



45th Annual Meeting In October (Members Will Drive USAWOA's 2018 Legislative Agenda)

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The USAWOA 45th Annual Meeting of the Members (AMM) will be conducted from 4 to 7 October 2017, at the Walter Washington Convention Center, in Washington, DC. Registration for the AMM can be accomplished on the USAWOA portal website in the online store. Members may also register manually, using the registration form located on page 23 of this magazine.

Reservations at the hotel must be made separately. *The cutoff date to receive the prevailing per diem rate for the hotel is 20 September 2016, so register for the meeting and reserve your room now!* Details can be found at <https://woaonline.org/45thAMM/45thAMM.html>.

As they did last year, Members will be asked to vote on a series of official USAWOA resolutions. These will form the basis of next year's USAWOA mission with The Military Coalition (TMC), the Pentagon, Congress, and the White House.

This series of core resolutions were submitted to the USAWOA Past Presidents Council (PPC) for its review and comment. The members of the PPC have reviewed the slate of resolutions and made their recommendations. I concurred with all recommended changes, and submitted a final version to the national Executive Committee (EXCOM).

In turn, the EXCOM conducted its review and unanimously approved the consolidated document (on behalf of the USAWOA board of directors) for presentation to the Members at the AMM for a final vote. A link to the final slate of resolutions will be emailed to all USAWOA Members this week.

Following is a list of the titles of the resolutions that will be submitted to the Members at the 45th AMM for consideration, debate, and final vote of approval. Many will sound

familiar, as they are ongoing resolutions (updated from last year to reflect progress or changes). Several of last year's resolutions have been removed pursuant to legislative victories (and will be reported on at the 45th AMM). And a couple of them are new, including Resolution 2018-013, which was raised at the 44th AMM, with a unanimous vote of the Members to be developed as a potential 2018 resolution.

- Resolution 2018-001: End Sequestration
- Resolution 2018-002: Properly Fund Our Nation's Armed Services
- Resolution 2018-003: Survival of the All-Volunteer Force
- Resolution 2018-004: Support Army Senior Warrant Officer Leaders and the Army Senior Warrant Officer Council
- Resolution 2018-005: Fair Uniformed Service Member Pay Increases
- Resolution 2018-006: Oppose Reductions to Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH)
- Resolution 2018-007: Adequately Fund Retirements of the Future Force
- Resolution 2018-008: Provide Complete Concurrent Receipt of Military Retirement and VA Disability Compensation
- Resolution 2018-009: Oppose TRICARE Beneficiary Cost Increases
- Resolution 2018-010: Oppose TRICARE Pharmaceutical Cost Increases

- Resolution 2018-011: Adequate Funding and Appropriate Management Flexibility for the Department of Veterans Affairs

- Resolution 2018-012: Provide Equivalent Benefits To All Service Members Serving On Active Duty Orders

- Resolution 2018-013: Institution of Compulsory National Service Obligation

Ensure Your Representation

All Members of the USAWOA are entitled to attend the AMM, but obviously a majority will not be able to. However, we strongly encourage all Chapters to discuss and debate the resolutions described above, and *send at least one Chapter representative to the AMM, to participate in debating and voting on them.*

As noted in previous articles published in the *Newsliner*, a great way to ensure each Chapter's voice is represented at the meeting is to utilize fundraising proceeds to fund the attendance of at least one Chapter official. My home chapter – the Arlington Hall Minuteman Chapter – has been doing this for more than a decade. Usually it sends the Chapter President, who in turn provides a briefing on the AMM to Chapter Members upon his or her return.

Additionally, USAWOA AMMs provide a great opportunity for Members to network with one another. With informative panels, briefings, and other events scheduled each day – many by senior Army leaders and Warrant Officer leaders – they also offer a powerful venue for professional development. In recognition of this, the Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA) reaffirmed his support for attendance of meetings such as ours (in either

PTDY or TDY status) in his 1 June 2016 memo, "Subject: Interaction with Military Associations". This guidance has not been superseded.

Whether or not you will be able to attend the 45th AMM, please also ensure you have forwarded your proxy for the meeting. Manual and fillable versions are available on the USAWOA portal, and it may also be found on page 22 of this issue.

From the President's Reception on the evening of 4 October through the Awards Banquet and Ball on the evening of 7 October (and the business meetings and social events in between), the 45th AMM promises to be a tremendously successful event. I look forward to seeing as many of you there as possible!

Senate Returns – NDAA Vote Expected

On Saturday, 9 September 2017, I spoke at the Warrant Officer Luncheon, at the 2017 annual meeting of the National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS), conducted in Louisville, KY. I was pleased to be able to report on several victories achieved by USAWOA, NGAUS, and the rest of our partners in The Military Coalition.

All of these achievements have been reported on since last year's 44th AMM. At the end of last year we met the goal represented by Resolution 2017-014, with legislation signed into law to recognize all retired guardsmen and reservists as Veterans. Resolution 2017-013 was also satisfied with reform of the Uniformed Services Former Spouses Protection Act, protecting future service members from predatory divorce settlements.

This spring, VA Secretary Shulkin answered our years-long cry for a consolidated medical records keeping system for all uniformed services and the VA, as outlined in Resolution 2017-012. He essentially announced the scuttling of the VA's legacy system and the adoption of the Department of Defense's (DOD's) new consolidated one, on as expedited a basis as possible.

Although the Reserve Component Benefits Parity Act we championed earlier this year will not pass as a stand-alone bill, it appears two out of the three main goals in it will be achieved. Changes are written into both the Senate and House

versions of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 2018 to ensure pre- and post-mobilization medical benefits for reserve component service members deploying under 12304b mobilization authority.

Separately, in the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017, these same Soldiers will once again receive the Post 9-11 GI Bill benefits they deserve (just one of almost two dozen wonderful changes brought about by this legislation – see the August 2017 *Newsliner* for more). We still need to work on reestablishing appropriate retirement points credit for these folks, but this is a great start.

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Notwithstanding the foregoing, the same challenges face us yet again this year, as the Senate returns to finally take up their version of NDAA 2017. As we reported in detail last month, we remain concerned about yet another standard pay raise, another attempt to cut basic allowance for housing, and exorbitant increases in TRI-CARE and TRICARE Pharmaceutical costs in the Senate's bill.

As I pointed out to the Warrant Officers at the NGAUS event, the real enemies we face are ongoing sequestration, and what USAWOA believes is simply woeful under-spending on national defense. As pointed out in a recent article pub-

lished by our TMC partner the Military Officers Association of America, in real dollars, defense spending has now dropped to a post-WWII level of 3.1% of gross domestic product (GDP).

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"BE IT RESOLVED, by the United States Army Warrant Officers Association, that it strongly urges that Congress end sequestration, and strongly urges it to commit funding at least equivalent to 5% of gross domestic product to the armed forces, in support of their readiness, training, modernization, and maintenance of current personnel and quality of life programs and initiatives, moving forward."

45th AMM Sponsor Announces Veterans Hiring Initiative

IBM, one of the generous sponsors of our 45th AMM, and America's largest technology employer, announced it will hire 2,000 U.S. veterans over the next four years. These positions are part of the company's broader pledge to hire 25,000 U.S. workers through 2020, and many are "new collar jobs" that do not always require a four-year college degree. Please learn more about this opportunity at <https://www.ibm.com/blogs/policy/tag/new-collar-jobs/>. 🇺🇸