

SOUNDINGS

Silver Strand Chapter of Military Officers Association of America

June 2007

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

CAPT Jim Cahill, USNR, Retired

Where do your national MOAA dues go? Part of your dues goes to legislative action at the national level to support and continue veteran's benefits and entitlements.

In mid April, MOAA council and chapter presidents, from all the 50 states and Puerto Rico, with members of the National MOAA staff, paid a visit to congress. Here, those from the individual states, meet with their representatives and senators and their staffs to discuss MOAA legislative initiatives. Silver Strand Chapter was represented by past president and current national board member, BG Wayne Hoffmann, AUS (Ret).

Focus was on three issues of concern. (1) H. R. 579 and S. 604, Tricare fee increases; (2) H.R. 1589 and S. 935, SBP (survivor benefit plan) inequities, and (3) H. R. 784 and S. 935, a larger pay raise for the troops than the 3% in the budget.

Most in congress expresses support and recent reports have

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Rear Admiral Patrick E. McGrath, Deputy Commander, Navy Region Southwest, will speak at the joint Navy League/Chapter dinner on June 21. RADM McGrath began flight training at NAS Pensacola, FL in March 1980 and was designated as a Naval Aviator in April 1981. Upon completion of pilot training, he reported to his first fleet assignment with the HSL-35, making deployments to the Indian Ocean and Western Pacific aboard *USS Fanning*, *USS Reasoner*, and *USS Harry W. Hill*. He was then assigned to HSL-41 where he served as a flight instructor in the SH-60B Seahawk helicopter. He then was assigned to HSL-45, where he completed a deployment to the Persian Gulf aboard *USS Kinkaid* as Officer-in-Charge. He completed his Juris Doctorate in Law in 1991 at the University Of San Diego School Of Law. He left active duty in August 1990 and was commissioned in the Naval Reserves. His commands include: Commanding Officer of Naval Reserve Carrier Southwest Augment Unit 0294 and Deputy Commander, REDCOM Southwest. In his civilian career, he serves his community as a Deputy District Attorney in the San Diego District Attorney's Office.

See Page 7 for more information on Joint MOAA/Navy League dinner, 21 June

Legislative Update

House Passes Defense Bill The House of Representatives spent two days and approved more than 40 amendments before finally passing the FY2008 Defense Authorization Bill on Thursday, May 17, by a 397-27 vote.

Some of the amendments adopted would:

- Extend the military pay raise plus-ups (3.5% raise in 2008 and raises that are one-half percentage point larger than the average American's for 2009-2012) to also include uniformed members of the Coast Guard, Public Health Service and NOAA Corps (Rep. Drake, R-VA).
- Require increased family support and mental health services for National Guard and Reserve personnel (Rep. Braley, D-IA).
- Let employees who are family members of mobilized military personnel use family medical leave to deal with issues arising from that call to duty (Rep. Altmire, D-PA).
- Authorize Guard and Reserve members up to 10 years after leaving service to use GI Bill benefits (Rep. Carney, D-PA).
- Authorize vouchers for free mail delivery to military personnel in Iraq or Afghanistan or hospitalized in military facilities. (Rep. Altmire, D-PA/Rep. Udall, D-NM).
- Bar simultaneous deployment of both military parents to a combat zone when the military couple has minor dependents (Rep. LaHood, R-IL).
- Bar courts from changing child custody orders while a servicemember is deployed, other than temporary orders issued in the best interest of the child. Original custody order to be reinstated upon the member's redeployment (Rep. Turner, R-OH).

Administration Opposes House-Passed Benefit Protections

On May 16 the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) fired off a letter to Congress expressing its displeasure with a number of pay and benefit improvements the House included in its version of the FY2008 Defense Authorization Act. Here's what OMB had to say on the following topics:

Military Pay Raise: The Administration "strongly opposes" the provisions that would provide active duty, Guard and Reserve personnel an extra one-half of one percent pay raise each year from 2008 through 2012. The OMB letter calls this small extra pay raise "unnecessary."

TRICARE Fee Hikes: OMB says, "The Administration is disappointed that the Committee language would not allow DoD to adjust TRICARE health fees and payments for retired military beneficiaries under age 65."

Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance: "The Administration opposes" the House proposal to establish a special \$40/month payment to survivors of members whose deaths were caused by military service and who now lose up to \$1,067 per month due to deduction of VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) from their military SBP annuities. "It appears to be the first step toward eliminating the offset between SBP and DIC," said the letter.

Combat-Related Special Compensation: The Administration "strongly opposes" the House proposal to extend CRSC eligibility to members who are forced into medical retirement with 15 to 19 years of service and who suffer combat-caused injuries rated as 60% or more disabling. MOAA has a hard time understanding any position that would refuse to "vest" such long-serving combat-wounded members in their service-earned retired pay - especially since the government already extended such vesting to thousands who were allowed to retire with 15-19 years' service during the force drawdown of the 1990s.

