

SOUNDINGS

Silver Strand Chapter of Military Officers Association of America

April 2008

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

CAPT Jim Cahill, USNR, Retired

Stop the 10.6 % Medicare/Tricare cut!

Medicare and Tricare are under a serious threat. Providers will face a reduction in payments for services of 9.9 percent, unless Congress changes the law prior to the end of June 2008. This reduction in reimbursement will be automatic without legislation being passed to change the existing law.

If the legislators do not change the law or find the money to extend the fix, an 11% payment rate cut will occur on July 1.

If not enacted, this will be a huge impact for military and Medicare/Tricare beneficiaries. Many doctors will start to refuse treatment to patients due to these cuts.

Many longtime healthcare providers are closing their offices or threatening to do so not only because of substandard payment rates. Some are retiring and there are not enough doctors willing to replace them in this region due to the low fees.

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Bruce Sievers will speak at our Chapter Dinner on April 21 at Coronado Yacht Club. He has presented, *"An American In Love With His Country"*, to more than 7,000 groups all across America. Included in these groups are many VFW, MOWW, MOAA and American Legion Post meetings, featuring such special events as Memorial Day and Flag Day services and 9-11 memorials, as well as several American Legion District and State Conventions. *He has been invited to the White House to present his program for President Gerald Ford, President Jimmy Carter, President Ronald Reagan, and President George Bush. President Ronald Reagan, along with the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge, awarded him the George Washington Medal of Honor for his presentation.* Toastmasters International has bestowed upon him the prestigious Communication and Leadership Award. The Daughters of the American Revolution honored him with the National Medal of Honor. He was a Green Beret in the Army. He is a devoted husband and father of five boys. *All this he has accomplished by his unabashed advocacy of a single theme...the joy of being an American.*

See Page 7 for more information on Chapter dinner Monday, 21 April

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Legislative Update

Reducing Copays Saves Everyone Money

On March 19, DoD hosted a panel to discuss ways to reduce the overall cost of providing military medical benefits by removing financial and other barriers for preventive care of chronic conditions and by promoting healthy lifestyles. MOAA Deputy Director for Government Relations CDR John Class (USN-Ret) sat on the panel along with Congressional, defense, and health industry experts.

All panelists agreed that eliminating unnecessary obstacles for preventive care, such as copays, can reduce long-term health care expenditures. TRICARE Standard still requires copayments for preventive measures like cancer screenings and immunizations, but studies have shown that even modest copays can significantly reduce beneficiaries' use of these services. Reduced use of preventive care raises longer-term costs when preventable diseases turn into serious illnesses.

Panelists also discussed "pay for performance" options that would require providers to report data on the outcomes of their care. Those who use appropriate preventive techniques and thus improved outcomes would receive bonuses or higher reimbursements.

A House staff representative on the panel said short-term costs pose one unfortunate potential barrier to progress. He said that Congress is very interested in pursuing incentives to encourage preventive care, but needs more information from DoD about potential costs of such measures.

He observed with some irony that DoD proposals to increase health fees for beneficiaries could work against this goal. House and Senate leaders are concerned that, while fee increases and higher pharmacy copays may produce short-term savings,

they could actually increase long-term health costs by deterring patients' use of medications and needed care.

CDR Class urged inclusion of all categories of beneficiaries - active duty, Guard/Reserve, retirees, survivors and family members -- in any preventive care pilot programs. He also recommended full implementation (rather than pilot projects) wherever possible for initiatives that are already well-documented as highly effective.

Age-62 Widow's Tax Is History

The infamous Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) age-62 "widow's tax" will finally be eliminated as of April 1, 2008. Prior to the law change MOAA won in 2005, SBP was reduced at age 62 from 55% of covered retired pay to 35% (covered retired pay could be as low as \$300 or as high as full retired pay). The FY2005 Defense Authorization Act phased out the age-62 benefit reduction over a 4 year period.

