



Legislative Update

By Rick Jones, Director;
Mike Plumer, National Military and Veterans Benefits Advisor;
and Morgan Brown, Senior Legislative Assistant

Permanent Fix Needed in Medicare/TRICARE Reimbursement Rate

As the debate over health-care reform continues in the Halls of Congress, the dark cloud lurking over the shoulder of every Medicare and TRICARE beneficiary is the scheduled 21.2 percent cut in Medicare and TRICARE physician payment rates slated to go into effect on Jan. 1, 2010.

Regular readers of the Journal know that Medicare and TRICARE payment rates are adjusted each year for inflation with the exception of those for physicians' services. These rates are governed by a complex formula called the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) mechanism—that, unless overridden by legislation, reduces fees on an annual basis to reign in costs.

Over the past six years Congress blocked scheduled cuts through a series of short- and long-term fixes and periodically provided modest increases. Although the actual reduction was blocked, the requirement for them was not, and as a result, the scheduled cut in physicians payment rates presently stands at 21.2 percent.

To avoid the scheduled cut, a short-term fix was tacked on to the defense appropriations bill (HR 3326). The measure delays the scheduled doctor payment cuts until Feb. 28, 2010. This gives Congress more time to deal with the issue and hopefully, come up with a

permanent fix.

Each of the lawmakers NAUS encountered is thoroughly versed on the issue and understands the consequences should Congress fail to act in a timely manner.

Without a fix in the Medicare payment rate, doctors treating Medicare and

dramatic and negative impact on military beneficiaries and a delay in cancelling them could endanger health care for many TRICARE beneficiaries.

A failure to fix the scheduled cut in doctors reimbursement would further restrict TRICARE beneficiary access to quality care and lead quite possibly to a

hollow benefit—a promise that could not be realized. **NAUS continues its work to ensure our elected members of Congress bear this in mind as work gets underway in the Second Session of the 111th Congress.**



NAUS President MG Bill Matz, left of President Obama, stands on the podium with other Veteran organization representatives at signing of the veterans advance funding bill.

Criminal Activity Costs Medicare and TRICARE Billions of Dollars

A recent CBS "60 Minutes" program highlighted the fact that Medicare fraud has become one of the most profitable crimes in

America—to the tune of \$60 billion per year and likely more. The Government Accountability Office (GAO), the investigative arm of the United States Congress, places that figure much higher and believes that **upwards of \$80 billion** worth of Medicare money is being stolen every year.

As expected, the same types of fraud committed against Medicare or Medicaid are also occurring within the military's TRICARE programs. Past figures suggest that as much as ten percent of expenditures associated with military healthcare programs are



At a recent event on Capitol Hill, NAUS Legislative Director Rick Jones (l) met with Rep. Ike Skelton, Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. Chairman Skelton has worked with NAUS and the military community to protect TRICARE benefits. In the coming session of Congress, the Chairman will lead the House investigation of the senseless terror attack that killed 13 people at Fort Hood.

the result of fraud, waste, or abuse. This means that fraudulent purchases of care within the \$47 billion military health system could **amount to \$4.7 billion annually.**

Last year we reported that a Philippine corporation was ordered to **pay back more than \$100 million** following a TRICARE fraud conviction. A quick "Google search" on the Internet reveals several other more recent examples like a Louisiana doctor indicted this past November on 48 counts of healthcare fraud **totaling \$1.3 million.** Prosecutors in that case say the doctor submitted claims to Medicare, TRICARE, and federal health programs for patients who were

not physically present in his office. Also charged with fraud in November was a former military spouse from Kansas who continued to receive healthcare benefits from the TRICARE program despite knowing she was no longer eligible. The former spouse made a total of 176 medical claims, 161 pharmacy claims and one dental claim over an undisclosed period, resulting in **a loss to TRICARE of more than \$97,700.** A document obtained by NAUS from the Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS), the criminal investigative arm of the DoD Inspector General, reflects the widespread nature of the problem. **In FY 2009, DCIS recovered \$581,427,177 in healthcare-related fraud cases--**no paltry sum, but without doubt a fraction of the total criminal activity taking place.