Tricare Emergency Facility Use Overseas

Many military retirees occasionally travel outside the U.S. One concern is what medical coverage they have should care be required. There are a couple options available to you:

1. You can pay the bill then, when you return home, submit a claim to Tricare. The claim will be processed and paid in accordance with existing policy. Normal medical care needs are generally paid.
 2. If the required care involved going to an Emergency Facility, payment might be paid by Tricare directly to the facility. This can be done through a local contractor. The way to do this is:
 - a. Call (888)777-8343 the Tricare Overseas line. You will then be guided to a regional contact, who will assist you. This should be done as soon as possible.
 - b. Go online at www.tricare4u.com . This is a general information home site with links to Oversea/foreign departments etc. You can also obtain claim forms at this site.
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Medicare Part D Disenrollment

Some retirees have been surprised to find out they are enrolled in Medicare's pharmacy plan Part "D". This is generally the case when the military retiree or spouse belongs to a HMO because most HMOs automatically enroll Medicare eligible members in Part "D". The problem is that the military retiree can no longer get his/her prescriptions through Tricare and there is in some cases a significant amount of money involved.

If you find yourself in this position and would like to disenroll, call Medicare at (800) 633-4227. This number is also noted in the top right hand corner of your Medicare Card.

If you would like to know whether or not you are enrolled in Part "D," you can find out by calling Medicare or through the web at www.Mymedicare.gov . This site will require you to register, but it is easy to do. Note: While you are at the site, note the things you can do through it such as view or modify your drug list or pharmacy information, or get a replacement Medicare Card, etc.

Visions of Valor: A Tribute to Medal of Honor Recipients **On display at the Coronado Museum of History & Art** **April 16-June 10, 2007**

The Medal of Honor has no equal. Earned by few, and revered by millions, it stands alone above all others. Behind the Medal are common men who responded with uncommon valor, who set examples that none should ever forget. They are emblematic of America's ideals of courage, sacrifice, and patriotism.

This exclusive exhibit provides a rare glimpse of America's true heroes. We invite you to join us in honoring these extraordinary individuals who, throughout their lives, have served those who wear the uniform of our nation.

"Visions of Valor" has been created by TriWest and is presently touring the United States. Recently efforts on the part of TriWest to further honor Medal of Honor recipients have resulted in a day each year to be set aside by Congress as Medal of Honor Day.

shown an increase in the numbers of co-sponsors for the bills.

Part of your Cal-MOAA dues goes to support legislative action in California.

On the state level a bill that deserves our support is SB 111. California is the only state that does not help National Guard members with education. Forty-nine states offer National Guard members benefits such as free state university tuition and stipends of \$500 a semester. Officials say their surveys of guard members show that help with education would be the major reason to reenlist.

Attempts to get tuition assistance have been stalled in Sacramento and bills have died in the legislature because of budget short falls or opposition to the war in Iraq. Only 13 of the 120 in the assembly have had military experience and less than that on their staff.

Cal-MOAA will be actively pursuing ways to bring legislation forward to correct this inequity, you can also help. Your legislators in both the state and national offices will be on their summer recess soon, call their local office and request their support for these bills. Phone numbers are in the Coronado Telephone Book, Page iii.

All members of the Silver Strand Chapter of MOAA should be proud of the two NJROTC units we support, Coronado High School and Mar Vista High School. Both units were designated as "Distinguished Units" by the NJROTC Area 11 Manager, CDR Ken Lyles, USN (Ret), based on the overall performance of the unit during this school year. I ask that you continue to make generous donations to these two exceptional units.

Jim Cahill



Silver Strand Chapter President CAPT Jim Cahill, USNR (Ret) presents CAPT Don Auten, USN (Ret) with a token of appreciation for his presentation on "Roger Ball." CAPT Auten is the author of "Roger Ball" a historical biography of Navy fighter pilot John Monroe "Hawk" Smith from his earliest days in the Navy to his position as Commanding Officer of TOPGUN, and his recognition as a tactical innovator in air combat. Chapter members and members of the Coronado Council of the Navy League enjoyed CAPT Auten's talk at their joint meeting on April 16 at Coronado Yacht Club.

TAPS

CDR Curtis Worley, USN (Ret)

New Silver Strand Chapter Members

Earl Pool, 1st Lt, USAF

Welcome Aboard

Mar Vista High School NJROTC Rated As Distinguished Unit



CDR Gerard F. Quinlan, Naval Special Warfare Command Staff, reviews the Mar Vista High School NJROTC Unit during their annual inspection. Mar Vista NJROTC was later designated as a “Distinguished Unit” based on overall performance of the unit during the year. Mar Vista participated in four Area 11 field events in the 2006/2007 school year and placed 1st or 2nd in each of them. In February 2007 they placed 1st in the Area 11 Superbowl Championship. The Unit has 130 cadets enrolled with 31 on the school honor roll, and 54% of the cadets have a 4.00 GPA in NJROTC studies. Their distinguished Color Guard supported many high school, city and area events throughout the year.