April 1 marks the end of the Social Security offset and a significant improvement to a critical benefit. SBP annuitants who are drawing Social Security benefits should see an increase in their May 1 SBP checks (which is payment for April) to reflect 55% of the deceased retiree's covered retired pay.

The increases phased in over the last 4 years represent up to a cumulative 57% increase in benefits -- excluding the effects of annual inflation adjustments, which make the increase even larger. Congress recognized that these two benefits are earned independently of one another through service and sacrifice to our nation.

MOAA takes great pride in having been the primary force behind that change, and getting Congress to agree that SBP and Social Security are independently earned and independently paid-for benefits.

Silver Strand Chapter MOAA First Vice President CAPT Nancy Owen, USN (Ret) shares the title of San Diego County's 2007-2008 Co-Veteran of the Year with Lt. Bobby Price. She considers it a privilege to represent the heroic veterans in San Diego. Since receiving the coveted title in November, she has attended the women's military luncheon, rode in the Veterans' Day parade and been honored by Mayor Cheryl Cox and the city council with a proclamation from the city of Chula Vista. A female veteran with comprehensive experience in the military healthcare system, she served in the U.S. Navy Nurse Corps for nearly 25 years. From March to August 1994, she served as Director, Nursing Services, U.S. Fleet Hospital, Zagreb, Croatia, a 60-bed tent hospital on the tarmac of the Zagreb airport. She was one of 150 medical personnel from Fleet Hospital SIX who deployed in March 1994 with more than 40,000 United Nations Protection Forces from nearly 40 different countries in the former Republic of Yugoslavia. She describes this assignment as her most impacting memory from her service.



Retired Capt. Nancy Owen and retired Lt. Bobby Price show off their awards at the Veteran of the Year Recognition Luncheon

MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE

Monday, May 26, 2008



The Silver Strand Chapter of MOAA, the General Henry D. Styer Post (VFW Post 2422) And the Coronado Council of the Navy League will offer a Memorial Day Service on Monday, May 26th, 2008 at 10:00 AM in Coronado's Star Park. Vice Admiral, Derwood C. Curtis, Commander, Naval Surface Forces, has been invited to be the guest speaker. Participants will include MCRD Marines, CHS NJROTC Color Guard, Coronado Battalion Sea Scouts, Boy and Girl Scout Troops, Gold Star Mothers, Gold Star Wives, and honored guests. After the service, a light luncheon will be provided at the VFW Hall, 557 Orange Avenue. Join your fellow patriots as we celebrate our freedom and honor our fallen comrades. At the Korean

War Memorial in Washington D.C. cut into granite is the statement: **'FREEDOM IS NOT FREE'**.

MOAA Scholarship Fund

Your Silver Strand Board is pleased to report that the Chapter recently sent a check for \$1,138 to the MOAA Scholarship fund. These funds were contributed by you to support MOAA scholarships and grants offered to military dependents. Your generosity resulted in the largest annual contribution in Chapter history. Thanks!

Silver Strand Chapter 2008 Dues Report

We currently have over 60 out of 214 total Chapter members who are **delinquent on their 2008 dues. If your mailing label has the year 07 beside your name, you have not paid your 2008 dues.** Please use the form on Page 7 to correct that oversight and mail them in today. Thank You!

Continued from page 1

In San Diego County, it is estimated that more than two thirds of the physicians who now accept patients would stop or reduce the numbers without a payment increase. The number of providers is now down 10 to 25 % from what it was three years ago. Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) has introduced S. 2785, the "Save Medicare Act of 2009", to reverse the cuts and provide a 1.8% increase instead. I suggest you go to the MOAA web site (legis@moaa.org) today and send e-mail to Senators Boxer and Feinstein asking them to support this bill (click on "Stop the 10.6% Cut" to use a suggested e-mail), or write or call their local offices.

If you have not paid your 2008 dues, please send a check to our P. O. Box today. Your membership renewal of \$10 is vital to the success of your chapter. Your dues have not increased since your Chapter was chartered in 1971, 37 years ago. That \$10 in '71 is now the equivalent of almost \$50. A first class stamp in '71 was 6 cents, now 41cents and will increase soon.

