

Bridge View



Charleston Chapter, Military Officers Association of America

July 2007



Web site: www.chasmoaa.org

Veterans' Silent War against ALS, a relentless killer, By Tom Mikolajcik Brig Gen USAF, (Ret.)

It is quiet. There are no shots being fired, no missiles being launched and no terrorist bombs exploding, but many veterans including those still serving, are fighting an enemy that has no borders, with an unknown cause and no weapons to use against it.

On a daily basis, we are constantly bombarded with media images of our young men and women fighting the war on terror around the world. What we don't hear about is the war our service men and women, and the veterans that came before them, are waging against a silent enemy. This enemy lurks behind the scene in the nervous system and can be more frightening than any enemy they had previously fought.

In this war, the enemy is not seen. It can strike anyone, anywhere at any time. It knows no borders or boundaries, killing those serving at home and those abroad. And it does not kill instantly, for it chooses to first tell its victims of their fate. Yet it is lethal nonetheless, turning wives into widows and leaving children without parents. And it takes no prisoners. The enemy, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), the deadly neurodegenerative disease that took the life of baseball legend Lou Gehrig and which now bears his name. And is now killing our military men and women—and our veterans—at a much higher rates than the general population.

In fact, veterans from the Cold War, Vietnam, Korea, World War II and as far back as World War I have a 60 percent higher incident rate of ALS than the general population. Recent studies have shown that Gulf War I veterans have twice the incident rate of ALS than non-veterans. Five to ten years after the Gulf War, ALS appeared in veterans and not only at a higher rate, but at a much younger age. An Army Colonel had to give up his Brigade Command this because of ALS. He has a wife and five children. An Air Force staff sergeant from Florida with 11 years of service, was medically retired this spring while in a wheel chair. He has a wife and three children—the oldest is seven.

What are our troops and our veterans up against? ALS strikes silently, eroding a persons abilities to control muscle movement, at first, people notice subtle changes such as weakness in their arms or legs or slurred speech. But as the disease progresses, they lose the ability to move their arms, to walk and even stand. Ultimately many no longer are able to breath on their own, speak, eat or even wink an eye. They are completely paralyzed, yet all the while, their minds remain sharp and their senses, remain in tact. They are isolated and awake, alive with the knowledge that they are trapped inside their own bodies.

This truly is a horrific enemy. On average, the victims of ALS die within two to five years after diagnosis. And as their bodies succumb to the disease, there is little they can do to slow the steady progression, for there is no cure for ALS and only one drug available to treat the disease. And that drug has limited affects, prolonging life by just a few months. ALS is an orphan disease with only about 30,000 patients in the United States. Drug companies will not invest much for research because of the potentially low return on investment.

We can expect to see more veterans diagnosed with ALS to include those serving in Iraq and Afghanistan over the next five to ten years. The Veterans Administration started a registry of veterans with ALS in 2003. The voluntary sign up as of October 2006 had 1,708 veterans with ALS veterans registered with only 936 still living—other words, 45 percent have already died since they registered.

Continued on Page 7:

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Cdr. John E Nolan (SC) USN

DoD Task Force on the Future OF Military Health Care

The DoD Task Force on the Future OF Military Health Care provided a preliminary discussion of its interim report at a Defense Health Board meeting. The task force is composed of 14 members appointed by the Secretary of Defense, half of which come from inside and half of which come from outside the Department of Defense. It is co- chaired by a prominent health care economist Dr. Gail Wilensky and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John D. W. Corley. The co-chairs indicated their recommendations would include;

- * Reviewing TRICARE contracts to ensure they contain the flexibility required to allow for inclusion of best business practices.

- * “Altering pharmacy incentives” (including beneficiary co-pays) to encourage use of the lower mail-order system.

- * ‘Rebalancing “ beneficiary fees “at or below” the share of DoD costs they represented when TRICARE was implemented in 1996 (the co-chairs indicated beneficiaries under 65 paid 11% of DoD costs in 1996 vs. 4% today; DoD leaders previously cited those figures as 27% and 14% respectively).

- * Phasing in beneficiary fee increases over 3 to 5 years.

- *Establishing a formula for regular fee increases in the future.

- * Increasing catastrophic expense cap (currently \$1,000 for active duty families and \$3,000 for retiree/ survivor families).

- * Establishing a tiered fee structure, with members in higher pay grades paying larger fees.

- * Requiring independent audits to ensure TRICARE pays only after any other insurance available to the beneficiary has paid.

The co-chairs acknowledged that if Congress is concerned about the impact of fee increases on retirees, Congress could address that with a one-time increase in retired pay to offset part or all of the increased fees. Col. Steve Strobridge (USAF-Ret.) expressed MOAA’s concerns about using a percentage of DoD health costs to assess or establish beneficiary fees. He stated that “We can determine the beneficiary fees are in the numerator of that fraction, but we have yet to be told exactly what DoD costs are being included in the denominator..... A good share of DoD costs are military readiness or conscious business decision costs for which beneficiaries should not be charged any share.”

Dr. Wilensky acknowledged the difficulty of trying to attribute the costs of military infrastructure and war-time needs. She indicated that these issues are being addressed by the group and the costs under consideration will be transparent in the final report. Specific beneficiary fee recommendations also won’t be ready until the final report Due in December. The interim report to Congress will reflect the kinds of general recommendations outlined above.

Airport gate passes for Military Families

Military Family members with photo IDs now may obtain passes to accompany their departing or returning service member to the gate.