Healthcare reform legislation pending in Congress and under debate in the Senate relies on uncovering and significantly reducing fraudulent healthcare schemes to help finance coverage for the uninsured. But NAUS asks, why the wait? If there is fraud and abuse in Medicare, Medicaid, and TRICARE, why does it take a healthcare bill to fix it? Wouldn't it make more sense to get a better grasp on the problem now? And if so, why isn't funding for it just a part of the respective agencies' appropriation bills? And, why hasn't it ever been sincerely addressed from the onset of these programs? While Congress and the Administration sit on their hands, untold billions of your hard-earned tax dollars continue to go out the door.

In testimony before the Senate's Subcommittee on Defense Appropriations last year, **NAUS told Congress that America expects its government to move courageously and tackle the real issues like fraud in the TRICARE and Medicare systems. We urged increased funding for DCIS and for the TRICARE Program Integrity Office, responsible for anti-fraud activity in the military health system. In our opinion, the government should be directing and properly resourcing its investigative teams to root out criminal activity, rather than looking to make up avoidable losses**

by making military retirees foot the bill. With hard work and honest public service, we are confident Congress will have more than enough money to pay for earned benefits like TRICARE

Will There Be Another Attempt To Raise TRICARE Fees This Year?

No doubt this is a question on many readers minds and a quick look at past history tends to lead us to believe there will be. After all, with four attempts in as many years, the prospects for another in 2010 is quite high.

Readers of the Journal continue to point with concern at a December 2008



NAUS Board Member Win Reither with Dr. Jill Biden (r) at a Veterans Day event held at the Vice President's home in Washington. During the conversation, Dr. Biden called over her Policy advisor to discuss the issue of Widows Survivor DIC benefits, a longtime key NAUS issue since NAUS first introduced it in 2001.

Budget Options report by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) that suggests saving money by cutting TRICARE benefits. Although this document doesn't contain formal proposals, it does outline courses of action Congress could take with federal programs to rein in costs—including raises in fees and deductibles for various TRICARE programs. There is also high concern about the recommendations of the Task Force on Military Health Care, which contained similar, outlandish proposals.

Equally threatening is a growing mindset in DoD (and some in Congress) that military retirees and their families are absorbing billions of dollars that military leaders would rather use to help troops fighting today--many of whom are charged with ensuring the health and well being of all military beneficiaries. We recall the comments of Dr. David Chu, the Pentagon's former Undersecretary for Personnel and



Representative John Carter (R-TX) (l) and Veterans Benefits Advisor Mike Plumer at a recent meeting.

Readiness who said, "The amounts [spent on TRICARE] have gotten to the point where they are hurtful. They are taking away from the nation's ability to defend itself."

This pervading belief appears to be alive and well within the present DoD leadership. Defense Secretary Robert Gates virtually echoed Dr Chu "warnings" in April 2009 when he said, "Health care is eating the Department alive ... there has not been a single premium increase allowed since the (TRICARE) program was founded." Gates continued asking, "What medical plan in the nation has not had a single increase in the premium or co-pays in the last dozen years?"

And in a press interview last year, Admiral Michael Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, spoke of his support for increasing TRICARE fees on working age military retirees, those under age 65. "It's a move even more justified in a severe financial crisis that will squeeze



Legislative Director Rick Jones (l) takes a moment to celebrate with Rep. Mike Michaud (r) in the East Room of the White House following President Obama's signing of the veterans advance funding bill, a measure to ensure that veterans health care will no longer be held hostage to the annual budget battles in Washington. Michaud chairs the House Veterans Health Care Subcommittee.

defense budgets. We have not had any kind of a co-pay increase since 1995. I mean it absolutely makes no sense to me (not to raise fees)," Mullen said. "It's a given, as far as I'm concerned." We should also point out that many of the service chiefs have supported the issue of fee increases, including at least two of the "sitting chiefs."

Some key members of Congress appear to be softening up to the idea of

fee increase and this could pose problems down the road ahead. Last year Representative Susan Davis, D-CA, Chairwoman of the House Armed Services Committee's subcommittee on military personnel said, "Some fee increases may be inevitable as part of a larger compromise that includes other initiatives to hold down costs." Davis went on to say she "anticipates a discussion about fee increases will come next year, during debate over the 2011 defense budget."

In addition, Senators Ben Nelson, D-NE, and Lindsey Graham, R-SC, the chairman and ranking member on the Senate military personnel subcommittee have, in the past, indicated they could support modest TRICARE fee increases for working age retirees as well.

