

SOUNDINGS

Silver Strand Chapter of Military Officers Association of America

August 2008

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

CAPT Jim Cahill, USNR, Retired

On July 9, the Senate passed H. R. 6331, the Medicare Improvement for Patients and Providers Act of 2008, by a vote of 69-30. The House had passed this bill by a wide margin before the 4th of July recess.

On July 15 President Bush vetoed this bill. Both houses of congress rapidly overrode the veto with large majorities. The bill is now law. Our members of Congress, Representative Susan Davis and Senators Boxer and Feinstein, all voted to override the veto.

This new legislation will provide for lower out of pocket cost for mental-health services, currently at 50% out of pocket will be reduced to 20%. Some anti-anxiety and sleep drugs, not previously, will be paid for. New Medicare participants will find it easier and cheaper to get a physical checkup. Preventive health care will be increased. These new benefits will be phased in over several years.

Thanks to you chapter members and MOAA members nationwide, with other concerned citizen by the hundreds of thousands made their

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LtGen Helland, Commanding General I MEF; Commander, Marine Corps Forces Central Command, began his military career by enlisting in the Army in 1968 and serving for three years with U.S. Army Special Forces. He was designated a Naval Aviator in 1974 and is qualified as a CH-53 pilot. His Marine Corps career assignments include tours of duty with Amphibious Units, Aviation Combat Elements, and Joint Task Forces. He assumed command of the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) in August 1996 and led the MEU through two Mediterranean deployments, during which he was designated Commander, Joint Task Force Nobel Obelisk, Sierra Leone, Africa, for evacuation operations. In August 2001, he reported to US Marine Corps Forces South, Miami, Florida as the Deputy Commanding General, Marine Corps Forces South and the Commanding General, Fleet Marine Forces South. From August 2005 to July 2007 LtGen Helland commanded the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, MCAS Miramar San Diego, California.

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

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MOAA Silver Strand Chapter: www.cal-moaa-silverstrand.org

Legislative Update

Senate Punts Key Defense Bill Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Carl Levin (D-MI) is frustrated at not being able to bring the FY2009 Defense Authorization Bill up for Senate consideration, and so is MOAA.

The authorization bill is the key vehicle for nearly all military personnel changes, and the Senate is scheduled to consider amendments to prevent undue TRICARE increases, ease compensation penalties for disabled retirees and military widows, plus up military pay raises, and fix Reserve retirement inequities, among others.

But it's hung up in the Senate because some senators won't agree to limit amendments to defense-related issues. The single biggest issue is that some Republicans insist on being able to add amendments to expand oil-drilling. But Sen. John Warner (R-VA), the elder statesman and former chairman of the Armed Services Committee, isn't among them. Warner voted to move on with the defense bill and limit amendments to defense issues. But that effort gathered only 51 votes...9 short of the 60 needed to end the debate and move on.

So the Senate had to punt action on the defense bill into September. That's not good, because Congress is scheduled to adjourn by the start of October so legislators can go home to campaign for re-election. That will leave only one month for the Senate to resolve this debate, then work through a hundred or more amendments, and then hope that House and Senate leaders can resolve a thousand or more differences between the House- vs. Senate-passed bills. The latter process alone usually takes several months.

Meanwhile, the House of Representatives has been working to fulfill its defense responsibilities. The House passed its version of the FY2009 Defense Authorization Act in May, and on July 28, the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee approved the FY2009 Defense Appropriations Bill -- which provides the funding to pay for what's in the authorization bill. One new proposal in the appropriations bill would pay an extra \$500 per month to any servicemember extended past his or her separation date under a service "stop-loss"

program, retroactive to October 2001.

Troop/Vet Benefits Bills Clear House With the August recess at hand, the House has rushed to pass a number of measures strongly endorsed by MOAA that address disability, financial, tax, reemployment, and health care protections for veterans and military families.

