually any private sector health plan.

- There should be no enrollment fee for TRICARE Standard or TRICARE For Life (TFL), since neither offers assured access to TRICARE-participating providers. An enrollment fee implies enrollees will receive additional services, as Prime enrollees are guaranteed access to participating providers in return for their fee. Congress already has required TFL beneficiaries to pay substantial Medicare Part B fees to gain TFL coverage.
- There should be one TRICARE fee schedule for all retired beneficiaries, just as all legislators, Defense leaders and other federal civilian grades have the same health fee schedule. The TRICARE schedule should be significantly lower than the lowest tier recommended by the Defense Department, recognizing that all retired members paid large up-front premiums for their coverage through decades of arduous service and sacrifice.

TRICARE Prime — Require a DoD report, including reports from managed care support contractors, on actions being taken to improve Prime patient satisfaction, provide appointments within Prime access standards, reduce delays in obtaining pre-authorizations and referrals, and provide quality information to assist beneficiaries in making informed decisions.

TRICARE Standard Enrollment – Oppose establishment of any TRICARE Standard enrollment system; to the extent enrollment may be required, any beneficiary filing a claim should be enrolled automatically, without denying the claim. No enrollment fee should be charged for TRICARE Standard until and unless the program offers guaranteed access to a participating provider.

TRICARE Standard Provider Participation Adequacy – Continue monitoring DoD and GAO reporting on provider participation to ensure proper follow-on action.

Administrative Deterrents to Provider Participation – Continue efforts to reduce administrative impediments that deter health care providers from accepting TRICARE patients.

TRICARE Reimbursement Rates – To the extent the Medicare rate freeze continues, encourage DoD to use rate adjustment authority as needed to sustain provider acceptance.

Require a Comptroller General report on the relative propensity of physicians to participate in Medicare vs. TRICARE.

Active Duty Dependent Dental Plan — Increase the DoD subsidy for the Active Duty Dependent Dental Plan to 72% and increasing the cap on orthodontia payments to \$2,000.

TRICARE Dependent Dental Coverage for Surviving Children — Authorize children of members who die on active duty to retain coverage under the Active Duty Dependent Dental Plan until they reach 21 or 23 if enrolled in college.

TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) Access — Require a DoD report on options to assure TRS enrollees' access to TRICARE-participating providers.

TRS Alternative Option — Authorize an option to have DoD subsidize premiums for continuation of a member's civilian family health insurance during activation periods.

Reserve Separatee TRS/CHCBP Coverage — Authorize one year of post- Transitional Assistance Management Program (TAMP) TRS coverage for every 90 days deployed for returning IRR or involuntary separatees from the Selected Reserve. Authorize Continued Health Care Benefits Program (CHCBP) coverage for voluntarily separating Reservists subject to TRS disenrollment.

Gray Area Reserve Coverage — Authorize an additional premium-based TRS option for Guard/Reserve members to avoid losing health coverage upon entering "gray area".

Guard/Reserve Dental Coverage — Provide coverage for Reservists once an alert order is issued and for 180 days post-mobilization (during TAMP), unless dental readiness is restored to T-2 condition before demobilization.

Guard/Reserve Mental Health — Guard and Reserve members and their families should have equal access to evidence-based treatment for post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), depression, and other combat-related stress conditions. Post-deployment health examinations should be offered at the member's home station.

Guard/Reserve Health Information — Improve electronic capture of non-military health information in the service member's medical record.

TRICARE For Life — Oppose any TFL enrollment fee and seek equal coverage of TFL beneficiaries under TRICARE and Medicare preventive care initiatives.

Restoration of Survivor Coverage — Restore TRICARE benefits to previously eligible survivors whose second or subsequent marriage ends in death or divorce.

BRAC and Re-Basing — Require an annual DoD report on the adequacy of health resources, services, quality and access to care for beneficiaries affected by BRAC/rebasing.

So You Think You Know Something About Cannon Balls!

It was necessary to keep a good supply of cannon balls near the cannon in the sailing ships of old. But how to prevent them from rolling on the deck was a problem. The best storage method devised was to stack them as a square pyramid, with one ball on top, resting on four, then nine which rested on 16. Thus we have a supply of 30 cannon balls in a small area next to the cannon. There was a bit of a problem though, how to prevent the bottom layer from sliding/rolling from under the others, But if a metal plate with 16 round indentations, called a Monkey for reasons unknown, were used then the balls would stay in position. If the plates were made of iron, the iron balls would quickly rust to it, so the solution would be to make this base plate of brass - hence the Brass Monkey. Few landlubbers know that brass contracts much more and much faster than iron when chilled. Consequently, when the temperature dropped too far, the brass indentations would shrink so much that the iron balls would roll right off the Monkey plate. Thus, it was quite literally, cold enough to freeze the balls off a Brass Monkey. All this time readers you thought this was just a vulgar expression, now you know the "rest of the story" and a bit of historical knowledge you didn't know before.

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