



Ozark Empire News

Ozark Empire Chapter, Military Officers Association of America
2131 West Republic Road, Box 164, Springfield, Missouri 65807
<http://www.oemoaa.us>



January 2018

Chapter Mission Statement: *To stimulate patriotism in our community and serve those who hold or have ever held a warrant or commission in any of the seven uniformed services, as well as their surviving spouses. The Ozark Empire Military Officers Association of America (OEMOAA) is an affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA).*

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Happy New Year to all as we welcome 2018!

MOAA's 2018 Advocacy Mission has 10 key areas. I encourage everyone to visit the MOAA website to review these and help, where possible, with our local congressional representatives to ensure success. Unfortunately, highlighted with the information below regarding TRICARE Pharmacy, we may have already missed a big portion of Goal #1: "avoid disproportional TRICARE fee increases." Pharmacy co-pay changes effective 1 February 2018. While retail pharmacy and home delivery copayments will increase, **prescriptions filled at military pharmacies remain available at no cost.**

- Using home delivery (currently Express Scripts), the copayments for a 90-day supply of generic formulary drugs will increase from \$0 to \$7 (700% increase). **NOTE: the \$7/Rx is temporary; it is scheduled to go to \$10/Rx soon.** For brand name formulary drugs, copayments will increase from \$20 to \$24 (20% increase). Non-formulary drug copayments will increase from \$49 to \$53 (8.2% increase). *Question:* Did anyone come close to an 8.2% COLA?
- At a retail network pharmacy, copayments for a 30-day supply of generic formulary drugs will increase from \$10 to \$11 and from \$24 to \$28 for brand name formulary drugs.

TRICARE groups pharmacy drugs into three categories: generic formulary, brand name formulary, and non-formulary. You pay the least for generic formulary drugs and the most for non-formulary drugs, regardless of whether you get them from home delivery or a retail pharmacy. You CAN reduce the costs of non-formulary drugs with an approved medical necessity, from your provider.

Here's a direct example based on a patient I cared for some years ago. The patient had 24 active medications (this is not unique, nor is it the most I've seen). For this patient, using the new fees going into effect 1 February 2018, her out-of-pocket costs will increase 105% from \$140 to \$287 per encounter. There will be significant impact on these "small fee" increases on beneficiaries across the spectrum, and the "incremental" increases will not stop. If you recall, everyone was essentially forced into moving their maintenance medications from the retail network to Express Scripts or the Military Treatment Facility (MTF) with the congressionally mandated decision AND a \$0 co-pay promise for generics. Once they had all of this business moved into a venue the government controls, it is now only a matter of how frequently they will move the costs up. I encourage everyone who makes routine visits to a base/post to move their prescriptions to the MTF pharmacy. Only then will we start to force change by moving the market. The other thing you may wish to explore is that some generics are so inexpensive you may be able to receive 90-day supplies from your local pharmacy for cash at, or slightly above, the \$7 co-pay. As you can tell, this is an area I am passionate about and have in-depth knowledge of.

I am providing a link to the Fort Leonard Wood Pharmacy for your consideration since it is closest to our OEMOAA members: <http://glwach.amedd.army.mil/pharmacy/default.asp>. This link has all operational hours and a secondary link to their formulary. Here's additional information to consider:

- Off-post providers can electronically prescribe non-controlled medications for pickup at the Main or PX Outpatient Pharmacy by ordering to **DOD FT LEONARD EPHCY**. Controlled medications must be hand-written and presented to the pharmacy.
- Online refills are available on the Patient Portal at <https://www.tricareonline.com/portal/page/portal/TricareOnline/Portal>.
- Refills must be picked up at one of the MTF Pharmacies within 14 calendar days of the date filled/refilled. If not, they will be returned to stock and the pick-up process will take much longer since the pharmacy will have to re-accomplish the work to fill the prescriptions.
- Make sure to validate that the MTF carries your medication prior to the first fill since it does take them 3 business days to get any new medication in stock, this validation can be done online or with a call to the pharmacy.
- Once you establish your prescriptions (new) with the MTF, you can then use either the phone or TRICARE Online to initiate a refill. At that time you can designate where you want to pick up your medications (PX/BX or main pharmacy).
- Prescriptions for controlled medications that are refillable are limited, by law, to only a 30-day supply and up to 5 refills, if authorized (please consider this since no 90-day supplies are allowed; these Rx's may be a candidate for your local pharmacy).