It is important to note that Secretary Gates's comments track closely with those of Chairwoman Davis. In comments last spring, Gates said, "... we'll have a better chance of having a serious dialogue with [Capitol] Hill, if we go ahead and fund it and then begin the conversation. So we'll keep our fingers crossed."

We heard this same "need for dialogue" comment more recently at the NAUS Annual Membership Meeting in November. In a presentation before the general membership, Admiral Christine Hunter, Deputy Director of the TRICARE Management Activity, spoke positively of low TRICARE cost shares but indicated "it is a dialogue that we are going to have to get into at some point...as we decide how to deal with the growing overall cost [of the TRICARE program]."

In all candor, another attempt is likely and the failure of Congress to curtail earmarks and other wasteful spending, the unwillingness to curb rampant fraud in Medicare and TRICARE, and a deep-seeded desire in some individuals to shift more of the cost to beneficiaries will make the task of stopping this attempt much harder. However, as they have in the past, elected members of Congress can defeat any proposals for higher TRICARE fees and it is important that you stay engaged.

We said it before and we will say it again: We can only win these battles if you stand up and let your voice be heard. Readers need to constantly remind their elected officials just how important earned healthcare benefits are and

perhaps most important, clearly state that your vote this November will be tied to your elected officials' support.

Brave Americans are risking their lives daily to protect our country, eliminate terrorism and preserve our freedom. In return, our country is obligated to ensure they receive the benefits they've earned and deserve. There is a sacred trust between a nation and its warriors, and it



Congressman Jason Altmire, (D-PA) (l) and NAUS Senior Legislative Assistant Morgan Brown pause for a photo after a recent meeting. Congressman Altmire is co-chair of the New Democratic Coalition's task force on health care reform and Morgan used the opportunity to relay NAUS concerns with potential changes to Medicare, and the importance of protecting earned TRICARE and Veterans benefits.

is imperative that this trust is never threatened, weakened or broken. To renege on the commitment now would send the wrong signal to those who serve and have served in America's Armed Forces, especially in a time of war.

Healthcare Reform

NAUS continues to monitor development of healthcare reform legislation keeping a close eye out for any provision that would limit choices or unnecessarily subject beneficiaries to additional penalties or fees. **What we do know is the House-passed Affordable Health Care for America Act, H.R. 3962, states in Section 311 that "nothing" in the bill "shall be construed as affecting" authorities used by the departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs to provide TRICARE programs or VA health care benefits.** Efforts to strengthen this language by Representative Steve Buyer and others in the House were not adopted in the final bill.

The Senate was in the midst of debate

on its healthcare reform bill as this issue of the Journal went to press. **Unlike the House measure, the Senate bill, HR 3590, lacks explicit language protecting military and veterans healthcare benefits.** Our effort centered on getting these important protections in the bill. At last word, the Senate hoped to complete work on the



Legislative Director Rick Jones congratulates Rep. Steve Buyer (R-IN) on the introduction of H.R. 2243, the NAUS-endorsed Surviving Spouses' Benefit Improvement Act. Rep. Buyer's bill would achieve two major goals. First, it would increase the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefit paid to widows and widowers whose spouse died while on active military duty or as the result of a service connected injury or illness. Second, it would eliminate an unjust offset between the VA benefit and a military benefit for survivors. Congressman Buyer is a Desert Storm veteran and serves as Ranking Member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee.

Health Care Reform legislation before Christmas. In the event the Senate does not include the stronger language in its bill, the difference will have to be resolved in the joint House-Senate conference that will follow sometime after the first of the year.

A major concern NAUS members have is that cuts or changes to Medicare will almost certainly have adverse consequences for TRICARE beneficiaries. Both bills propose slicing \$500 billion from Medicare to pay the cost of expanding coverage to the uninsured. Cuts of this magnitude could make it difficult for doctors to remain profitable, and over time, cause them to opt out of the program altogether.

Speaking of additional beneficiaries, at press time the Senate was tossing around the idea of expanding Medicare eligibility to Americans age 55 to 64 in their reform bill. The proposal was offered in lieu of the less popular "public option." Few details were available at press time, but we know participants would be expected to

buy into the program at a higher cost than those age 65 and older. A change of this nature would flood the Medicare rolls and threaten access for millions of current Medicare and TRICARE for Life beneficiaries.