- *VA Disability System Reform:* H.R. 5892 would require the VA to provide immediate payment for unquestioned disabilities such as amputations rather than holding up claims until all conditions are evaluated. It would also require a plan to modernize the VA disability rating schedule and address quality of life issues, change evaluator incentives to improve processing quality, and require the VA to establish special offices to assist survivors and dependents. In addition, it would allow a survivor or dependent to proceed with a VA claim if the veteran dies before it is adjudicated
- *Mortgage Foreclosure Protections:* H.R. 3221 would prohibit foreclosure on property owned by a servicemember for nine months (vs. 90 days) following deployment. It would also increase, through the end of 2008, the maximum guaranty amount for mortgages backed by the VA
- *VA Health Care and Counseling:* H.R. 6445 would exempt vets who have catastrophic, non-service-connected disabilities from paying copayments for hospital or nursing home care and loosen restrictions on counseling for those vets' family members
- *Reemployment Rights:* H.R. 6225 would strengthen protections for reservists denied reemployment benefits by state or private employers
- *Armed Forces Student Rights:* H.R. 6225 would limit interest on loan debts to 6% for members on active duty. It would also require colleges to refund tuition and fees for students forced to leave school because of military orders and reinstate those students on return with the same academic status held prior to service

Memorial Day Service in Coronado 2008

Four hundred seats had been set for the Memorial Day Service on May 26 and many in the overflowing crowd stood throughout the service. The service was offered by the Silver Strand Chapter of MOAA, the General Henry D. Styer Post (VFW Post 2422) and the Coronado Council of the Navy League. Participants included Webelo Pack 122, Boy Scout Troop 111, Troop 801, Troop 806, Coronado Girl Scouts, Coronado Sea Cadets, Coronado High School NJROTC, Marine Corp Band San Diego, and the Marine Recruit Depot Honor Guard.



MajGen Michael Lehnert, USMC, Commanding General, Marine Corps Installations West was the guest speaker. Portions of his outstanding speech follow: *This weekend, the majority of this country will enjoy a long weekend. They will shop at malls, bar-b-cue spareribs and those who can afford a tank of gas will visit family and vacation spots. Most won't think much about why they have this long weekend. Each year, the percentage of veterans as a proportion of the entire U.S. population grows smaller. The old veterans are going on to their reward while the young ones deploy and redeploy and go back to the fight again. Those who remember them are generally friends and loved ones. But for you and me and those like us, we remember. We remember those who stood beside us in formation, who joked with us, went on liberty, celebrated life's triumphs and tragedies. They helped us build our families, they forged bonds of friendship and now they are gone. Those of us who wear the uniform today, stand on the shoulders of those who went before us and we*

remember. Our last four Marines killed in combat were all from Camp Pendleton. Today we remember LCpl Casey Casanova of McComb, Mississippi, Corporal Miguel Guzman of Norwalk, Ca., LCpl James Kimple of Carroll, Ohio and Sgt Glen Martinez of Boulder Colorado. Three men and one woman who joined the Corps to make a difference and they did. We pray for their families and that they will not have died in vain. We remember wars past and we remember the war we are currently engaged in. Over 4600 families mourn the lost of a loved one this Memorial day from Iraq and Afghanistan. 492 of those dead called California home. They left 205 widows, 3 widowers and 300 kids who will grow up without a dad, two children who will grow up without a mom. 38 were engaged. 67% were members of the Army. 27% were Marines. 4% were Navy and 2% were Air Force. 59 were immigrants. As I visit the hospitals, the wards, the barracks and the homes of these incredible people from all of the Services, I'm awed by their spirit and their families. Our nation doesn't deserve them. They suffer combat casualties long deployments, frequent separations, never complain, whine or ask for anything but to be returned to their units. We owe them our infinite gratitude and respect. In times of crisis, the rest of the world has turned to the United States for leadership. Though often unappreciated, it is America that has been called upon to act when the forces of oppression and tyranny rise to threaten our freedom. It was this way in 1941. It was this way on 9 11 and hopefully it will be so for our grandchildren. Ladies and Gentlemen, we remember the dates 7 December 1941 and 11 September 2001 because they represent attacks on our freedoms and on values. They represent the sacrifices of our citizens. Whether your ancestors came over on the Mayflower or if like Armando Gonzalez they were naturalized citizens, being an American isn't about who your ancestors were or where you came from. Being an American is about believing in the ideals that this country was founded on: freedom, opportunity, justice and respect for the human spirit. We are engaged today in a war of ideas that would challenge those ideals. We cannot do less than respect the spirit of the men and women who gave their lives in responding to attacks on American soil, fighting back the forces who would change what we are and what we stand for. You will be proud to know that the soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines who travel in harms way in the defense of our nation's freedoms get this big idea. They know that there are no shortcuts, no excuses and no mulligans. Each service member raises their right hand and promises to support and defend the Constitution of the United States. That's what we are going to do. That's our promise to you.... To all, thank you for remembering.

