

# SOUNDINGS

Silver Strand Chapter of Military Officers Association of America

October 2009

## Presidents Message MajGen Bob Butcher, USMC (Ret)

I am proud to report that for the third straight year, your Silver Strand Chapter has been selected as a "Five Star Chapter" by National MOAA. That five star designation means that we have been judged to be one of the very best chapters in the country. The flag streamer that is awarded to recognize the five star designation will be formally presented at the MOAA Annual Meeting "Year of the Chapter" banquet on Saturday, October 24<sup>th</sup>.

Speaking of MOAA's Annual Meeting, it's being held at the Marriott Resort right here in Coronado this year. There are interesting and informative seminars and events that you are encouraged to attend. Details are in the latest issue of "The Military Officer" magazine or on the web at: [www.moaa.org](http://www.moaa.org). This is a rare (perhaps once in a lifetime) opportunity to personally support MOAA by attending their annual meeting right here in our home town.

There are all kinds of telephone and email scams out there. One of the most reprehensible is a telephone scam targeting veterans and attempting to obtain their credit card information, allegedly to enroll them in a bogus "new VA pharmacy billing procedure." The VA does not call vets, asking for personal information. In fact, no reputable

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**RADM Mac McLaughlin, USN (Ret)** is President & Chief Executive Officer of the USS Midway Museum. He was hired as the Chief Operating Officer in December 2003, one month prior to the Midway's arrival in San Diego and has been the chief executive throughout the building of the Museum. During his career as a Naval Aviator, he served as a Commanding Officer of a helicopter squadron and Naval Air Station. He served two tours of duty in the Pentagon on the Chief of Naval Operations Staff and served Flag tours as Commander, Naval Air Reserve Force and Naval Reserve Forces Command. He is the former Chairman of the Naval Helicopter Association and a member of the Board of Directors for the Historical Naval Ships Association, the San Diego Port Tenants Association and the Fleet Week Foundation. He is a member of the American Association of Museums and the California Association of Museums. He graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1972 where he was an All-American and Captain of the track team.

**See Page 7 for more information on Chapter dinner Wednesday, 21 October**

# Legislative Update

**Defense Funding Bill Moving:** As this item was being written, the Senate was preparing to begin action on the FY2010 Defense Appropriations Bill (H.R. 3326), which the House already has passed.

This is one of 12 departmental appropriations bills Congress is supposed to finish before the start of the new fiscal year on Oct. 1.

The House has passed all of them already. Senate leaders acknowledge there's little chance of finishing all of them before the end of the month, but the Defense bill should be one of the ones that do pass before that deadline.

The Defense Appropriations Bill is not to be confused with the FY2010 Defense Authorization Bill, which is still pending negotiations between House and Senate leaders. It's the latter bill that addresses the personnel and compensation issues that interest most MOAA members.

Will Congress finish action on the Authorization Bill before the end of the month? It's always possible, but don't hold your breath. In the last 10 years, Congress finished the Defense Authorization Bill before mid-October only once. In four of those years, it didn't get done until December or later.

**Part B Premium Relief Coming:** As the potential implications sink in concerning the absence of any 2010 Social Security COLA, House leaders have rushed to pass legislation to prevent some unintended consequences for certain groups of Medicare enrollees.

A special law protects most Medicare enrollees from seeing any Part B premium increase in the event that there's no COLA for Social Security. Without that protection, a Part B hike would result in a net reduction of the person's Social Security check as of January 2010. But the premium increase exemption doesn't apply to about 25% of Medicare recipients, including those who will newly qualify for Medicare, low-income seniors who qualify for both Medicare and Medicaid, and those with incomes above \$85,000 (\$170,000 for a married

couple) who already are subject to "means-tested" (higher) Part B premiums.

An additional wrinkle in the law requires disproportional Part B premium increases for that 25% to help make up for the loss of revenue from the 75% who are protected from the premium hike. In this particular case, the Congressional Budget Office says those who aren't exempt would experience about four times the normal increase – a serious political hot potato.

So House leaders rushed to pass legislation on Thursday (by a vote of 406 to 18) to bar any 2010 Part B premium increase for any Medicare beneficiaries. The Senate is expected to follow suit quickly -- and likely will have done so by the time you read this update.

**Contact Your Legislators:** Hill leaders are working on resolving the differences between the House and Senate versions of the FY2010 Defense Authorization Bill.

There are big differences between them on many personnel and benefit issues, including upgrades on concurrent receipt, survivor benefits, health care, Guard/Reserve retirement, and manpower levels.

Please send your legislators a [MOAA-suggested message](#) to retain these important provisions in the final versions of the defense bill. (click on [MOAA-suggested message](#) and follow the directions to send the prepared message to your Congressman and Senators or modify the prepared message or prepare your own message)

**MOAA Pushes Guard, Vet, Spouse Rights:** This week, MOAA has urged the House Veterans Affairs Economic Opportunity Subcommittee to approve legislation supporting military spouses, wounded warriors and National Guard members.