Our final observation involves the estimated 11 million illegal aliens now in this country and how they may benefit from the healthcare reform legislation. The House-passed bill allows illegal immigrants to buy into the newly proposed "health care exchange" provided no government subsidy is involved. The Senate bill, which is not yet finished, would bar illegal immigrants from using even their own money to buy insurance in the exchange. It lacks however, reliable verification requirements necessary to prevent "illegals" from benefiting illegally from the legislation. In the absence of common sense, resolving this difference is expected to be highly contentious when the two chambers meet and compile a separate bill.

Dear Readers: The healthcare reform effort continues to be a work in progress and like many of you, NAUS has ample concerns. As the New Year begins and before Congress finalizes this legislation, **readers are urged to send messages to their representatives in Congress and implore them to protect their important VA and TRICARE benefits.** You can do this through our Legislative Alert system at: <http://capwiz.com/naus/home/>.

VA Continues to Work on Seamless Transition

The VA and Kaiser Permanente recently announced a program designed to improve care and services provided to veterans residing in the San Diego, California, area. VA and Kaiser Permanente will soon launch a pilot program there to exchange electronic health record (EHR) information using the Nationwide Health Information Network (NHIN) created by the Department of Health and Human Services.

"The ability to share critical health information is essential to interoperability," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Eric K. Shinseki. "Utilizing the NHIN standards and network



Rep. Rob Wittman poses for a photo with Legislative Director Rick Jones following a discussion on key issues before Congress. Rep. Wittman (R-VA) is a member of the House Armed Services Committee and shares NAUS concerns about the controversial deadline on withdrawal of forces in Afghanistan.

will allow organizations like VA and the Department of Defense to partner with private sector health care providers to promote better, faster and safer care for veterans."

VA and Kaiser Permanente have sent a joint letter to veterans in the San Diego area who receive care from both institutions, to invite veterans to participate in this first-ever pilot program. Veterans, who respond and ask to participate, will enable their public and private sector health care providers and doctors to share specific health information electronically, safely, securely and privately. For more information, go to this website <http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/prssrelease.cfm?id=1824>.

NAUS Note: We continue to hear that the DoD/VA collaboration on electronic health records is progressing. We look forward to a briefing on the process early in 2010.

Senate Passes Veterans Caregivers Assistance Bill

In mid-November, the Senate passed S. 1963, the Caregiver and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act, by a vote of 98-0. The Senate approved version would provide needed assistance and support to family members and others who are serving as caregivers for the most seriously injured veterans of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. This assistance includes health care, counseling, support and a living stipend.

The bill has one simple NAUS-endorsed theme: that every veteran deserves access to high quality health care, whether that care is provided by VA, or by a family caregiver.

The bill has been referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs for its consideration.



NAUS Representatives MG Matz, Mrs. Matz and Mike Plumer (on right side) at the 2009 Veterans Day Breakfast at the White House with President and Mrs. Obama and other veterans representatives.

how would slip through the cracks.

We do applaud the tremendous amount of work done for the majority of beneficiaries. Yet we continue to receive complaints that serious problems remain. In one instance, a NAUS member and her son, eligible for benefits because her husband is 100 percent disabled,

NAUS Note: This legislation is critical to aid those family member caregivers who have, in many cases, had to move and give up careers to aid their loved ones. We hope there is no more delay in ensuring this legislation goes to the President as soon as possible.

VA Claims: Is There Any Relief in Sight?

In recent Congressional testimony in October, VA Secretary Shinseki reported that the VA had set a new record, of 92,000 disability benefit

claims processed in the month of July. He tempered that good news by saying the VA had received 91,200 new claims in July. He stated that some good progress is being made with advanced training for new claims processors and new IT solutions (new computers and software programs are being added as rapidly as possible). He said that these new IT initiatives are "integral to our (VA) ability to perform our mission."

NAUS Note: Disability claims processing is the "gateway" for veterans to receive benefits and medical care. In light of this NAUS pressed the TMC Veteran's Committee and was successful in having "Fixing the VA Claims Process" named the Committee's number one priority for 2010.

reported difficulties shortly after submitting their applications. They both applied on the same day in early August. The son's application went through without a problem. However, the mom's application got hung up somewhere and neither she nor the school received a penny. Fortunately, NAUS was able to assist her in tracking down her application and she received her funds to pay her bills in time.