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legislators aware that these cuts needed to be rescinded. The military community has shown congress that veterans are important, and we will fight for our rights on critical issues.

The struggle may not be over. We must monitor the action of the president and congress on this issue. It will be necessary to be vigilant to the progress of the final solution to be hammered out in the next few months.

National MOAA will follow this very closely in Washington and will alert the membership if more letters and e-mails are necessary.

Coronado Yacht Club continues to provided us good service and quality meals through their caterer Consummate Catering. We need your help when making reservations to Chapter dinner meetings to make it a better experience for all. We set a firm deadline for dinner reservations of Friday before the Monday dinner so that the caterer can order the necessary food. The yacht club is not a full service restaurant and does not stock excess food. When members fail to make a reservation and show up for dinner, or bring friends without reservations, or change meal choices at the last minute, the caterer has a difficult time responding to these changes. Please make reservations on time and for all persons in your party

Jim Cahill

New Silver Strand Chapter Members

LT Roxann Gudewicz, USN

CDR Fredrick Harris, USNR

CAPT Ken Ireland, USNR

Welcome Aboard

TAPS

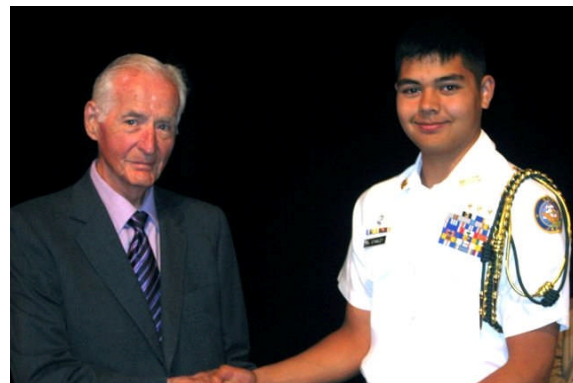
LCDR Sam Thompson, USN (Ret)

CAPT Ward Boston, USN (Ret)

CAPT Ward Boston, USN (Ret) passed away on June 12, 2008. He was President of the Silver Strand Chapter MOAA in 1984 and was a past member of the Board.

Coronado High School NJROTC Awards Day

CAPT Jim Cahill, USNR, (Ret) presents the Silver Strand Chapter MOAA Outstanding Cadet Medal and Citation to Cadet LCDR Andrew Stanley on May 30, 2008. Cadet Stanly was Islander Company's Commanding Officer and under his leadership, the unit was ultimately chosen by the Naval Education and Training Command to receive NJROTC's highest honor of "Distinguished Unit." Cadet Stanley will be attending New Mexico Military Institute next fall on the "Foundation Program."



**MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION
OF AMERICA (MOAA)
SPECIAL EVENT**

Joint Chapter Luncheon

Saturday, 20 September 2008

**Sweetwater Chapter Host
Pendleton Chapter, Heartland Chapter, Miramar Chapter
San Diego Chapter, Silverstrand Chapter**

GUEST OF HONOR

**VICE ADMIRAL NORBERT R. RYAN, JR.
UNITED STATES NAVY, RETIRED
PRESIDENT OF THE MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA (MOAA)**

WHERE: MCAS Miramar Officers' Club

**TIME: 1100-1300 – No Host Cocktails
1200 hrs - Lunch**

PRICE: \$22.00 Per Person

**MENU: 1. Charbroiled Wrangler Steak
Tender Beef Steak rubbed with barbeque seasoning &
Topped with Sante Fe BBQ Butter, baby skins
or
2. Chicken Morel
Grilled Boneless Breast of Chicken
Served in brown sauce, rice pilaf, green beans almondine
Salad, Carrot Cake, Coffee and Tea**

Please detach and mail the below reservation form with check made out to Sweetwater Chapter NLT 12 September 2008 to Sweetwater Chapter, MOAA ; P.O. Box 268; Chula Vista, CA 91912-0268. For questions please call Bill Hoyt at 619-479-7092

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ ZIP _____

CHAPTER _____ SPOUSE/GUEST _____

Check Menu Selection #1 _____ Wrangler Steak #2 _____ Chicken Morel

Mar Vista High School NJROTC Awards Day

Mar Vista High School NJROTC unit presented awards to cadets on May 28 2008. The Day started with the incoming CO Cadet/ENS Stephanie Paredes and out going CO Cadet/CDR Christina Eaves hosting the Honor Unit 2008 banner. The Commander Naval Education and Training Command (CNET) Honor Unit Award is received as a result of their many "Outstanding" accomplishments conducted during this school year.



CDR Doug Hatfield, USN (Ret) presents the Silver Strand Chapter MOAA Outstanding Cadet Medal and Citation to Cadet/ENS Stephanie Paredes. Cadet Paredes was selected to be the new Unit Commanding Officer for this next school year. She has been very active in Unit activities including duty as the field meet Exhibition Drill Team Commander and planning the Navy ball. Cadet Paredes also received a Silver Strand Chapter \$500 donation on behalf of the Unit from CDR Hatfield, a member of the Chapter. This donation was used to support four Mar Vista NJROTC cadets at the June Sailing Academy conducted at Fiddlers Cove Marina.

New Life Membership Incentive

A new Life Membership incentive is available for chapter members. Chapter members now can receive a 10 percent discount when they convert to a MOAA Life Membership, and the chapter will receive a \$20 credit for the membership conversion. (The Silver Strand Chapter uses this \$20 to renew your membership for two years -- saving you even more money!)

Interested members should call the Member Service Center at (800) 234-6622, ask for the 10 percent discount, and give them our chapter name -- the Silver Strand Chapter.

VA Offers New Online Resource Service

The Department of Veterans Affairs is offering a new online service, My HealtheVet, which is a gateway to veteran health benefits and services. It provides access to: trusted health information; links to federal and VA benefits and resources; the Personal Health Journal; and online VA prescription refill service. In the future, MHV registrants will be able to view appointments, co-pay balances, and key portions of their VA medical records online.

My HealtheVet is a powerful tool to help veterans better understand and manage their health, according to VA officials. The Web site also features a section called "Learn About" which provides resources on a variety of topics such as computers, the Internet, phishing scams and telephone scams. Health information from A to Z plus medical dictionaries, an encyclopedia, journals, and more will be available soon.

To visit the My HealtheVet site, go to www.myhealth.va.gov/.

Joint Silver Strand Chapter MOAA /Coronado Navy League Dinner Meeting

Date: Monday, August 18, 2008

**Lieutenant General Helland, Commanding General I Marine Expeditionary Force; and
Commander, Marine Corps Forces Central Command**

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:

- August 18 Dinner Meeting Reservation
- Pay 2008 Dues
- Donate to NJROTC & Naval Sea Cadets
- Donate to MOAA Scholarship Fund

Chapter Meeting Monday, August 18, 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, August 15 (Firm)**

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: \$_____



Silver Strand Chapter Board of Directors

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Past President	Wayne Hoffmann, BG, AUS (Ret)	522-0031

**Dates to Remember
2008**

Chapter Meetings

August 18

October 22

December 2

Board Meetings

September 16

November 18

SOUNDINGS

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

Return Service Requested

TIME DATED MATERIAL