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The President has signed what is a fairly good Authorization Act for the military; we have a new tax law and, hopefully, we will have an Appropriations Act soon. However, I see potential problems on the horizon that remind me of a situation that I dealt with in the 1980's. I was one of five Department of Government Representatives that dealt with highly sensitive communications matters. We obtained secure voice devices for several high-level staff cars such as for the Secretary of State. Everyone was extremely excited until I pointed out that these folks used to "talk around things" but would not do so now. Then I reminded them of how easy it was to intercept voice signals coming from a car before they were encrypted. Anyway, I see the new tax law and proposed increased military spending much like that. We cannot afford to get excited about these actions; rather, we need to be doubly vigilant. In 2018, I can certainly envision our Congress casting an evil eye at military pay and benefits for a place to cut spending when the new tax law starts to fall short of generating enough revenue to pay for new military hardware expenditures. Additionally, sequestration's ugly head is still lurking around, which could easily impact the military's 2018 and 2019 spending which, of course, includes our pay and benefits. The bottom line is that we have to keep a high volume of emails flowing to our legislators so that they know where we stand.

On the plus side, the new legislation gives a permanent extension for Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA), and it is indexed to COLA. It's not a perfect fix, but it is far better than letting it expire. I would like for members of our Chapter who are impacted by SSIA to let me know who you are so I have a better idea of how many members are impacted.

The Missouri Association of Veterans Organizations (MAVO) priorities for the Missouri State Legislative Session don't include a new Veterans Home. However, the number one priority is to maintain necessary funding levels to support existing Veterans Programs, and they are supporting replacing the Missouri Veterans Home in Mexico, Missouri.

LTC Frank Bridges, USA Retired, OEMOAA Legislative Chair

"Always Respond to Calls for Action"

VETERANS AND MILITARY COALITION OF THE OZARKS (VMCO)

The Veterans and Military Coalition of the Ozarks (VMCO) met 21 December 2017 with guest speaker Bryan C. Matthews, Medical Director of the Veterans Health Care System of the Ozarks at Fayetteville, Arkansas (**shown at right**). He highlighted the five priorities for veterans care in 2018 as follows:

1. Give greater choice based on what is available at the Veterans Administration (VA). Is it accessible to a veteran in need, and is it feasible for a particular veteran to use? If not, the veteran needs to use a non-veteran caregiver.
2. Is the care needed available on a timely basis? If not, then the veteran needs to use a non-veteran caregiver.
3. The veterans organization will focus on what it does well.
4. Modernization of facilities and finally suicide prevention. Bryan indicated that Fayetteville will have a new mental health facility next year. He emphasized that 14 out every 20 veterans who commit suicide are not VA patients.
5. Additionally, the Springfield and Joplin VA Clinics will open in the fall with Springfield, hopefully, opening in October 2018. When both of these facilities are fully functional, Mount Vernon will close. The VMCO representatives believe that Fayetteville offers good, timely service

LTC Frank Bridges, USA Retired



CHRISTMAS MEETING AND SILENT AUCTION FUNDRAISER

This year, our December meeting was held at the Twin Oaks Country Club's Mulligan Room. The Club was beautifully decorated for the holidays, which helped put everyone in a festive mood. To add to that feeling, 32 members of the Kickapoo High School Choir—led by Mr. Nathan Cornelius—entertained us with a variety of Christmas music before dinner. In addition to our heartfelt applause, we thanked them with a \$250 donation to be used for their Spring concert trip.



Cathy Nicholson checks out a basket of books, some art items from Korea, and two Army-Navy tablecloths.



Jay Gann studies a set of Pennsbury Pottery, a folk art dinnerware made in Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

Also before dinner (and for a while afterwards), we held a Silent Auction. Our first one was last year—thanks to Jerry and Cathy Nicholson—and its purpose was to raise money to help support the Honor Flight of the Ozarks. This year, thanks to so many members donating items to the auction (and so many members buying items), we raised \$638. That amount, plus \$40 from the 50/50 club tickets sold at this meeting, and many members adding a little extra for Honor Flight when paying their dues, the balance in the chapter account marked for Honor Flight of the Ozarks is \$1567.