[MOAA's statement](#) for the subcommittee's Sept. 24 hearing urged adoption of several initiatives. (click on [MOAA's statement](#) to read the statement MOAA provided)

## NEW COMMANDING OFFICER FOR NAVAL MEDICAL CENTER SAN DIEGO



Naval Medical Center San Diego (NMCS D) Commanding Officer change-of-command occurred on Friday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>. RADM C. Hunter, MC turned over the reins of leading NMCS D and Navy Medicine West (NMW) to RADM C. Bruzek-Kohler, NC. RADM Bruzek-Kohler is the first Nurse Corps officer to Command NMCS D and NMW. Navy Medicine Deputy Surgeon General, RADM R.Cullison was the Guest Speaker. He extolled RADM Hunter's and NMCS D's accomplishments and challenged RADM Bruzek-Kohler to continue building on past achievements. RADM Hunter departs to assume the position of Deputy Director, TRICARE Management Activity in Washington.

RADM Bruzek-Kohler is a native of New Jersey and earned her BSN from Villanova University. She was commissioned into the Navy as an Ensign in 1974. Advanced degrees include a Master of Education, a Master of Arts and Doctor of Education. She is also a Fellow in the American College of Healthcare Executives. She recently served at BUMED, serving in a variety of positions including Deputy Chief for Medical Operations Support, Chief of Staff, and as the 21<sup>st</sup> Director of the Navy Nurse Corps.



### MOAA Annual Meeting 2009

MOAA Annual Meeting and Year of the Chapter Symposium, San Diego; Coronado Island Marriott Resort

Oct. 22-24, 2009

You can register for the Annual meeting on line and see the full schedule of events at:

<http://www.moaa.org/moaadeploys>

## The 2009 San Diego County Veterans Day Parade

*“Welcome Home  
Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and  
Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) Veterans”*

HONORARY GRAND MARSHALS  
OEF/OIF VETERANS

Wednesday, November 11th

Starting at 11:00 am from Cedar Street & Pacific Highway  
([download parade route map](#))

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organization will ask you to divulge personal information over the phone.

Our August meeting was outstanding! CDR Sander's brought several examples of IED's with him and passed them around for us to look at. I now have a much better appreciation for the difficult job of finding and destroying these devices.

Our new caterer is very good! A slightly different taste, but they serve a wonderfully prepared meal. Come out and sample their food and – as an added bonus – learn about the San Diego Aircraft Carrier Museum (USS Midway) from the museum's CEO, Rear Admiral "Mac" McLaughlin. Mac is a very good speaker and the museum is a real success story.

We need your help recruiting new members to our chapter. If you know an officer (former, retired or active duty) who you think might be interested in joining, please give one of the members of the board of directors (our numbers are on the back page) a call.

Thanks and warm personal regards, Bob Butcher

## **Silver Strand Elementary School Needs Our Help!**

Just one hour a week will make a positive difference in the lives of our students  
by helping to strengthen literacy skills

We are looking for enough tutors to allow first through third grade students to  
receive extra help with reading

You are invited to attend  
**Everyone a Reader Volunteer Tutor Training**  
Wednesday, September 30, 2009  
8:30 am – 11:30 am  
Silver Strand Elementary School  
1350 Leyte Road  
Room 701

At the training, you will have the opportunity to sign up to read with students for  
one hour per week

For more information, or to reserve a spot for the training, please contact:

Ellen Cody @ 619-522-8934 (x4501)  
evernia@coronado.k12.ca.us

# The 20th Annual

## MILITARY WOMEN'S LUNCHEON



Guest Speaker Panel-“Today’s Military Women”

Date: **Saturday, October 31, 2009**

Time: **1100-Social Hour/No host bar; 1200-Luncheon; 1300-Program**

Place: **Marine Corps Air Station, Miramar Officer’s Club**

Deadline for reservations: **Tuesday, October 20, 2009. No walk-ins will be accepted.**

For additional information contact: Toni Lopez (619) 462-6081

(detach and mail)

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Branch of Service \_\_\_\_\_

World War II Veteran \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

No. of reservations \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$25.00 per person= Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Make checks payable to: Military Women’s Luncheon**

**Mail to: Toni Lopez, 4950 Treasure Drive, La Mesa, CA 91941**

### **Flu Prevention Update 2009**

Navy Medical Center San Diego is now providing the regular flu vaccines at the hospital near the pharmacy and at clinics. The Novel Influenza Type A (H1N1) vaccine is separate and won't be available until mid to late October. When the H1N1 flu vaccine is available, information will be posted on their website:

[www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcscd](http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcscd) and on the Flu Hotline recording at 619-532-5FLU. (619-532-5358). For more information on the H1N1 flu, please refer to the following websites: Centers for Disease Control:

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu> and County of San Diego:

[http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/Portal/News/swine\\_flu\\_cdc\\_sd.html](http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/Portal/News/swine_flu_cdc_sd.html)

## **Help Needed To Eliminate Offset To SBP**

Please support the elimination of the dollar for dollar offset to SBP for military widows of our heroes who died of a service related illness or injury. Please call or email the White House regarding the elimination of this unfair widow's tax. DIC, death indemnity compensation, is a small annuity given to the spouse of the fallen as a small compensation for our hero's ultimate sacrifice, losing his life in service to our nation. The Widow's tax in essence, takes away this compensation by offsetting it dollar for dollar by the amount of SBP, resulting in no additional pay to compensate for the death of a spouse. The net effect is that a survivor's pay is the same as any other military widow. She gets nothing for her husband and her family's sacrifice. Step One is to contact your Senators and Congressperson.

