

SOUNDINGS

Silver Strand Chapter of Military Officers Association of America

December 2010

Presidents Message MajGen Bob Butcher, USMC (Ret)

By all accounts, Captain Ireland gave a great overview of the Coronado High School NJROTC Unit and their achievements at the October Dinner Meeting. We owe the Navy League our thanks for providing this excellent program. Your MOAA chapter can be very proud of our role in getting the unit started.

Our December speaker is Colonel (USMC, Retired) Ken Jordan. Ken is a member of National MOAA's Board of Directors, where he serves on the Government Relations Committee. If you can only make one meeting this next year, I'd suggest this one should be it! I'd also offer that it doesn't take a genius to figure out that passing legislation to improve the lot of active duty, retired and reserve members is going to be really hard for the foreseeable future, but I think that after hearing what Colonel Jordan has to say you'll agree that we have the right team working the issues!

The fact that our country is so deeply in debt makes it very hard to imagine that MOAA can achieve their legislative goals, but I'll guarantee that they won't succeed unless they try and they will definitely do that! The potential for their success depends, more than ever before, on the numbers that they can reference when they talk to

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Col Ken Jordan, USMC (Ret) graduated from Sam Houston State University in 1961 and joined the Marine Corps as an infantry officer. He commanded a force recon detachment in Vietnam and served in various staff and command positions in a 28-year career. On retirement he was a director of human resources for a major bank for 10 years and a career transition counselor for six years. He has served on multiple veteran-related boards and has been chairman of several, including the Marine Memorial Association and the USO of San Diego. He was appointed to the Veterans Disability Benefits Commission and the Secretary of the Navy Retiree Advisory Council. He currently serves on the board of the Veterans Medical Research Foundation (VMRF), a joint endeavor by the UCSD School of Medicine/Medical Center and the VA of San Diego. VMRF conducts biomedical and health services research in support of present and future veterans. He is a member of the Miramar Chapter of MOAA and serves on the Government Relations Committee of National MOAA.

See Page 7 for more information on Chapter dinner Tuesday, 7 December

Legislative Update

Lame Ducks on Defense The lame ducks were back on the Hill this week, facing the crucial tasks of:

- Approving funds to keep the government running beyond December 3
- Stopping a 23% cut in Medicare and TRICARE payments to doctors now scheduled for Dec. 1 (with an additional 2% cut due January 1)
- Acting on legislation to extend some or all of the tax cuts due to expire December 31
- Passing a defense authorization bill for our wartime military

The expectation is that Congress' first priority is to extend the continuing resolution in order to keep the government running beyond December 3 and avoid a government lockout.

After that the top priority will likely be extending some or all of the Bush era tax cuts.

The Senate acted yesterday to approve a one-month delay in the 23% cut in Medicare/TRICARE payments scheduled for December 1, but the House is unlikely to act on it until after Thanksgiving.

And that will only delay the problem for a few weeks. Unless Congress acts again in December, an even bigger 25% cut will kick in for Medicare and TRICARE on January 1.

Hill leaders also sent mixed signals on the chances of finishing the FY2011 Defense Authorization Act. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) promised to bring it to the Senate floor the week after Thanksgiving.

Meanwhile, some House leaders expressed public pessimism about the chances of getting it done before Congress adjourns for the year. If not, it would be the first time in 48 years that Congress failed to pass a defense authorization act - which should be a national embarrassment for a nation at war.

If you haven't already done so, please send your legislators the MOAA-suggested messages (and if you did so last week, please send them again now) asking them to:

A. [Stop the 25% cut to the Medicare/TRICARE reimbursement rate](#) and

B. [Do whatever must be done to pass the defense authorization bill](#)

Big Retirement Cuts for Current Troops? On Wednesday, the Bipartisan Policy Center released the recommendations of a privately funded Budget Reduction Task Force with the goal of bringing the federal debt below 60 percent of GDP by 2020.

This group, co-chaired by former Senator Pete Domenici (R-NM) and former Congressional Budget Office Director Alice Rivlin, is independent of the President's Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, whose co-chairs issued a separate deficit-cutting proposal last week.