Your chapter has been honored in the recent past with national awards for superior communications and outstanding Chapter awards, and your leadership has had the additional honor of having four chapter members serving on the MOAA National Board, one as President and one currently as Chaplain and Chairman of the Scholarship Committee.

Jim Cahill

New Silver Strand Chapter Members

MajGen C. Dean Sangalis, USMCR (Ret)

CAPT Jordine Von Wantoch, USN (Ret)

LtCol Henry Peterson, USA (Ret)

Welcome Aboard

Mar Vista NJROTC Cadet Awarded Meritorious Achievement Ribbon



Cadet Second Class Petty Officer Autumn E. Barrows is presented the Meritorious Achievement Ribbon by Commander K. A. Liles, U. S. Navy NJROTC Area Eleven Manager during the unit's annual inspection on February 21. In August 2007, Cadet Barrows demonstrated exceptional leadership and courage when she saw flames and smoke coming from a building across the street from her employment. Realizing that people were in danger she ran into the burning apartment building to alert residents about the flames. On entering the burning building she encountered a senior citizen in a hallway who had been trying fight the flames and was being overcome by smoke. Cadet Barrows pulled him out of the building to safety before the firefighters arrived. Her heroic action was instrumental in ensuring he was able to escape the burning

building to safety. The Citation accompanying the ribbon closed with: "She is an outstanding and courageous Cadet. By this outstanding meritorious achievement, Cadet Barrows reflected great credit upon herself, her unit, her school, the community and the Naval Junior Reserve Officer's Training Corps Program." *The Meritorious Achievement Ribbon is the highest award an NJROTC cadet can earn.*

Islander Company Excels in Annual Inspection

Nearly five years ago, the City of Coronado assisted the Coronado Unified School District in bringing a Navy Junior ROTC program to the high school. Since then the unit has grown to include nearly ten percent of the school's enrollment. The Department of the Navy sends a representative to Coronado High School once each year to inspect the unit. This year's inspection was conducted by the NJROTC Area 11 Manager, Commander Ken Liles on January 31.

The day began with Islander Company's senior staff, led by its Company Commander, Cadet Lieutenant Andrew Stanley and its Executive Officer, Cadet Lieutenant Heidi McElrath, making a formal "state of the command" business presentation to Commander Liles. It is a pressure packed event for these high school seniors whose normal academic school days end with afternoons of running a 100-cadet unit in a disciplined and organized fashion. Commander Liles then conducted a personnel inspection of all Islander Company cadets in their Winter Blues uniforms. The company shone as its six platoon leaders presented their charges to Commander Liles. Of the 98 cadets inspected last Thursday, 69 were awarded a grade of "Outstanding" on their uniforms and in their personal bearing. Cadet Ensign Ian McRae was recognized by Commander Liles as the day's top platoon leader and was awarded an achievement medal.



From left Cadets: Brandi Bible, Steven Karamoto, Matt Mohn, Greg Rathbone, and Andrew Stanley

The day culminated with all of Islander Company forming on Niedemeyer Field for a required marching parade and pass-in-review. In appreciation for strongly endorsing the original program set-up money, Islander Company cadets invited Mayor Tom Smisek to stand as the honorary dignitary for the pass-in-review. Commander Liles took the opportunity to enthusiastically express his satisfaction with what he had seen of Islander Company that day. In his remarks, he noted that of the 60 NJROTC units under his direction, four consistently ranked at the top, and that Coronado's Islander Company was among those four.



Mayor Smisek also took the opportunity to congratulate the cadets on their success and noted how pleased he was with the precise and disciplined pass-in-review. In his remarks, the mayor recalled his days at the US Naval Academy and related to the cadets that "his marching never approached (their) professionalism, precision and style." At the ceremony's conclusion, Company Commander Stanley dismissed his fellow cadets to a loud "AYE, AYE, SIR!"