Here is Step Two in our effort for the complete removal of the SBP/DIC offset -- calling, emailing and writing to the President. We need every MOAA member, your friends, family and anyone else who can help, to please make calls or write emails. This legislation has passed the House and the Senate, but now is in appropriations. It has not been funded. Chances are slim unless they hear from us. Please give widows a voice and follow Step Two.

### **Step 2. Call and Write President Obama**

**First:** Go <http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/> and click on "Contact Us" on the upper right-hand corner.

Fill out the form with your name and address and then fill in the "Message" section with the message below:

Or email the President at [President@whitehouse.gov](mailto:President@whitehouse.gov). Include your name and contact information...address, phone and email. You can also email the first lady at [firstlady@whitehouse.gov](mailto:firstlady@whitehouse.gov). Both say they support military families. Widows ARE still military families.

*Dear President Obama,*

*Please end the dollar-for-dollar offset of the DOD's Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) by the VA's Dependency Indemnity Compensation (DIC) - the SBP/DIC Offset. The sacrifices these families have endured should not continue, especially through offsets in survivor benefits. It is our duty and responsibility as a nation, both ethically and morally, to look after and care for those left behind by our fallen military service members. Our full support for these surviving families should be the uppermost priority and their service and support to our nation and their service member should never be forgotten. Your support of this issue is greatly appreciated of this issue.*

*Respectfully, Your Name*

**Second:** You can also call the President on the Comment Line. Phone Numbers --

Comments: 202-456-1111 (This is a great place to leave a message for the President.

See script below for some ideas on what to say.)

Switchboard: 202-456-1414, FAX: 202-456-2461 TTY/TDD --Comments: 202-456-6213

Visitors Office: 202-456-2121

**Script for leaving a message for the President through the "Comment" phone number:** *My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I would like to request that the President seeks an end to the dollar-for-dollar offset for military surviving spouses of the DOD's Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) by the VA's Dependency Indemnity Compensation (DIC) -- the SBP/DIC Offset. Our full support for these families should be the country's uppermost priority, and improving military survivor benefits are a great first step. Thank you very much.*

**Third:** You can also write to the President through the U.S. Postal Service (although this process may take several days or weeks before a message is received at the White House):

The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20500, (Please include your email address)

**Joint Silver Strand Chapter MOAA /Coronado Navy League Dinner Meeting**

Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2009

**Rear Admiral Mac McLaughlin, USN (Ret), President & Chief Executive Officer of the  
USS Midway Museum**

Where: Coronado Yacht Club, 1631 Strand Way

When: 1800: Social Time

1900: Dinner

1945: Program

*Prime Rib w/ Creamy Horseradish Au Jus & Twice Baked Potatoes, or  
Grilled Salmon w/ Creamy Lemon Dill Sauce & Wild Rice, or  
Vegetarian Plate - Portobello Mushroom w/ Chardonnay Sauce  
Pear & Cranberry Spring Salad Mix, grilled vegetables, desert, rolls, coffee, tea; \$30 per person*

Use the coupon below for:

- October 21 Dinner Meeting Reservation
- Pay 2009 Dues
- Donate to NJROTC & Naval Sea Cadets
- Donate to MOAA Scholarship Fund

**Chapter Meeting Wednesday, October 21, 2009**

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Reservations must reach our PO Box by **Noon, Monday, 19 October (Firm)**

Indicate your choice (s) of entrée \_\_\_\_\_

Number attending dinner \_\_\_\_ X \$30 = \$\_\_\_\_\_

**2009 Dues (\$10 for members, \$5 for Auxiliary)** \$\_\_\_\_\_  
**(\$40 for 5 years) (\$20for 5 years)**

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

Naval Sea Cadet Corps, Coronado Battalion \$\_\_\_\_\_

MOAA Scholarship Fund \$\_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$\_\_\_\_\_



## Silver Strand Chapter Board of Directors

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First Vice	Nancy Owen, CAPT, USN (Ret)	437-0542
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## Dates to Remember 2009

### Chapter Meetings

October 21

December 8

### Board Meetings

November 17

### SOUNDINGS

Silver Strand Chapter  
Military Officers Association of America  
P. O. Box 180043  
Coronado, CA 92178-0043

Return Service Requested

**TIME DATED MATERIAL**