

SOUNDINGS

Silver Strand Chapter of Military Officers Association of America

August 2007

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

CAPT Jim Cahill, USNR, Retired

The politicians are now in their districts on a summer break and the legislation activities have slowed until the fall.

On the national level, Senator Barbra Boxer has agreed to cosponsor the Retired Pay Restoration Act of 2007, authored by Senator Harry Reid. Under current law, disabled veterans cannot draw on both their retirement and disability benefits. In contrast, disabled retirees from any other branch of the federal government can draw both their disability pay and their retirement pay. This bill would correct this injustice. No other federal retirees are forced to forfeit their retirement pay-only our disabled military retirees. Contact your member of congress and request their full support of this change in law.

On the state level, the budget for FY 2007-08 was passed by the Assembly on July 20. The Senate has not passed their version as yet. If there is no compromise between the Democrats and the Republicans by the end of July, the state will be unable to pay its bills.

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A 1954 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, **Vice Admiral Ed Martin** was designated a Naval Aviator in 1955 and subsequently served in numerous carrier based squadrons. While on a combat mission over North Vietnam on July 9th 1967, he was shot down near Hanoi by a surface-to-air missile and held there as a POW for nearly six years.

Following repatriation in 1973, he was subsequently promoted to flag rank in 1980 and to Vice Admiral in 1983 where he served first as Commander Sixth Fleet and then as DCNO Air Warfare. The Admiral ended his distinguished military career as United States Commander, Eastern Atlantic and Deputy Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Naval Forces Europe.

His many awards and decorations include: The Distinguished Service Medal (two awards); the Silver Star; Defense Superior Service Medal; Legion of Merit (two awards); Distinguished Flying Cross; Bronze Star (two awards); Purple Heart (two awards); and, L'Ordre du Merite (France's second highest award).

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

Legislative Update

Wounded Warrior Report Released

President Bush's Wounded Warrior Commission released its findings and recommendations this week. Former Senator Bob Dole and former Health and Human Services Secretary to President Clinton, Donna Shalala, chaired the panel. MOAA testified before the Commission in April.

The Commission was established to find ways to improve care and services for wounded troops following reports of substandard outpatient care and administrative problems at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. The Commission made six major recommendations:

- Create a patient-centered recovery plan for every seriously injured service member
- Establish a single disability rating system, with DOD/Services determining fitness for continued service and the VA assigning disability ratings for those determined to be unfit for duty
- Aggressively prevent and treat post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI)
- Significantly strengthen support for families of the wounded
- Rapidly transfer patient information between DOD and VA
- Strongly support Walter Reed by recruiting and retaining first-rate professionals through 2011

MOAA strongly endorses the majority of the recommendations.

We do, however, have significant concern over two recommendations. First, the Commission would distinguish between disabilities incurred in combat or combat-related events from those from non-combat related events. Non-combat disabled retirees would be given only VA care and their spouses/dependents would be ineligible for any government health care (except if the service member later died of a service-connected cause).

MOAA strongly objects to distinguishing between combat-

related disabled and other service-disabled retirees for the purpose of awarding basic military benefits such as earned retired pay and TRICARE coverage. DOD has an employer's responsibility to all military retirees. If they're injured badly enough to be retired, then health care is part of the retirement benefit. In the process of trying to honor the combat-related wounded, we must guard against dishonoring thousands of others who are no less disabled in service to their country. The purpose of the Commission was to improve care. The last thing we expect to come out of it is a benefit cut for non-combat-disabled retirees and their families.

The second major concern is that the Commission proposes new VA earnings-replacement payments that would cease at age 65 and be offset or replaced by Social Security payments. Social Security and other "safety net" social insurance programs available to all Americans are not a substitute for VA disability compensation. In addition to paying into Social Security like all other Americans, disabled service members paid huge premiums of service and sacrifice in defending their country. There's a huge difference between becoming disabled in defending your country and becoming disabled for General Motors. Those who earn VA compensation have earned it as a supplement to other benefits available to the general population. Congress has long recognized that, and shouldn't backtrack from it now.