RADM Hunter, Commander, Naval Medical Center San Diego, Addresses Chapter



RADM Christine Hunter

Chapter President Cahill presented Admiral Hunter a contribution for the C5 Gift Fund after her well received address. C5 is the acronym for the Comprehensive Combat & Complex Casualty Care Center which opened a newly renovated facility in October 2007. The center provides prosthetics, physical rehabilitation, medical care, transition assistance to the wounded warriors and family support. There are currently 190 wounded warriors recovering at the hospital: NMCS D has been receiving 200-300 wounded per year.

Admiral Hunter addressed the Silver Strand Chapter MOAA on February 18 at the Coronado Yacht Club. She presented a comprehensive update of medical programs and healthcare services at Naval Medical Center San Diego (NMCS D). Despite deployments of over 600 military personnel last year, and ongoing deployments, NMCS D personnel continue to deliver state of the art medical and dental care to over 250,000 beneficiaries at the hospital, branch clinics, and Tricare Outpatient Clinics. NMCS D has been designated a STEMI (Heart Attack) Center for San Diego. Cardiovascular services are provided to patients by experienced cardiologists, vascular surgeons, cardiac surgeons, and interventional radiologists.



CAPT Jim Cahill, President Silver Strand Chapter, RADM Hunter, CAPT Nancy Owen, Vice President Silver Strand Chapter

Its official, DD-214's are NOW Online

The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) has provided the following website for veterans to gain access to their DD-214's online: <http://vetrecs.archives.gov/> This may be particularly helpful when a veteran needs a copy of his DD-214 for employment purposes. NPRC is working to make it easier for veterans with computers and Internet access to obtain copies of documents from their military files. Military veterans and the next of kin of deceased former military members may now use a new online military personnel records system to request documents. Other individuals with a need for documents must still complete the Standard Form 180, which can be downloaded from the online web site. Because the requester will be asked to supply all information essential for NPRC to process the request, delays that normally occur when NPRC has to ask veterans for additional information will be minimized. The new web-based application was designed to provide better service on these requests by eliminating the records centers mailroom and processing time.

Joint Silver Strand Chapter MOAA /Coronado Navy League Dinner Meeting

Date: Monday, April 21, 2008

Bruce Seivers

“An American In Love With His Country”

Where: Coronado Yacht Club, 1631 Strand Way

When: 1800: Social Time

1900: Dinner

1945: Program

Slow Roasted Prime Rib w/ Peppercorn Au Jus & Creamy Horseradish, or Bacon Wrapped Fresh Salmon w/ Fresh Mango Salsa, Apple Cider Reduction Pre-Set Spring Salad, rice, vegetables, desert, rolls, coffee, tea; \$30 per person

Use the coupon below for:

- April 21 Dinner Meeting Reservation
- Pay 2008 Dues
- Donate to NJROTC & Naval Sea Cadets
- Donate to MOAA Scholarship Fund

Chapter Meeting Monday, April 21, 2008

Mail to: Silver Strand Chapter MOAA
P.O. Box 180043
Coronado, CA 92178-0043

Name _____

Phone _____

Reservations must reach our PO Box by **Noon, Friday, 18 April (Firm)** (Due to the popularity of the speaker, reservations will be limited to the first 100 MOAA and Navy League members that register)

Indicate your choice (s) of entrée _____

Number attending dinner ____ X \$30 = \$_____

2008 Dues (\$10 for members, \$5 for Auxiliary) \$_____

Donation to NJROTC (Coronado and Mar Vista High Schools) \$_____

Naval Sea Cadet Corps, Coronado Battalion \$_____

MOAA Scholarship Fund \$_____

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$_____



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Dates to Remember 2008

Chapter Meetings

April 21

June 16

August 18

October 22

December 2

Board Meetings

May 20

July 15

September 16

November 18

SOUNDINGS

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Military Officers Association of America

P. O. Box 180043

Coronado, CA 92178-0043

Return Service Requested

TIME DATED MATERIAL