Among a broad range of other proposals, the Rivlin-Domenici plan would dramatically alter the military retirement system by:

- Shifting it to a 401(k)-style system involving member contributions and variable government matching (depending on skill, retention needs, etc., each year),
- Basing retired pay on the highest five years' average basic pay (vs. the current three years),
- Delaying eligibility for immediate retired pay until age 57 for those with 20 or more years' service, and
- Vesting retirement benefits for members with 10 or more years of service

They estimate this would reduce long-term military retirement costs by 50%.

To help achieve those savings, the Rivlin-Domenici plan would shift all currently serving troops with less than 15 years of service to the new system! It's a formula guaranteed to end in a long-term retention and readiness disaster. If it were in place today and soldiers with 10 years of service facing a third or fourth...or fifth...combat deployment had a choice between leaving with a vested retirement benefit or being forced to serve until age 57 to get an immediate annuity, we wouldn't like the resulting retention rates.

MOAA doesn't believe Congress would stand for it. But having a commission of this stature even propose such a thing is troubling, indeed.

NJROTC Cadets Attend Mini Boot Camp

On the 16th and 17th of October 28 first year cadets from Coronado High School's "Islander Company attended Mini-Boot Camp" at Mar Vista High School. They joined with cadets from Mar Vista, Westview and Ramona High Schools. In total a hundred cadets participated from the four schools. They earned their first ribbon and advancement of their Junior ROTC careers. The cadets had a taste of real boot camp, cleaning their barracks, uniform inspections, working with their fellow peers and as a bonus getting yelled at by Marine Drill Inspectors. The main objective of "Mini Boot Camp" is to instill discipline, improve their military knowledge, work with others to accomplish a mission and support each other so that tasks can be achieved in an efficient manner. Mini Boot camp was not only memorable in a physical aspect; it also gave them stories and memories to share with each other. They were able to learn from their experiences, both good and bad, gaining self confidence and an understanding of what military life is about. **Cadet Chloe Lozier**



Cadets from Islander Company pose after the graduation ceremony from mini-boot camp. In the front are the "Silvercord" instructors and Islander Company's Instructors, First Sgt. Gallegos (USMC retired) and Capt. Ken Ireland (USN retired)

Letters to the Troops

Your Chapter is again conducting our own "Letters to the Troops" letter writing contest for Coronado school children, *for the eleventh year*. Each school submits letters written by the students, starting with the line: "I just want to thank you for..." and complete the letter in their own words. The letters are judged by a Chapter committee where first and second place for each school is selected. All letters are then sent to the fleet and overseas stations and distributed to servicemen and women, just in time for Christmas. A book certificate from a local book store is presented to each first and second place student, and a donation is made to the school whose students wrote the most letters.

"Letters to the Troops" has been very popular with the school children, with over 700 letters written each year. Your Chapter has reports back from troops who received these letters stating their gratitude and thanks, and some with descriptions of trading letters with their shipmates, much like trading baseball cards.

NMCSD Now Providing Seasonal Flu Vaccines At Various Locations

Call the Flu Hotline recording at 619-532-5FLU (619-532-5358) for additional information and updated information on availability and sites for seasonal flu vaccines.

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Congress. For that reason alone, your chapter and National MOAA membership is important, so I urge those of you who owe chapter dues to pay them today.

There is much more value to your membership and you'll hear about some of them over the next year, but one is our "Letters To The Troops" Campaign. Each year we ask the Coronado school children to write letters to service members serving overseas during the holidays. We'll judge those letters at 3:30 PM on 3 December at the Coronado Library Winn Room. If you'd like to help and leave there with a great feeling about the youth of our community, I'll see you there!

The slate of officers for next year can be found on page 4 and it's the strongest slate I've ever seen from our chapter. Kathy Bruyere will lead you next year and I know her well from out time together on the National MOAA Board from 1998 to 2004. She has previous experience as a chapter president and I've had a chance to observe her in leadership positions. I've been very impressed – not only by her obvious leadership abilities, but by her caring and concerned manner that is clearly genuine.

