

# SOUNDINGS

Silver Strand Chapter of Military Officers Association of America

April 2009

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

I continue to be impressed with the Board of Directors that you have elected to assist me! Their enthusiasm and commitment to the chapter is exceeded only by their abilities! They truly are an exceptional – and highly motivated – body.

Due to the efforts of the National MOAA President (Norb Ryan) and the leaders of ten other veteran organizations, President Obama has abandoned the crazy idea of billing veteran's health insurance companies for the costs of treating their service caused injuries. Beyond question, the number of voters these groups represent weighed heavily on his decision. For that reason alone, the dues you pay to National MOAA and to the Silver Strand Chapter are worth every penny!

As the legislative year unfolds, there are sure to be other pieces of legislation that we'll need your help with, so please send Jim Strickland ([jos1048@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jos1048@sbcglobal.net)) your email address, so he can let you know when your crucial help is needed.

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**LtCol Jan Janus, was appointed as JROTC Program Manager for the San Diego Unified School District in 2007.** He enlisted in the US Army in 1967 and completed Warrant Officer flight training the following year. His initial troop assignment was as a helicopter gunship pilot and Section Leader with the 1<sup>st</sup> Squadron 9<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division in the Republic of Vietnam. He received a battlefield commission as an Armor officer upon leaving Vietnam and was transferred to the 25th Infantry Division at Schofield Barracks, HI. He completed the Armor Officer Advanced Course in 1974 and was assigned to Fort Carson, CO, where he assumed command of Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion 34th Armor, 4th Infantry Division (Mech). In 1976, he was transferred to the 4th Brigade and assumed command of Company A, 1st Battalion 70th Armor. Later in 1976, the 4th Brigade deployed to Germany, where it joined the US V Corps. In 1985, he served as the Senior Brigade Advisor for the 2nd Brigade, 40th Infantry Division (Mech), California ANG and retired from that position in 1989. He was recalled to active duty less than one year later for service during Operation Desert Shield/Storm. He became an Army JROTC instructor in 1993, serving as the Senior Army Instructor at James Madison High School for fourteen years.

**See Page 7 for more information on Chapter dinner Monday, 20 April**

# Legislative Update

**Budget Resolution Highlights Military/Vet Issues** The House and Senate Budget Committees worked to produce their respective drafts of the FY2010 Budget Resolution this week, which is Congress' blueprint for action in the coming year.

The budget process has been so contentious in recent years that Congress sometimes hasn't been able to pass a budget resolution, but that's a big priority this year for the Democrats who control the White House and both chambers of Congress.

But it's going to be a challenge amidst the current fiscal turmoil, and they're starting behind the power curve already, because the new Administration won't deliver its budget until the end of April - two weeks after the April 15 deadline when Congress is supposed to have finished action on it.

Meanwhile, committee leaders are soldiering on, going out of their way to express their empathy for military and VA people programs.

In that regard, both include full funding for VA programs, plus a "reserve fund" to allow for potential improvements to military and VA health care, "affordability of health care for military retirees or veterans" (TRICARE fees), and progress on eliminating VA compensation offsets for disabled retirees and Survivor Benefit Plan annuitants.

Unfortunately, we've learned to take those reserve fund provisions with a grain of salt, because they carry the disclaimer that any such initiatives must be "deficit-neutral." That is, their cost must be offset by cuts in other so-called "mandatory spending" programs. The great difficulty of finding such offsets has been the main obstacle to addressing these inequities in previous years.

The good news is that there's no such limitation on the reserve fund to reform the formula Medicare uses (and TRICARE follows) to set provider payments. That means Congress plans positive action to reverse the current law that will otherwise cut Medicare and TRICARE payments to doctors by 20% as of next January.

All in all, MOAA is encouraged that the Budget

Resolutions contain explicit expressions of support for many of the key concerns we've articulated to Congress for a number of years. We'll do our best to work with Hill leaders to turn those words into positive actions.

