

# SOUNDINGS

Silver Strand Chapter of Military Officers Association of America

April 2011

## President's Message CAPT Kathy Bruyere, USN (Ret)

Happy Spring to you all!!!

These next two months are chock full of special religious and ceremonial days, but did you know there's also a special week? April 10-16 is National Volunteer Week. Why am I telling you this? Stay tuned, but first, how about answering these questions:

- Do I like receiving "SOUNDINGS", full of interesting information I can use?
- Does my Chapter need my current e-address?
- Do I owe Chapter dues?
- Does my local elected Representative support HR 178?
- Do our California Senators support S.260?
- Does my Chapter need help?

The answers to all these questions can be found in this issue of SOUNDINGS, which could very likely be the LAST time you will receive it in its current, informative format, unless some

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**RADM Patrick McGrath** assumed command of Naval Air Force Reserve in August, 2007. He is a 1979 graduate of the U. S. Naval Academy. He was designated as a Naval Aviator in 1981, reporting to the Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron (Light) (HSL) 35. While at HSL-35, he deployed to the Indian Ocean and Western Pacific. He completed tours as a flight instructor in HSL-41, and then an officer-in-charge in HSL-45, completing a deployment to the Persian Gulf. During this tour, McGrath pursued his studies at the University of San Diego School of Law and completed his Juris Doctorate in Law in 1991. He left active duty in August 1990 and was commissioned in the Navy Reserve. He held numerous billets at HSL-84 before assuming command. He subsequently commanded the reserve units for Carrier Southwest, Carrier Group 1, and Commander Naval Air Forces, U.S. Pacific Fleet. He is currently assigned as commander, Naval Air Forces Reserve and vice commander, Naval Air Forces. In his civilian career, McGrath serves his community as a deputy district attorney in the San Diego District Attorney's Office.

**See Page 7 for more information on  
Chapter dinner Monday, 18 April**

**MOAA Silver Strand Chapter: [www.cal-moaa-silverstrand.org](http://www.cal-moaa-silverstrand.org)**

# Legislative Update

**Government Shutdown and You** Almost five full months after the start of FY2011, legislators continue to battle over the FY2011 budget. In the interim, the government has been kept running through a series of short-term continuing resolutions.

The current resolution expires on April 8, which has federal agencies preparing for a possible government shutdown if legislators of both parties can't bridge the huge gulf between their proposals for federal spending cuts.

The last federal shutdown happened in FY1996 during the Clinton administration. It lasted 21 days and caused some 284,000 federal employees to be furloughed.

The President, presidential appointees, members of Congress, certain legislative branch employees, military people, and federal employees deemed "excepted" aren't subject to a furlough. "Excepted" employees are required to work during a shutdown because they're protecting life or property or performing other essential functions.

What exactly will happen in the event of a shutdown? Unfortunately, most federal agencies are being very coy about releasing that information.

**Social Security:** Checks for current eligibles will continue, but processing of new applications will be likely suspended.

**Military and federal civilian retired pay, survivor annuities:** DFAS and the Office of Personnel Management won't give specific answers, but we believe checks to current beneficiaries will continue. The Social Security answer raises at least some question whether new retired pay and survivor accounts would be started.

**VA disability compensation and survivor benefits:** The VA isn't talking on the subject. But a 2008 Congressional Research Service report said during previous shutdowns "multiple services [for veterans]

were curtailed, ranging from health and welfare to finance and travel."

**Pay for active duty military and drilling Guard/Reserve members:** Again, DFAS won't give a straight answer. We know the troops will still be on duty. But some media reports have indicated they won't be paid if the shutdown encompasses a payday. When MOAA contacted DoD for confirmation, we were told an official release has not been issued by the Secretary of Defense.

**Eliminate Federal Pensions?** Thirteen senators offered new legislation last week that would dramatically cut federal retirement benefits for new hires, beginning in 2013.

The "Public-Private Employee Retirement Parity Act," (S. 644) would eliminate the defined-benefit pension portion of the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) for all future government hires and members of Congress -- but would not affect FERS pensions for current federal employees, retirees, and Congressional members and staffs.

In essence, the federal retirement plan for new hires would be the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) benefit with its agency-matching contributions.