Jim Strickland has been our secretary and newsletter editor for the past ten years, but he needs to move on. Neither one of these jobs demands an extraordinary commitment, so if you can make time to volunteer for either or both of those positions, your chapter officers would be grateful! Contact me (619.298.7888) or Jim (619.435.6608) if you think you may be interested.

It has been my pleasure to serve as your president for the last two years! I thank each and every one of you, but particularly the board members listed on page 8 for your support and help!

With personal best wishes for all, Bob Butcher

2011 CHAPTER OFFICER SLATE

The Nominating Committee was chaired by Brigadier General Wayne Hoffmann. Joining him on the committee were Captain Jim Cahill and Colonel Jim Strickland. They have proposed the following slate of officers to lead our chapter for 2011:

President: Kathy Bruyere, CAPT, USN (Ret)
First Vice President: Miles Harvey, CDR, USNR (Ret)
Second Vice President: Tom Bauer, CAPT, USN (Ret)
Secretary:
Treasurer: Tom Bernitt, CAPT, USN (Ret)
Air Force Representative: Jim Strickland, Col, USAF (Ret)
Army Representative: Don Mayhue, BG, ARNG (Ret)
Marine Corps Representative: Fred Allega, Col, USMC (Ret)
Navy Representative: Jim Cahill, CAPT, USNR (Ret)

In accordance with our Chapter By Laws, this slate will be placed in nomination at our Annual Membership Meeting on December 7th. Additional nominations will be accepted from the floor, nominations will be closed and our officers for 2011 will be elected and immediately installed.

We still do not have a volunteer to fill the Secretary position. If you have an interest in serving on your Board in this position, please call Jim Strickland at 435-6608.

New Silver Strand Chapter Member
Capt Lane Sontheimer, USAF
Welcome Aboard

Joint MOAA/Navy League Dinner October 2010

CAPT Ken Ireland, Senior Naval Science Instructor, Coronado High School addressed the dinner meeting on October 21 at Coronado Yacht Club. CAPT Ireland talked proudly about Islander Company. He covered the objectives of NJROTC which includes: promote patriotism, develop informed and responsible citizens, develop leadership, provide incentives to live healthy and drug free and provide information on the military services as a military career. He said the benefits to CHS include: improved attendance, higher graduation rates, decreased

disciplinary actions and increased parental involvement. He covered many accomplishments including the unit being rated 5% in the country in academics, the Color Guard placing first and second in area meets, and the rifle team placing first and third at area meets. CAPT Ireland thanked the Silver Strand Chapter for their support of Islander Company.



Islander Company presents the Colors



Celebration of the Navy's 235th Birthday, from left: Command Master Chief Ken Shivers, CAPT Ireland, MA2 Joshua Almosara (NASNI Sailor of the year) and Chief Jason Boatman

Should I salute or place my hand over my heart?

Public Law 110-181 states "all persons present in uniform should render the military salute. Members of the Armed Forces and veterans who are present but not in uniform may render the military salute.

All other persons present should face the flag and stand at attention with their right hand over the heart, or if applicable, remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart.

Citizens of other countries present should stand at attention. All such conduct toward the flag in a moving column should be rendered at the moment the flag passes."

To clarify, retirees may salute or place their hand over their heart to render respect to the U.S. flag.



U.S. Air Force Photo by Josh Plueger

Aid and Attendance

Aid and attendance is an underutilized special monthly pension benefit offered by the Veteran's Administration for veterans and surviving spouses who require in-home care or live in nursing homes.

To qualify, a veteran (includes the surviving spouse) must have served at least 90 days of active military service, one day of which is during a period of war, and must be discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. The veterans benefit is \$18,234 annually (paid monthly) and increases to \$21,615 if a veteran has one dependent. The surviving spouse alone is \$11,715 annually. For more information, call 1-800-827-1000 or visit <http://www.va.gov>: (type aid and attendance in the search block), or contact your local VA office.

Bases Get New Names In Realignment

Some military installations have new names as joint basing continues. The 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission's directive ordered the consolidation 26 stateside military installations into 12 joint bases.