With these reservations, MOAA wholeheartedly endorses the Wounded Warrior Report recommendations, and we urge the President to task DOD and the VA to implement its major recommendations as soon as possible.

Senate Passes Pay Raise/ Wounded Warrior Fixes

Frustrated by stalled attempts to clear contentious amendments over Iraq War policy in the defense authorization bill, Senate leaders this week agreed to pass a separate measure on the care of wounded warriors and to vote a 3.5% pay raise for the troops.

The "Dignified Treatment of Wounded Warriors Act." (S.1606) is a comprehensive package that would address the problems highlighted in media reports concerning problems faced by outpatients at Walter Reed and other military and VA facilities.

2007 National JROTC President's Academic Championship Results

Coronado High School NJROTC cadets earn first place in a national academic competition sponsored by the College Options Foundation. CAPT Lee Pontes, USN (Ret), Senior Naval Science Instructor, CHS stated, "I offer my thanks to those teachers that have made these student/cadets the academicians that they have proven themselves to be." Each cadet will receive a \$200 savings bond.



Cadet Lieutenant Philip Espe (Senior)

Cadet Lieutenant Austen McRae (Senior)

Cadet Lieutenant JG Heidi McElrath (Junior)

Cadet Chief Petty Officer Ariana Pybus (Junior)

**Cadet Petty Officer Second Class Jackson Hummeldorf
(Sophomore)**

Left to right: Back row, partially hidden Jackson Hummeldorf; Front row L to R: Ariana Pybus, Heidi McElrath, CHS Principal Karl Mueller, Austen McRae & Philip Espe

U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps, Coronado Battalion

The U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps is a nationwide organization dedicated to helping American youth realize personal success and achievement through a nautically oriented training program. Through Sea Cadet leadership, young Americans ages 13 through 17 develop interest and skill in basic seamanship and its naval adaptations, while learning the value of patriotism, courage, self reliance, teamwork and accountability.

Our Coronado based U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps unit has recently been awarded two prestigious awards by Captain Michael Ford, USNR (Ret.), Executive Director of the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps in Arlington, Virginia. This unit, under the command of CDR Jacqueline Rychnovsky, NC, USN, is divided into two groups by age. The first group, Training Ship Bora Bora, was commissioned as an official unit in July, 2006. As one of the fastest growing Training Ships in the nation with an enrollment of 24 cadets ages 10-13, the unit was awarded the Morgan L. Fitch Jr. Trophy as the most outstanding NLCC unit in the nation. The second group, Coronado Battalion, which boasts an enrollment of 28 cadets age 14-17, is the proud runner-up recipient (shared with TS Bora Bora) of the George S. Halas Trophy, awarded annually to the outstanding combined NSCC Unit/NLCC Training ship in the Nation. The winner of the George S. Halas Trophy was SEAL Beach Battalion/Training Ship Sea Lion in Orange County, California.

The combined Coronado units have nearly tripled their enrollment since CDR Rychnovsky assumed command in December 2004. "None of this could be done without the talented and dedicated cadre of adult volunteers who donate a minimum of one weekend a month toward the success of our unit." In addition, the battalion receives an immeasurable support from the Active Duty members of the Amphibious Construction Battalion One command, Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, the Coronado Council Navy League and the City of Coronado. More information about the units can be found at www.coronadobattalion.org and www.tsbora.org

Your Silver Strand Chapter of MOAA is proud to support the Coronado Battalion.

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

YOUR TRICARE DATA MAY BE COMPROMISED! National MOAA has been alerted that uniformed service members and family members are at a potential risk. Defense contractor SAIC reported on July 20 the potential compromise of personal/medical information of 870,000 TRICARE beneficiaries. The company said that analysis has not shown any evidence that any personal information was compromised, however the possibility cannot be rule out. Updates will be provided by MOAA as information becomes available. Go to the MOAA web site: <http://www.moaa.org> or (800) 234-6622 X807 for the latest news.

You will notice a new line item of the dinner registration form in this issue. Your Board of Directors, at the most recent board meeting, passed a motion to support the Coronado Battalion, U. S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps. The U. S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps is a nationwide organization dedicated to helping American youth realize personal success and achievement through a nautically oriented training program.