Mar Vista NJROTC graduating seniors include (from left): Cadet/CDR Garrett Griffin, Executive Officer, who has an appointment to the United States Naval Academy and will double major in engineering and biology; Cadet/CDR Amanda Mathew, Commanding Officer, will be attending CSU San Marcos with a NROTC Marine Corps option scholarship and will major in psychology; Cadet/LT Jayme Davis, Operations Officer will be attending CSU San Marcos this fall and will major in mathematics. She plans on joining the Marine Corps and remain in the reserves throughout college.



On May 19th the Mar Vista NJROTC female fitness team participated in a national physical fitness competition held at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot. They are rated the top NJROTC female team in California, and placed 5th in the nation at this competition. Cadet/CDR Mathew placed 3rd in the nation. Pictured from left are Cadets: PO1 Alexis Pantoja, SN Brenda Dube, LT Jamie Davis, CDR Amanda Mathew, SN Alejandra Huecias and PO3 Rosalinda Herrera.

Veterans Saluted

Folding Canes with Interchangeable Handles to be Given to WWII and Korean Veterans

April 11, 2007... Alpharetta, Georgia... A program was announced today that will provide free folding canes with interchangeable handles to World War II and Korean War Veterans. Can-Am Care, LLC, the makers of the *HUGO Folding Cane* and other state-of-the-art mobility assistance products, instituted this program, “*HUGO Salutes Our Veterans*,” to recognize the support and efforts the members of the United States Armed Forces made for our country during World War II and the Korean War. *HUGO Folding Canes with Interchangeable Handles* will be provided at no charge to Veterans who may be in need of mobility assistance.

The *HUGO Folding Cane* is the most versatile, functional and ergonomically correct cane in the world. The *HUGO Folding Cane* is adjustable to different heights, and fits most people between 5’ to 6’5” and can support up to 550 pounds. The patented Shock Absorbing Tip is flared with an ultra grip edge for extra stability and traction on all kinds of terrain, in all kinds of weather. A safety strap at the handle provides extra confidence. The *HUGO Cane* easily folds into four sections and can be conveniently stored in its handy pouch. A Sure-Lock System ensures cane rigidity and stability. The *HUGO Folding Cane* is also the only cane to feature an interchangeable handle option which allows the user to customize the cane.

“This generous effort represents the appreciation of private citizens and of companies for the selfless service of all those who have served our country. We deeply appreciate Can-Am’s support of America’s Veterans,” said Christopher Scheer, Public Affairs Supervisor at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Veterans are encouraged to contact Can-Am Care toll-free at 1-888-412-4992 Monday-Friday, 8am-6pm EST or www.HUGOSalutes.com. Proof of service may be required.

CHS NJROTC Military Ball

Coronado High School NJROTC cadets “cut the cake” at their second annual military ball on April 13. Cadet Lieutenant Junior Grade John Fitelson was given the task of planning the entire event in recognition of his creativity, enthusiasm for anything “glitzy” and “can do/never fail” spirit. John put together an eager team that included Cadets Melissa Silverthorn, Jessica Junk, Teddy Taylor and Kimberley Kitchener. Together the five of them chose the theme for the evening – “Disguising the Night” -- and, with the professional party planning experience of Ms. Evonne Darby, the group put on a party for the ages.



Joint Silver Strand Chapter MOAA /Coronado Navy League (Host) Dinner Meeting

Date: Thursday, June 21, 2007

Rear Admiral Patrick E. McGrath, Deputy Commander, Navy Region Southwest

Where: Coronado Cays Yacht Club, 30 Caribe Cay Boulevard

When: 1800: Social Time

1900: Dinner

1945: Program

Seared Salmon with Buerre Blanc

Field Greens with Cucumber and Tomatoes with Red Wine Vinaigrette

Whipped Potatoes, Market Vegetables, Chocolate Cake, Coffee: \$32 per person

Use the coupon below for:

- 21 June Joint Dinner Meeting Reservation
- Pay 2007 Dues
- Donate to NJROTC
- Donate to MOAA Scholarship Fund

Chapter Meeting Thursday, 21 June 2007

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, 18 June (Firm)**

Number attending dinner ____ X \$32 = \$ _____

2007 Dues (\$10 for members, \$5 for Auxiliary) \$ _____

Donation to NJROTC \$ _____

MOAA Scholarship Fund \$ _____

MOAA Nametag (\$8.50) \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____



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**Dates to Remember
2007**

Chapter Meetings

**June 21
August 20
October 16
December 4**

Board Meetings

**July 17
September 18
November 13**

SOUNDINGS

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

Return Service Requested

TIME DATED MATERIAL