**Guard/Reserve Chiefs Testify** Senate Armed Services Personnel Subcommittee Chairman Ben Nelson (D-NE) opened a March 25 hearing with service and DoD Guard/Reserve leaders by announcing that he is sponsoring a bill, S. 731 to accomplish a long-standing MOAA goal: authorizing TRICARE coverage for "gray area" reservists - who have completed 20 or more years in the Guard or Reserve but are not age 60.

Ranking Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) expressed concern about career retention among mid-grade NCOs and officers. He's considering re-introducing legislation to incentivize longer careers by reducing the Reserve retirement age (normally 60) one year for each two years served beyond 20 years. MOAA has long supported this initiative as well.

**New Bills of Interest** A number of new bills have been introduced that would benefit active duty members, retirees, Guard and Reserve members, and their families and survivors.

Sen. Inhofe (R-OK) and Rep. Franks (R-AZ): Establish a U.S. policy of committing a minimum of 4% of the nation's gross domestic product to the base defense budget to meet national security requirements.

Chambliss (R-GA): Allow Guard and reserve members to draw retired pay 3 months early for each 90 days served on active duty since 9/11/01. Current law only provides such credit for service after Jan. 28, 2008.

Rep. Bilirakis (R-FL): Reduce from 57 to 55 the age at which a qualifying remarrying survivor could retain VA dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC).

Rep. Bilirakis (R-FL): Require the military pay raise to exceed private sector pay growth by 0.5 percentage points each year for 2011 through 2014. The purpose of the bill is to continue reducing the current 2.9% pay gap between military and private sector wages by a half-percentage point each year.

## Chapter Dinner Speaker's Topic Interested Many

Jane Bergman, Administrator, Veterans Home of California, Chula Vista, was the guest speaker for our MOAA Dinner meeting on Monday, February 16. She has been working at the Veterans Home since its opening in 2000 and was appointed as administrator in May 2008. Jane described the three tiers of care provided, including domiciliary (independent), RCFE (assisted living) and skilled nursing units. 315 residents are currently at the home which has a capacity of 400. However, shower repairs and budget constraints will keep the census around this number. The veterans' home is located on 30 acres of land and provides a wonderful home and activities for those who have served our nation. Residents also include some spouses of veterans. Currently there are 271 male and 44 female residents; the majority are veterans of World War II. Jane also shared a comparison of the veterans' home to a couple other San Diego long term care facilities and the veterans' home received high marks in



health inspections, staffing, and quality measures. You can compare other nursing homes on the internet at: [www.medicare.gov/NHCompare](http://www.medicare.gov/NHCompare) Tours of the Veterans Home are given on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 1 p.m. No reservations are necessary. The home is located at 700 East Naples Court, Chula Vista next to Sharp Hospital. For eligibility and other information about Veterans Homes of California go to [www.cdva.ca.gov](http://www.cdva.ca.gov)



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## VADM KILCLINE TO SPEAK, Memorial Day, May 25, 2009



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 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at 10:00 AM in Coronado's Star Park. Vice Admiral Thomas Kilcline, Commander, Naval Air Forces will be the guest speaker at this moving and memorable tribute to our Nation's fallen service members. 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 2009 Dues Report

We currently have over 60 out of 214 total Chapter members who are **delinquent on their 2009 dues**. If **your mailing label has the year 08 beside your name and is highlighted in red, you have not paid your 2009 dues**. Please use the form on Page 7 to correct that oversight and mail them in today. **If you elected to receive your newsletter electronically and have received a "Delinquent Dues" e-mail**, please mail your check to the PO address in the e-mail today. Thank You!

*Continued from page 1*

Fully one third of you have not paid your 2009 dues as I write this letter. If you received this newsletter by "snail mail," check the address label. If the number behind your name is 08, it should be highlighted in red and your dues are overdue. (If the number is 09 or beyond, your dues are paid through December of the year indicated.)