CHRISTMAS MEETING ATTENDEES



Gayle & Marge Stephens, Charlotte Skiffington, Diana & Phil Samples, and Bill & Cathy Pickett



Judy McManus, June & Sam Hamra, Rita & John Allen, Nancy Gordon, Steve Vanderhoof, and Greg McManus



Becky & Bryan Hutchings, Chuck & Cathy Guy, Carole & Norm Workman, Hazel Williams, and Patti Echols



Carla & Ron McCall, Lavern & Margo Kohl, Sue & Glenn Israel, and Carl & Linda Boswell



David & Darlene Reed, Cathy & Jerry Nicholson, Jay & Robin Gann, Shirley Bridges (and Frank, who was taking pictures)



Frank Bridges(left) and Cathy Pickett (right) welcome Auxiliary member Charlotte Skiffington, after her long absence.

In the photos of members at the tables, the first person identified is to the left of the empty space at the front of the table, and the names follow around the table to the back & on to the right front.

MISSOURI COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS

The Missouri Council of Chapters held its 9 December quarterly meeting in Columbia. The primary business of the meeting was to elect and swear in the Officers for 2018. The new President is LTC Frank Bridges, USA Retired, Ozark Empire Chapter; Vice President is COL Steve Vanderhoof, USA Retired, Ozark Empire Chapter; Secretary is 1stLt John Glenn USMC Retired, Greater St. Louis Chapter; and Treasurer is 1LT Jeff Long, ARNG, Mozark Chapter. Also, MAJ Joe Phillips, Retired, presented a Certificate of Appreciation to COL Steve Vanderhoof for his service as Vice President, and LtGen Rich Harding, USAF Retired, presented a plaque to MAJ Joe Phillips for his service as President, Council of Chapters. The next meeting will be 4 March 2018 at Fort Leonard Wood at 1000 hours. *LTC Frank Bridges, USA Retired*



MAJ Joe Phillips, USA Retired, presents a certificate of Appreciation to COL Steve Vanderhoof, USA Retired, for his service as Vice President of the Council of Chapters



LTG Rich Harding, USA Retired, presents a plaque to MAJ Joe Phillips, USA Retired, for his service as President of the Missouri Council of Chapters

HEALTH STATUS OF OEMOAA MEMBERS

Frank Bridges has been in touch with OEMOAA members Colonel Bill Lord, USA Retired, and Colonel Michael Murphy, USA Retired. Bill is having some real health problems that have something to do with his liver and brain. The bottom line is that he is not doing very well. He does hope to come to a meeting or two when it gets warmer. But his wife, Bettye, is not very well either. As for Mike Murphy, he says he is all but fully recovered from his fall. It was obvious from our conversation that he is in very high spirits. He, too, hopes to attend meetings in the Spring. For now, he and his wife, Jackie, are very busy with taking care of her father, but they hope to have him in the Mount Vernon Veterans Home soon.

The Ozark Empire News is published by the Ozark Empire Chapter, which is an affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA). MOAA and its affiliated chapters and councils are nonpartisan.

JANUARY 2018 MEETING

- DATE:** 3rd Friday, 19 January 2018
- PLACE:** Twin Oaks Country Club (Oak Room B)
1020 East Republic Road
Springfield, Missouri 65807
- TIME:** 1815 – Social Hour
(Drinks can be purchased from their bar; for example:
house wine \$6/ glass; domestic beer \$4; liquor varies.)
1900 – Dinner/Program
- MENU:** Buffet w/2 Entrees (Chef's Choice), 2 Sides, Small
Salad Bar; Bread/Butter; Dessert, Assorted Beverages
(water, tea, coffee)
- COST:** \$21.00 per person (includes gratuity)
- SPEAKER:** Angela Owen, Group Fitness Instructor
"Benefits of Physical Activity for Everyday Living"
- RSVP:** By 1200 hours, Monday, 15 January 2018
To LtCol William Pickett, USAF, Retired
417-888-0135 or cathyquilt@earthlink.net

LtCol Pickett will acknowledge ALL reservations received.