The Coronado Battalion has recently been recognized as the most outstanding Cadet Corps unit in the nation. The unit CO is CDR Jacqueline Rychnovsky, NC, USN. The unit also won the national award for excellence in cadet recruiting and retention during the training year. No other unit in the nation achieved two national awards this year. Please make a contribution to this unit, their only source of funding comes from the parents and donations from individuals and organizations like ours.

Jim Cahill

New Silver Strand Chapter Members

CAPT Diane Snyder, USN
Col A. J. Allega, USMC (Ret)
RADM Patrick McGrath, USNR

Welcome Aboard

Silver Strand Chapter President, CAPT Jim Cahill presents CHS NJROTC Cadet Ensign Andrew Stanley the MOAA Outstanding Cadet Medal on June 1 at the CHS Awards Day. Cadet Stanley is the Prospective Commanding Officer for Islander Company for the 2007-2008 school year. He replaces Cadet/LCDR David Foy who received the MOAA award last year. Cadet Stanley's accomplishments that led to his selection were many but notably he led this year's Armed Exhibition to its highest finishes ever at recent drill competitions. His potential as a future naval officer was confirmed by his invitation to and attendance at the U.S. Naval Academy's summer session in June.



Silver Strand Chapter President, CAPT Jim Cahill presents Mar Vista High School NJROTC Cadet/LT Monica Martinez the MOAA Outstanding Cadet Medal on May 23 at the MVHS Awards Day. Cadet Martinez has been selected as the NJROTC Unit XO for the 2007/2008 school year. She had overall top grades for her class, was on the NJROTC Unarmed Drill Team, volunteered for every community service event and ran the unit blood drives.



NMCS D Opens TRICARE Plus Program For Enrollment

Naval Medical Center San Diego has resumed offering enrollment in NMCS D's TRICARE Plus program to beneficiaries who are 65 and older. This program complements the TRICARE for Life benefit. NMCS D's goal is to provide comprehensive health care for seniors, including primary and specialty care services. Beneficiaries who choose TRICARE Plus will be enrolled to one of the primary care clinics and assigned a Primary Care Manager who will coordinate all their healthcare services.

For specific questions regarding TRICARE Plus, you may contact the Enrollment Office at (619) 532-9896 or the Health Benefits Office at (619) 532-8328. Questions or concerns from patients may also be referred to Patient Relations at (619) 532-6418.

Health Care Consumer Council

RDML Christine Hunter, MC, USN, Commander, Naval Medical Center San Diego cordially invites all military personnel, ombudsmen, and TRICARE beneficiaries from the San Diego area to a Health Care Consumer Council on Wednesday, 8 August 2007 at Naval Medical Center – Building 5, Auditorium, 4:00. Admiral Hunter invites your direct questions and feedback regarding your health care services at NMCS D and clinics.

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

A SPECIAL INVITATION TO OUR AUXILIARY MEMBERS

At the joint luncheon on September 15th, we are putting together a table or two especially for auxiliary members in Area VIII chapters. This will be a great opportunity to meet auxiliaries from other chapters. As has been announced, Congresswoman Susan Davis is the speaker. Her talk will be informative and of particular interest to auxiliary members. If you are interested the special seating arrangement, please make your reservation through your chapter and then call Anne Patton at 858 759 2715.

Joint Silver Strand Chapter MOAA /Coronado Navy League Dinner Meeting

Date: Monday, August 20, 2007

Vice Admiral Ed Martin, USN, (Ret)

A POW Story

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
Traditional Caesar Salad, rice, vegetables, desert, rolls, coffee, tea; \$30 per person*

Use the coupon below for:

- August 20 Dinner Meeting Reservation
- Pay 2007 Dues
- Donate to NJROTC
- Donate to MOAA Scholarship Fund

Chapter Meeting Monday, August 20 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, Thursday, 16 August (Firm)**

Indicate your choice (s) of entrée _____

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

2007 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: \$_____



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Dates to Remember 2007

Chapter Meetings

**August 20
October 16
December 4**

Board Meetings

**September 18
November 13**

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

Return Service Requested

TIME DATED MATERIAL