If you receive this newsletter electronically from our home page (and well over half of you do) and you haven't received an email message from Jim saying that your dues are overdue, your dues are paid through at least 2009. Incidentally, we thank you, as the electronic transmission of the newsletter has saved us a lot of money and, in large measure, that's the reason our dues are the same as they were thirty years ago.

We support two of the best JROTC units in Southern California. Plan to attend our April 20<sup>th</sup> joint dinner with the Navy League to learn more about JROTC and how you can help keep this great program in California schools.

Finally, please mark you calendars and join us on Monday, May 25<sup>th</sup> to honor those who have given their lives to permit us to live in freedom. The service takes place in Star Park and begins promptly at 10:00 AM.

Warm personal regards, Bob

### **New Silver Strand Chapter Members**

**Roy E. McCoy, CAPT, USN (Ret)**

**Jerry Mitchell, Col, USMC (Ret)**

**Welcome Aboard**

**TAPS**

**Col James Donnell, USMC (Ret)**

### **Honoring Women's Military Service and VA Needs**

This National Women's History Month, it's worth noting that women comprise almost 15% of today's armed forces, up from 2% in the 1950s. The 1.8 million women veterans represent more than 7% of the 23.4 million veteran population.

That poses some new funding and program challenges for the VA, which is putting more money toward those requirements. For one thing, most women veterans are of child-bearing age -- a new reality for the VA. Maternity, pre- and post-natal care, mental health, and military sexual trauma are issues that require sensitivity, experience and new capacity to effectively address women's needs.

Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA) and Rep. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin (D-SD) have introduced the "Women's Health Care Improvement Act" (S. 597 and H.R. 1211, respectively) to help eliminate barriers that have discouraged women vets from seeking VA care and help them in transitioning home to their lives as mothers, wives, and citizens.

MOAA thanks all women who are serving or have served, paving the way for coming generations. Please ask your elected officials to sign on as cosponsors of these important bills.

# Healthcare Consumer Council Meeting

**RADM Christine S. Hunter, MC, USN, Commander**

**Naval Medical Center San Diego**

Cordially invites all  
Military Personnel, Ombudsmen, and TRICARE beneficiaries from  
the San Diego area

The Admiral welcomes your direct questions and feedback  
regarding your health care services at NMCS D and clinics.

~ Wednesday, 15 April 2009 ~ 1600

~ Naval Medical Center San Diego ~  
~ Building 5 Auditorium~

Direct questions to Andrea L. Graves, Head, Patient Relations, (619) 532-6418

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## **Threat to JROTC Programs in California – Your Help Needed**

The San Francisco School Board voted in 2006 to phase out all JROTC programs at San Francisco schools. These programs are currently scheduled to end this June, unless the School Board rescinds this action. This now appears to be unlikely. The good news is that there is another way that California can ensure the long-term vibrancy and vitality of its JROTC programs statewide. Assemblywoman Fiona Ma from San Francisco recently introduced Assembly Bill 223 (AB223), which calls for the reinstatement of JROTC by the San Francisco Unified School District's Board of Education. Additionally, Assemblywoman Mary Salas has introduced legislation (AB351) that addresses an important Physical Education credit issue by insuring that JROTC programs throughout California are given physical education (PE) equivalency for JROTC. These bills have huge implications for the viability of JROTC programs statewide during the current fiscal crisis and for years to come.

Here's how you can help. Please contact Assembly Education Committee members, where the bills are now being considered, as well as your State Assembly person and Senator. It is very important that we flood our legislators with positive messages about this bill.

