



Suncoast Chapter USCG Chief Warrant Officers Association

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The March meeting of the Sun Coast Chapter of the U.S. Coast Guard Chief Warrant Officers Association was held in the Red Tail Lounge at Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater Florida on Wednesday March 19, 2008.

The following members attended:

Douglas and Barbara Cameron
Ben Hogan

Art Cushing
Bill Reetz

David Daniels

The meeting was called to order by President Bill Reetz at 2:05 PM, who then led the members in the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a moment of silence for those who have crossed the bar.

A brief discussion was held concerning the visit by Ed Swift the Executive Director of the Association last month when David and I toured several of the hotels in the Westshore area to make a recommendation for the location of the 2009 annual meeting here in Tampa. Our recommendation was the Embassy Suites on Westshore Avenue across from Westshore Mall.

David Daniels will be representing the Suncoast Chapter at the annual meeting in Portland Maine from April 16 through the 19th. This will be my final meeting as Vice President Retired Affairs. A motion was made by David Daniels and seconded by Doug Cameron to present a check in the amount of \$100 to the Jon Keller Scholarship Program at the annual meeting as we have done for the past several years. After a brief discussion about this months change in meeting time and location it was decided to return to holding our meetings at our usual time of 1900 (7:00 pm) on the 3rd Monday of the month in the dining facility or a local restaurant.

The below is an (Info update from MOAA- the CWOA is affiliated with MOAA as part of the Military Coalition):

“Every so often, we like to take a moment and address some of the more frequent questions we receive through MOAA's Member Service Center. We asked MOAA's member service representatives what questions are most on the minds of the people who call MOAA headquarters.

1. Am I eligible for the new combat related special compensation (CRSC) provision passed in the recent defense bill? When can I apply?

Under the new provision, which became effective on Jan. 1, CRSC eligibility was extended to anyone who was retired from the military with less than 20 years of service and was awarded VA disability compensation for a combat- or operations- related condition. This includes medical (chapter 61) retirees and members who retired under the Temporary Early Retirement Act (TERA) during the force drawdown of the 1990s.

Eligible members have to apply to their service for CRSC. Applications can be made now, but the application form hasn't yet been updated to reflect the new change in eligibility rules. Service CRSC officials have asked that newly eligible members hand-write "Chapter 61" or "TERA" on their website <https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/crsc/documents/ClaimForm.pdf> (note the link to this form is an Army site. All CRSC forms are the same, but the Army site offers the easiest place to access the form online. The form has directions for filing with all services).

2. I'm on TRICARE For Life. How do the DoD health fee proposals affect me?

There are two parts of the plan proposed by the Task Force on the Future of Military Health Care that would affect Medicare-eligibles. The plan calls for significant increases in copays for most medications not obtained at military hospitals and clinics. For drugs purchased in retail pharmacies, the plan would raise the generic drug copay to \$15 (vs the current \$3), for brand name formulary drugs, it would be \$25 (vs. the current \$9) and for non-formulary medications, it would be \$45 (vs. the current \$22). Generics would be provided at no charge through the mail-order system, but the copay for other drugs would rise. The Defense Department included these proposals in the FY2009 defense budget proposal. MOAA is fighting those unfair increases.

The Task Force also proposed an annual \$120 enrollment fee for TRICARE-For-Life beneficiaries, but the Defense Department didn't include that in the FY2009 defense budget, so that's not on the legislative table this year. MOAA believes it's only a matter of time before Defense leaders push for a TFL enrollment fee at least that big.

3. Has the Shingles vaccination SNAFU been fixed yet? I'm being required to pay for almost the whole thing out of pocket!

TRICARE does cover the vaccine, but TRICARE deductibles and copays will apply for TFL users. That means that retirees who get the vaccine early in the year, before they've met their annual deductible will pay some or all of the cost of the benefit. MOAA believes preventive care such as this vaccine should be exempt from any deductible or copay, and has recommended that to both the Defense Department and Congress. At the very least, it should be covered as a

pharmacy issue rather than a health care service, so that it would only have a \$3 or \$9 copay and be exempt from the deductible.

4. What else is MOAA doing for those who still aren't eligible for concurrent receipt?

MOAA's goal remains full repeal of the disability offset for all retirees with any service-connected injury. We've made significant progress, for many but about two-thirds of the disabled retiree population remains to be helped. MOAA is pushing Congress to equalize coverage for all members 50% or more disabled, regardless of years of service, and to expand coverage to those with 40% or lower disability ratings. MOAA considers this a vesting issue. Disabled members should be entitled to keep their service-earned retired pay (2.5% of pay times years of service), independent of any service-caused disability.

5. Is MOAA stopping the campaign to get equity for survivors who suffer from the offset between the military's and the VA's survivor annuity?

Definitely not. MOAA's goal is the full elimination of any VA compensation deduction from the military Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP). Last year, we won a step in the right direction when Congress formally acknowledged the inequity of the current offset and authorized a very modest \$50 monthly payment to the affected survivors, with some additional increases in future years. That's a very small payment indeed, and even that change excluded eligibility for survivors whose military sponsors died on active duty.

But hard experience indicates that full repeal isn't likely to happen in one year. We're pushing Congress to include active duty deaths and plus up the monthly payment to all affected survivors, with the goal of eliminating the offset as quickly as humanly possible.

Our next meeting will be on Monday April 21st at The Ranch House Grill, 4426 W. Gandy Blvd, Tampa, FL. Phone (813) 831-9759 at 1800 (6:00 pm). It's about a mile from the East end of the Gandy Bridge between the 1st traffic light (Westshore) and the 2nd (Manhattan) on the South side of the street (right next to Hooters). **Note Time Change.**

William Reetz
President

This months joke:

Two business men in NY are sitting down for a break in their soon- to-be new store. As yet, the store isn't ready, only a few shelves are set up. One says to the other, 'I bet any minute now some tourist is going to walk by, put his face to the window and ask what we're selling.'

No sooner are the words out of his mouth when, sure enough, Boudreaux walks to the window, has a peek and in a Cajun accent asks, 'Mai, cher, what're y'all sellin' in dare?' One of the men replies, 'Oh! We're selling assholes here.'" Without skipping a beat, Boudreaux says, 'Well, I see y'all're doing damn good, you only got two left!'