We have heard a number of anecdotal tales about student-veterans being evicted from their apartments, not being able to register for their classes and others that could have been avoided with a small application of "common sense" in the pre-launch months leading up to the initiation of the program.

Finally, we have heard the latest "problem" is with those students who have added or dropped courses. It seems the VA put aside the processing on these claims until a pending IT program solution was put into place. What happened before computers? Hand processing would have ensured these warriors and their dependents would have not had to suffer through the incompetence of an intractable system.

NAUS Note: It took the intervention of Secretary Shinseki in authorizing emergency \$3,000 payments for a large number of students and his authorization to hire a firm for temporary help to assist the VBA Education Service in getting a handle on the delays. Student-veterans deserve far better. And to ensure the promise of the program is not lost, VA needs to request the resources it needs to straighten out the program.



Legislative Director Rick Jones (I) and Senator Carl Levin, Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, pose for a photo in the Main Reception Hall outside the East Room in the White House following a signing ceremony Oct. 28 for the National Defense Authorization Act.

Post 9/11 GI Bill Update

"Enactment of the Post 9/11 Educational Assistance Act on June 30, 2008, gave VA approximately 14 months to develop a new, highly complex eligibility and payment system for hundreds of thousands of claimants who would be eligible to receive benefits under the new program on August 1, 2009." So began the litany of excuses from Keith Wilson, the Director of the VA Education Service, during a recent Congressional hearing.

NAUS will agree it was a daunting task but one that an agency the size of VA should have had sufficient time to develop a working system and have had an emergency process in place to aid those inevitable cases that some-



NAUS President Bill Matz takes a moment to speak with Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Daniel K. Inouye about progress on key NAUS issues, including the Defense Appropriations bill (*HR 3326*) and the Belated Thank You to Merchant Mariners bill (*S. 663*).

Decision Time for Merchant Mariner Belated Thank You Legislation

As we approach the end of the first session of this Congress, NAUS is working to raise the profile of the Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariners of World War II Act, legislation to acknowledge

America's support for the service of the Merchant Marine.

As is known, the House approved the NAUS-endorsed the Belated Thank You legislation (*H.R. 23*) last May, but the Senate has not acted and the bill approved by the House awaits Senate attention. The Senate also has legislation of its own, *S. 663*, introduced by Sen. Ben Nelson (D-NE). The Nelson bill presently has 47 cosponsors, which accounts for nearly a majority of Senators giving their names in support.

NAUS strongly supports this legislation. We supported House passage, and we support action in the Senate, too. Recognition of the Merchant Marine for the contribution they made to the war effort during World War II is long overdue. Passage of this measure provides the opportunity to rectify an error made at the end of WW II when our government failed to make Mariners eligible for the GI Bill and related veterans benefits.

Generals Eisenhower and MacArthur praised the Merchant Marine. They said, "The war would've been extended in time or lost without the service of the Merchant Marine." Over 800 ships and 9,400 Mariners were lost during the war—

one in every 26 Mariners who served was killed. (See related article on page 40.)

The Merchant Marine was involved in every invasion and theatre of war. They did not just deliver the troops, weapons and supplies that armed and equipped our victory; they fired the guns in defense of our Country, were taken Prisoner of War, and were an active part of the Armed Forces during the war.

Long overdue is the recognition of the heroic Merchant Mariners of World War II. Despite a record of exemplary, indispensable service to America's war efforts, recognized by all the leaders of the Allied Forces, Merchant Mariners were not given the formal recognition and benefits granted other services by the Congress at the end of the war in 1945.

Dear Readers: We encourage you to contact your Senators and give each the NAUS message to correct this wrong. As President Franklin D. Roosevelt said, "The Merchant Marine (of World War II) ... risked their lives time and again during the war for the welfare of their country." History shows that their contribution to victory is indisputable and it should also show our Nation's gratefulness.



NAUS President Bill Matz (l) shares a word with President of the United States Barack Obama prior to a signing ceremony for the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act. The President invited Matz to stand with him on the podium in the East Room of the White House, October 22nd, 2009.