Contacts should be made by phone, fax, and email to local district offices as well as the legislator's Sacramento office. [Assembly Education Committee members are listed here](#). Key message points are the following:

- I am a voter. AB223 and AB351 are important to California. Please vote for them.
- Now is the time to strengthen programs that work to provide additional opportunities for our children to build self-esteem and gain the type of skills that will prepare them for college and the workforce. JROTC programs are important to the development of today's young people and we should keep all of them.
- School districts are facing unprecedented budgetary strains. It makes fiscal sense for school districts to use JROTC to fulfill the PE graduation requirement. Because the federal government reimburses 50% of instructor salaries and provides all equipment and materials, school districts gain significant financial benefit.
- JROTC is one of the best leadership/character development programs in the nation and it has a vigorous fitness component that supports California PE standards.



## **An Open Letter From Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki**



My name is Ric Shinseki, and I am a Veteran. For me, serving as Secretary of Veterans Affairs is a noble calling. It provides me the opportunity to give back to those who served with and for me during my 38 years in uniform and those on whose shoulders we all stood as we grew up in the profession of arms.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has a solemn responsibility to all of you, today and in the future, as more Veterans join our ranks and enroll to secure the benefits and services they have earned. I am fully committed to fulfilling President Obama's vision for transforming our department so that it will be well-positioned to perform this duty even better during the 21st Century.

We welcome the assistance and advice of our Veterans Service Organizations, other government departments and agencies, Congress, and all VA stakeholders as we move forward, ethically and transparently, so that Veterans and citizens can understand our efforts.

Creating that vision for transforming the VA into a 21st Century organization requires a comprehensive review of our department. We approach that review understanding that Veterans are central to everything VA does. We know that results count, that the department will be measured by what we do, not what we promise, and that our best days as an organization supporting Veterans are ahead of us. We will fulfill President Lincoln's charge to care for ". . . *him, who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan . . .*" by redesigning and reengineering ourselves for the future.

Transforming any institution is supremely challenging; I know this from my own experience in leading large, proud, complex, and high-performing organizations through change. But the best organizations must be prepared to meet the challenging times, evolving technology and, most importantly, evolving needs of clients. Historically, organizations that are unwilling or unable to change soon find themselves irrelevant. You and your needs are not irrelevant.

Veterans are our clients, and delivering the highest quality care and services in a timely, consistent and fair manner is a VA responsibility. I take that responsibility seriously and have charged all of the department's employees for their best efforts and support every day to meet our obligations to you. Our path forward is challenging, but the President and Congress support us. They have asked us to do this well—for you. Veterans are our sole reason for existence and our number one priority—bar none. I look forward to working together with all VA employees to transform our department into an organization that reflects the change and commitment our country expects and our Veterans deserve.

Thank you, and God bless our military, our Veterans, and our Nation.

Signed: Eric K. Shinseki

March 13, 2009

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### **MOAA Scholarship Fund**

Your Silver Strand Board is pleased to report that the Chapter recently sent a check for \$522 to the MOAA Scholarship fund. These funds were contributed by you throughout 2008 to support MOAA scholarships and grants offered to military dependents. It is gratifying that Chapter members continue to contribute generously to this very important fund. Thanks!

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

**Date: Monday, April 20, 2009**

**LtCol JAN D. JANUS, USA (Ret), JROTC Program Manager for the SDUSD**

**“The State of Junior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps in California High Schools”**

**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, or Vegetarian Plate  
Pre-Set Spring Salad, rice, vegetables, desert, rolls, coffee, tea; \$30 per person*

Use the coupon below for:

- April 20 Dinner Meeting Reservation
- Pay 2009 Dues
- Donate to NJROTC & Naval Sea Cadets
- Donate to MOAA Scholarship Fund

**Chapter Meeting Monday, April 20, 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, Friday, 17 April (Firm)**

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

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

**2009 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 \$\_\_\_\_\_

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



## **Silver Strand Chapter Board of Directors**

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## **Dates to Remember 2009**

### **Chapter Meetings**

**April 20**

**June 15**

**August 17**

**October 21**

**December 8**

### **Board Meetings**

**May 19**

**July 21**

**September 15**

**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**