Seven bases received new names in January:

- Fort Lewis and McChord Air Force Base became Joint Base Lewis-McChord, led by the Army
- The Navy's Anacostia Annex and Bolling Air Force Base here became Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling, led by the Navy
- Naval Station Pearl Harbor and Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, became Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, led by the Navy
- Charleston Air Force Base and Naval Weapons Station Charleston, S.C., became Joint Base Charleston, led by the Air Force
- Elmendorf Air Force Base and Fort Richardson, Alaska, became Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, led by the Air Force
- Lackland and Randolph Air Force bases and Fort Sam Houston, Texas, became Joint Base San Antonio, led by the Air Force
- Langley Air Force Base and Fort Eustis in Virginia became Joint Base Langley-Eustis, led by the Air Force

Five others became joint bases in October when:

- Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek and Fort Story in Virginia became Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story, led by the Navy
- Fort Myer and the Marine Corps' Henderson Hall in Virginia became Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, led by the Army
- Andrews Air Force Base and Naval Air Facility Washington, in Maryland, became Joint Base Andrews, led by the Air Force
- McGuire Air Force Base, Fort Dix and Naval Air Engineering Station Lakehurst, all in New Jersey, became Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, led by the Air Force
- Navy Base Guam and Andersen Air Force Base in Guam became Joint Region Marianas, led by the Navy

Silver Strand Chapter 2011 Dues Are Due January 2011

Chapter dues are separate from National MOAA dues

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 2010 dues, or click on link below:

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

If you have elected to receive the newsletter via e-mail notification you probably do not remember if you owe dues for 2011. The Chapter Secretary will send an e-mail notification to members in November and again in December notifying those members who owe 2011 dues. **If you do not get this e-mail, you have already paid 2011 dues.**

Your Chapter supports two NJROTC programs and a Naval Sea Cadet Corps with your donations:
Coronado High School, Mar Vista High School and the Coronado Battalion

Please consider increasing your NJROTC & Naval Sea Cadet Corps contribution to these programs in 2010.

The Chapter also supports the National MOAA Scholarship Fund.

Thanks!

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

Silver Strand Chapter MOAA Dinner Meeting

Date: Tuesday, December 7, 2010

Col Ken Jordan, USMC (Ret)
Member Government Relations Committee of National MOAA

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:

- December 7 Dinner Meeting Reservation
- Pay **2011** Dues
- Donate to NJROTC & Naval Sea Cadets
- Donate to MOAA Scholarship Fund

Chapter Meeting Tuesday, December 7, 2010

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, 3 December (Firm)**

Indicate your choice (s) of entrée _____

Number attending dinner ____ X \$30 = \$_____

2011 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

President	Bob Butcher, MajGen, USMC, (Ret)	298-7888
First Vice	Nancy Owen, CAPT, USN (Ret)	437-0542
Second Vice	Kathy Bruyere, CAPT, USN (Ret)	409-9505
Secretary	Jim Strickland, Col, USAF (Ret)	435-6608
Treasurer	Tom Bernitt, CAPT, USN (Ret)	424-6365
Air Force Rep.	John Stihl, Maj Gen, USAF, (Ret)	435-4155
Army Rep.	Don Mayhue, BG, ARNG (Ret)	435-7400
Marine Rep.	Fred Allega, Col, USMC (Ret)	429-4282
Navy Rep.	Jim Cahill, CAPT, USNR (Ret)	435-8077
Legislative Chair	Jim Cahill, CAPT, USNR (Ret)	435-8077
Newsletter Editor	Jim Strickland, Col, USAF (Ret)	435-6608
Personal Affairs	Joan Thomas, CDR, USN (Ret)	435-3812
Chaplain	Tom Johnson, CAPT, USN (Ret)	435-3408
TOPS	Tom Bauer, CAPT, USN (Ret)	437-6689
Auxiliary Liaison	Kathleen Prout, Auxiliary	435-6623
Past President	Jim Cahill, CAPT, USNR (Ret)	435-8077

Dates to Remember 2010/2011

Chapter Meetings

December 7
February 21
April 18
June 20
August 15
October 20
December 6

Board Meetings

January 18
March 15
May 17
July 19

SOUNDINGS

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

Return Service Requested

TIME DATED MATERIAL