Lead sponsor Sen. Richard Burr (R-NC) stated in his press release, "Defined-benefit pension plans are going belly-up across the nation because politicians and employers continue to make promises they cannot keep...Right now, federal government workers receive far more generous retirement benefits than private sector employees. We cannot ask taxpayers to continue to foot the bill for public employee benefits that are far more generous than their own."

Finally, past attacks on federal civilian benefits have usually led to similar attacks on military retirement benefits, even though the military retirement package has the entirely different purpose of helping to offset the extraordinary demands and sacrifices of a career in uniform. With severe budget pressures certain to rise in coming years, there are sure to be more such proposals to come.

## Memorial Day Service, May 30, 2011

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 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at 10:00 AM in Coronado's Star Park. The guest speaker at this moving and memorable tribute to our Nation's fallen service members will be determined later. Participants will include MCRD Marines, CHS NJROTC Color Guard, Coronado Battalion Sea Scouts, Boy 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. Please mark your calendar right now and attend this event to honor those who have given their lives so that we might live in freedom. At the Korean War Memorial in Washington D.C. cut into granite is the statement:

*'FREEDOM IS NOT FREE'*

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### Silver Strand Chapter Newsletter "Soundings"

The Newsletter Editor position in our Chapter remains vacant after many solicitations for someone to volunteer to assume this responsibility. Your Board discussed various options to "get the word out" to our members short of a newsletter at the March Board meeting. One of the options was to use our group e-mail to send out a notice of an upcoming dinner meeting, the speaker and any other information of interest. Those members who do not have e-mail would be sent a post card with the dinner meeting date, location and speaker and reservation information. If you do not use e-mail but have a computer, you can log onto the Chapter website at: <http://www.cal-moaa-silverstrand.org/> for current events and make a dinner reservation.

We continue to search for a newsletter editor and develop other alternatives. If we are unable to find a volunteer, this edition of "Soundings" will be the **final edition as a comprehensive newsletter**. If you have an interest in producing the Silver Strand Chapter MOAA newsletter, please contact a member of the Board.

### Cell Phones for Soldiers

To a military family, a phone call home is priceless. The Armed Forces Services Exchange operates telephone call centers in Iraq, Kuwait, Afghanistan, other countries and aboard ships; anywhere service members are deployed. All of these locations stay busy around the clock to keep up communication between deployed troops and their loved ones. But these phone calls are expensive. *A phone call from overseas can cost \$7 to \$8 per minute. **Cell Phones for Soldiers*** was founded by teenagers Robbie and Brittany Bergquist from Norwell, Mass., with \$21 of their own money. Their goal is to help our soldiers serving overseas call home by providing prepaid phone cards.

*Cell Phones for Soldiers* addresses an everyday emotional need that everyone has experienced: the imperative to phone home, to hear a familiar voice while far away. Old cell phones are traded for phone cards which are distributed to our soldiers and sailors in Iraq and Afghanistan so they can phone home. Go to [www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com](http://www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com) for more information.

We have been asked by MOAA to support *Cell Phones for Soldiers* by collecting used cell phones, which will be exchanged for phone cards for our troops. I am asking for support from our Auxiliary members, all members and their families in this endeavor. We need to form a committee to divide the various responsibilities involved in collecting used cell phones. This would mostly involve placing drop boxes in various locations, picking up the cell phones, delivering them to me, packaging and mailing the cell phones, as well as approaching other businesses and organizations for donations of their unwanted cell phones. Please help our troops and volunteer to assist!

Contact Kathy Prout at [prout.kathy@gmail.com](mailto:prout.kathy@gmail.com) or at 619-435-6623 to volunteer

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member/members come forward and volunteer to take over the Newsletter Editor position. Reminder- we will accept any member/spouse /spouse team/auxiliary member AND we will purchase the necessary computer support program you may need. Not enough incentive? How about free dinner (s) at our dinner meetings? The bottom line is that there will be a change to the next SOUNDINGS format if this position is not filled soon.

If you still want to support National Volunteer Week, we are also still looking for a volunteer for the Secretary position. Again, this volunteer could be any of the above-mentioned members.

Military folks (and their supporters) are famous for stepping up and helping out when there is a need, and your Chapter does have a couple of critical needs.

Hoping to get some volunteers, and looking forward to seeing you all on April 18th!