ELECTED CHAPTER OFFICERS

- PRESIDENT:** Phil Samples, Colonel, USAF, Retired
417-742-5125 pls.rxdx@gmail.com
- 1ST VICE PRESIDENT:** Chuck Guy, COL, USA Retired
520-820-7339 chuckguy0765@gmail.com
- 2ND VICE PRESIDENT:** Jerry Nicholson, LtCol, USMC, Retired
417-315-8193 gnicholson013@yahoo.com
- SECRETARY/TREASURER:** William Pickett, LtCol, USAF, Retired
417-888-0135 cathyquilt@earthlink.net
- IMMED PAST PRESIDENT:** Frank Bridges, LTC, USA, Retired
573-308-7272 frankbridges@frankbridges.com

APPOINTED CHAPTER OFFICERS

- AWARDS COORDINATOR:** Bryan Hutchings, Major, USAF, Retired
417-887-4304 bkhutchings@mchsi.com
- SURVIVING SPOUSE LIAISON:** Margaret Maulin, LCDR, USN, Retired
417-886-8197 mmaulin75@gmail.com
- WEBMASTER:** Charley Hawkins, CAPT, USN, Retired
417-883-6937 charley65804@gmail.com
- MEMBERSHIP CHAIR:** John Allen, MAJ, USA, Retired
417-888-2097 jallen39@mediacombb.net
- LEGISLATIVE CHAIR:** Frank Bridges, LTC, USA, Retired
573-308-7272 frankbridges@frankbridges.com
- NOMINATIONS CHAIR:** Steve Vanderhoof, COL, USA, Retired
660-886-0205 svanderhoof856@att.net
- AMBASSADOR:** Michael Murphy, COL, USA, Retired
417-883-9474 06mmurphy@gmail.com
- AMBASSADOR:** Steve Vanderhoof, COL, USA, Retired
660-886-0205 svanderhoof856@att.net
- NEWSLETTER EDITOR:** Shirley Bridges, Spouse
573-308-5254 sbridges350@att.net

2018 MEETINGS & SPEAKERS

- 16 February – **3rd Friday**
Location: Twin Oaks Country Club (Oak Room A)
Speaker: Cherrie Mann, "Ladies Clothing and Accessories
During the Civil War"
- 16 March – **3rd Friday**
Location: Twin Oaks Country Club (Oak Room A)
Speaker: Kyle Wiley Pickett, Springfield Symphony
Orchestra Music Director/Conductor
- 20 April – **3rd Friday**
Location: Twin Oaks Country Club (Oak Room A)
Speaker: To be determined
- 15 May – **3rd Tuesday**
Location: Twin Oaks Country Club (Oak Room A)
Speaker: Jana Fornelli, Program Manager, Southwest Area,
Special Olympics of Missouri
- 22 June – **4th Friday**
Location: Twin Oaks Country Club (Oak Room A)
Speaker: To be determined.
- July – **NO MEETING**
- August – **NO MEETING**
- 21 September – **3rd Friday**
Location: Twin Oaks Country Club (Oak Room A)
Speaker: To be determined.
- 19 October – **3rd Friday**
Location: Twin Oaks Country Club (Oak Room A)
Speaker: To be determined
- 16 November – **3rd Friday**
Location: Twin Oaks Country Club (Oak Room A)
Speaker: To be determined
- 13 December – **2nd Thursday**
Location: Twin Oaks Country Club (Mulligan Room)
Program: Christmas Party (menu/price to be determined)

*The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself
in the service of others.—Mahatma Gandhi*

Never Stop Serving

OEMOAA NAME TAGS

Some members and their spouses prefer a solid plastic name badge with a magnetic clasp. The member cost is \$10 per badge, paid in advance. Forms for ordering these badges will be available at the next two meetings. You can also email Bill Pickett (cathyquilt@earthlink.net), and he will send you a form by return email. Please return completed forms to Bill at a meeting with the \$10 per badge fee. Your order will be ready for you at your next meeting. Yes, the name tags with the pin clasp will continue to be provided at no cost.