Tamie Boone: "20th Year of NAUS Service"

In today's age of job mobility it is rare to find someone with the loyalty to stay at one firm for nearly two decades. This is particularly true in the business of associations. Although Tamie did not move from one Nonprofit to the next, she certainly moved many times within a relatively small NAUS staff. For her many NAUS and SMW member fans, we thought it appropriate to commemorate her extraordinary service to our beloved association. We also thought it would be interesting to take our readers on a journey through Tamie's many years and many jobs as a member of the NAUS staff.

In July of 1990 the Boone family left Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where Mike had served with the Joint Special Operations Command. While at Bragg, Tamie managed the office of a local Psychologist. Mike was assigned to Headquarters Marine Corps and the Boone's moved into their new home in Springfield, Virginia, at the end of August.

After a brief period of settling in, Tamie began looking for work. In October, NAUS President General Jim Pennington hired her. Tamie started work on October 28th. She worked as the Accounting Assistant for the Association Treasurer, Dorothy Bodet. While working at Ft Bragg and raising a family, Tamie also found time to attend night school where she received an Associate Degree in Accounting from Webster University.

When NAUS' Manager of Computing, Sheila Thompson, left the staff on 31 October 1991, General Pennington asked Tamie to step-up and perform Sheila's duties as well as her own. Of course this would only be a temporary fix until NAUS could find a new hire. However, Tamie holds that job today and will continue to manage our computing well into the foreseeable future.

Tamie's big break came when Dorothy Bodet retired on 31 October 1992. General Pennington did not hesitate to promote Tamie to the position of Association Treasurer, one of only three Officer positions listed in the NAUS Bylaws. Tamie then hired an Accounting Assistant.

On a sadder note, NAUS Secretary and Membership Director Colonel Luther Ray passed away on 5 March 1993. So when General Pennington was looking for a new Membership Director he went no further than Tamie Boone, who acquired her third hat/job from departing members of the NAUS staff.

It was during this period that Tamie went back to night school at Strayer University and completed her Bachelors in Accounting. She graduated Suma Cum Laude, was inducted into the Alpha Chi National Honor Society, named Strayer University's "Outstanding Accounting Scholar" of the 1994 graduating class, and became a lifetime member of "Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges."

NAUS has an unusual history of staff longevity.

A few examples as of 18 December 2009.
(Tamie is the only person listed currently employed by NAUS.)

1. Tamie Boone - 19 years, 1 month & 20 days.
2. Gene Willis - 19 years & 18 days.
3. Chuck Partridge - 18 years, 9 months & 23 days.
4. Marcy Genest - 13 years, 10 months & 18 days.
5. Jim Pennington - 13 years, 5 months & 5 days.

and will start her new job in Washington D.C. this February.

Tamie's lengthy service did not go unnoticed by the NAUS Board of Directors at their November meeting. Board members and their spouses paid a special tribute to Tamie during their Friday evening banquet on November 6th. **But it was General Bill Matz who summed it up best when he said, "Tamie has been serving NAUS for 19 years, and if we get our way, we'll keep her another 19!"**



Acting Board Co-Chairman, Major General William Bowden presents a token of appreciation to Tamie from the NAUS Board and Staff.
(Board of Directors' Dinner, Ft Belvoir Officers' Club, 6 November 2009)

Several years went by. An IT person came and went. Then Marketing Director, Bill Maupin left the Staff and Tamie added her fourth hat. It wasn't until 3 October 2005 that she received some relief from General Matz when he hired NAUS' current Marketing Director, Steve Hein.

Today Tamie expertly manages her staff, which includes Database Manager, Toni Cimini, Accounting Associate, Charito Ampoyo, and Mailroom Associate, Nadine Vranizan.

Tamie has a difficult time not speaking with pride when the subject of her children comes up. Her son Shawn is a Biologist with the Army Corps of Engineers and completed his MBA at the Citadel in December 2008. Shawn served a tour in Iraq in 2003, assisted with the recovery from Hurricane Katrina, and is currently serving in Afghanistan. He manages several projects related to the building of infrastructure for the growing Afghan security forces.

Her married Daughter, Tauna was awarded a Maytag Fellowship and recently completed her PHD in Marine Biology from the University of Miami. Tauna was also awarded a NOAA Fellowship