All the best, Kathy Bruyere

P. S. You don't have to wait until National Volunteer Week- call one of the Board members now!

## **Silver Strand Chapter MOAA Dinner**



CWO2 Rudy Shappee was the guest speaker at the February 21 Chapter dinner at Coronado Yacht Club. He gave an interesting and energetic talk on how the U.S. Navy feeds the crews of its busy ships at sea from the Revolutionary War to the present, showing how food was prepared aboard and abroad during periods of conflict in our nation's history. Rudy said he became interested in this subject and discovered there was no single source of information of how the Navy first handled the task of feeding sailors at sea and how technology had changed this enormous task. This caused him to research the topic and write his first book, "*Beef Stew for 2500:*

*Feeding Our Navy from the Revolutionary War to the Present.*" He entertained the audience with early pictures of Navy shipboard kitchens, messhalls, recipes and sailor's slang for many common dishes. Rudy sold and personalized many copies of his book after the dinner.

## **Silver Strand Chapter Communication**

Your chapter continues to look for more efficient ways to communicate with our members. We developed a website to post both current long term information to keep members informed on issues of importance to active duty and retired military: <http://www.cal-moaa-silverstrand.org>

We use a group e-mail to notify members of an urgent legislative issue that needs your attention and possible action. Many of you have contacted your representatives based on these notices and made a difference in legislation that impacts the military community. ***We need your e-address for this to work effectively.***

If you have not received e-mails from your Chapter in the past, it could be that you have not provided your e-mail or that your e-address has changed and you did not notify the Chapter of the change. ***If you are not receiving e-mails notifying you of dinner meetings or urgent issues, please take a minute to notify your Chapter of your e-address.*** Send an e-mail to Jim Strickland at: [jos1048@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jos1048@sbcglobal.net)

## **Silver Strand Chapter 2011 Dues Were Due January 2011**

Your Board has continued the five year dues program whereby a member can pay four years dues at one time and get credit for five years dues. In other words a \$40 payment for regular members and a \$20 payment for auxiliary members will result in extending their membership through 2015. We recommend you consider this offer. You can use the dinner reservation form on page 7 of this newsletter to pay 2011 dues, or click on link below:

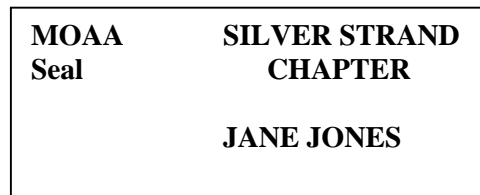
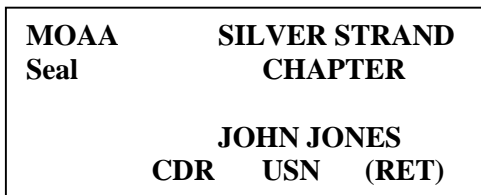
<http://cal-moaa-silverstrand.org/documents/YOUR2011DUESAREDue.pdf>

There are 13 members delinquent on 2010 dues and 2011 dues, and 19 members delinquent on 2011 dues. Those members delinquent on dues who have provided the Chapter an e-mail address have been reminded via e-mail to pay their dues. Those receiving a paper newsletter can check the address label for dues status.

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### **MOAA Nametags Available**

Members can order a nametag for you and your spouse with the MOAA seal in the upper left-hand corner for \$12. Use the form on Page 7 and print your name exactly as you would like it spelled. Include your rank and service. The standard your Chapter has chosen is depicted below.



### **Miramar National Cemetery Open House For Veterans**

**April 9, 2011, 10:00 – 12:30**

Nobel Drive between Miramar Road and I-805, Entrance on Nobel Drive

Directions: From I-805 take Nobel Drive Exit and proceed North to entrance. From Miramar Road turn into Nobel Drive and go South to entrance. Note: there is no entrance or access from MCAS Miramar

## Widow's Tax, by Kathy Prout, Auxiliary Representative

I am asking for your support for the Military Surviving Spouse's Equity Act, HR 178 in the House and S 260, its companion bill in the Senate. These bills seek to eliminate the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) offset from the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) for eligible un-remarried surviving spouses. This is commonly known as the widow's tax. We widows need your help and support.

SBP is the survivor's benefit plan. The service member purchases this for his/her spouse to ensure that the spouse will receive monetary compensation should the service member predecease his spouse. SBP is paid for through DOD. DIC (dependency and indemnity compensation) is compensation for a death caused by a service related injury or illness paid through the VA. It is paid for with the serviceman or woman's life. **Yet the government reduces SBP for those eligible widows dollar for dollar up to \$1154 a month.** In many cases, SBP is completely offset by DIC and the surviving spouse receives only \$1154 per month. These moneys are paid for two different purposes and were intended to be paid separately. DIC should be paid in addition to SBP, not as an offset, as it is now.

SBP is paid for by 94% of our veterans who purchase this for their spouses to insure their financial stability. Not paying full SBP to those surviving spouses whose husbands paid for it out of hard earned retirement pay is a broken promise. Some veterans pay for SBP out of their disability pay as their disability pay is offset in some instances. DIC is paid for in full upon the death of this veteran or active duty soldier or sailor with their lives.

As the result of a lawsuit brought by 3 widows against DOD, known as the Sharp Case in which the widows prevailed, the law changed in 2004, mandating that SBP be paid in addition to DIC with no offset. As of 2004, remarried surviving spouses over the age of 57 receive both SBP and DIC with no offset, leaving unremarried widows with the offset. To force a widow to remarry and to be with another man in order to receive the benefits paid for by her husband with his LIFE is ludicrous to say the least and an egregious offense to the deceased veteran. Congress was forced to pay remarried widows but chose against paying unremarried widows the same benefit, not to mention the rest of the 55,000 eligible widows. HR 178 and S 260 seek to eliminate this offset for all eligible surviving spouses.

Senator Boxer has co-sponsored S 260 but Senator Feinstein has not yet done so.

Please contact Sen. Feinstein and ask her to co-sponsor S- 260.

Email: <http://feinstein.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=ContactUs.EmailMe>

Senator Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senate  
331 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510 Phone: (202) 224-3841

Please email or call your representative and ask him/her to support and co-sponsor HR 178.

Go to <http://www.house.gov/>. Then click on the "write your representative" icon in the upper left hand box.

Congresswoman Susan Davis has not agreed to co-sponsor this bill nor has she supported it in the past. Her contact information is: [susan.davis@mail.house.gov](mailto:susan.davis@mail.house.gov) or Phone: (202) 225-2040

The Honorable Susan A. Davis  
1526 Longworth  
Washington, D.C. 20515

*"With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see right, let us strive to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who has borne the battle, his widow and his orphan."*

*President Abraham Lincoln, Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1865*

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

**Date: Monday, April 18, 2011**

**Rear Admiral Patrick McGrath, USNR, Commander, Naval Air Forces Reserve and Vice Commander, Naval Air Forces, and Deputy District Attorney, San Diego District Attorney's Office**

**Where: Coronado Yacht Club, 1631 Strand Way**

**When: 1800: Social Time**

**1845: Dinner**

**1930: 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:

- April 18 Dinner Meeting Reservation

- Pay 2011 Dues

- Donate to NJROTC, Naval Sea Cadets & MOAA Scholarship Fund

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**Chapter Meeting Monday, April 18, 2011**

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, 15 April (Firm)**

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

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

**2011 Dues (\$10 for members) (\$5 for Auxiliary)** \$\_\_\_\_\_

**(\$40 for 5 years) (\$20 for 5 years)**

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

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

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

Name Tag \$\_\_\_\_\_

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



## Silver Strand Chapter Board of Directors

President	Kathy Bruyere, CAPT, USN (Ret)	409-9505
First Vice	John Donahue, CAPT, USN (Ret)	894-4765
Second Vice	Tom Bauer, CAPT, USN (Ret)	437-6689
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Chaplain	Henry Peterson, LtCot, USAR (Ret)	760-729-6025
TOPS	Tom Bauer, CAPT, USN (Ret)	437-6689
Auxiliary Liaison	Kathleen Prout, Auxiliary	435-6623
Past President	Bob Butcher, MajGen, USMC (Ret)	298-7888

## Dates to Remember 2011

### Chapter Meetings

**April 18\***

**June 20\***

**August 15\***

**October 20\***

**December 6**

*\*Joint meetings*

### Board Meetings

**May 17**

**July 19**

**September 20**

**November 15**

### SOUNDINGS

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

Return Service Requested

**TIME DATED MATERIAL**