**Ron Kennedy, Colonel, USAF, Retired
South Carolina Native
Member of the Charleston Chapter MOAA
RV Road Traveler**



When Air Force Col. Ron Kennedy retired from active duty seven years ago, neither he nor his wife Diane were in any hurry to settle down.

“Our son and daughter were in college so we traveled the country in an RV for a year,” Ron said recently. “But after 12 months on the road we decided we wanted to return to South Carolina” where they grew up.

However, the Kennedy's journey to the Low country took several turns before Ron took his present job as a contracting officer with SPAWAR, the Navy's high-tech engineering outfit at the Naval Weapons Station.



Looking back, Ron said he and Diane grew up in South Carolina during the civil rights era. In fact, he and his twin brother Don “integrated Winnsboro High School in 1965.”

High school was also where Ron and Diane met and started dating. Diane went on to Benedict College while Ron and Don enrolled at Newberry College.

The Kennedy brothers became the first African Americans to graduate from Newberry. Ron and Diane were married shortly after they graduated from college in 1973.

Said Ron: “Diane was with me throughout my career. I had no intention of staying in the Air Force until after I got in, and then I loved it. But I wouldn't have stayed if she hadn't backed me up.”

For Ron, it was the beginning of a 27-year career that included top positions in the Air Force Office of Special Investigations, or OSI.



A Young Captain and Diane

But first, Ron was commissioned with a degree in accounting which the Air Force wanted to use. That meant 6 1/2 years with the Air Force Audit Agency at Kelly Air Force Base, Texas, and later at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam.

“I learned a lot about the Air Force and its operations but I was ready for a change,” he said. The change was to the OSI.

Ron moved up the OSI's ladder as he and his family moved from base to base. The list includes Norton and Travis in California, Bolling in Washington, Naples in Italy and Wright-Patterson in Ohio. His last post was as commander of OSI's Region 1 with 400 people at 31 geographically separated locations.

On one occasion, the OSI stopped a mentally disturbed mother who had killed two of her children. “I believe she would have killed a third (child) if we hadn't stepped in,” Ron said. “When I was in OSI, I felt every day that I made a difference in people's lives.”

Now that he's in the Low country, he's still making a difference for others.

“I believe in contracts that provide direct support for the troops in Iraq and Afghanistan,” he said, adding that he was working now on such a contract that must remain confidential.

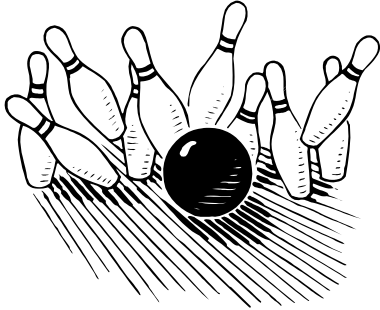
Besides, he said, “it's a great place to live. And you can play golf 12 months of the year.”



Ron Today

Welcome to MOAA Charleston Col. Kennedy

MOAA MIXED BOWLING LEAGUE



We have completed another fun filled season and are taking a break until we start a new season in September, 2007.

WE NEED SOME NEW BOWLERS !

Both regular and substitutes are need;
Both Men and Women

We bowl on Thursday evenings at 6:30 p.m.
The only thing needed to join us is a desire to enjoy the sport and the camaraderie of good folks.

For further information or to sign up for our next season, please contact:

Norm Wolff 216 6433 or junowolff@bell south.net

There are two women's leagues that bowl at the Starlifter Lanes on Wednesday and Thursdays mornings. If there any ladies who would like to join us. Please contact:

Judy Wolff 216 6433 or junowolff@bellsouth.net

You do not need to be a member of MOAA for the women's league.



Sam Stafford III, M.D.
Mt. Pleasant Dermatology
1280 Johnnie Dodds Blvd.
Suite 300
Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464
(843) 881-0320

Toys for Tots 2007

Our campaign for the 2007 Toys for Tots has started to pick up speed. Thanks to a generous donation our fund now stands at \$361.74.

Remember its through your support that this drive is successful

Lets beat last years total. As we have said in the past the Marines believe our donation of sports equipment is well received by the young teenagers.

Remember we will list each contributor in the newsletter.

A great way to remember an anniversary, birthday or simply a small memorial.

Lets Make This Year The Best Ever



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President's Pen



About two months ago your chapter voted to support BG Tom Mikolajcik in his effort to obtain assistance for those returning from our battlefields with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), an illness commonly called Lou Gehrig's disease. Tom is trying to get VA and congressional assistance for these worthy heroes and will appeal directly to Vice - Admiral Ryan for his support of this worthwhile project.

I have strongly endorsed this effort to the MOAA Director for Council and Chapter Affairs and the SC Council and Chapters president has likewise discussed this subject with the MOAA Director for Government Relations.

This is a major project which won't be solved easily or quickly and will be incorporated with several other debilitating disease studies for which our organization is committed to find successful medical treatments.

The June event was a Wine tasting and tour of Irvin Vineyards on 30 June. This was a fun event for all those who attended.

Follow-on events will be: July, no event; August, Carrabba's restaurant luncheon; September, Picnic; October, visit to the Charleston Tea Farm; November, Red's Ice House evening dinner and presentation of the Lahm Award; December, Holiday luncheon at the Oaks Country Club.

Cliff

For additional information about ALS and how to learn how you can help, please contact the South Carolina Chapter of the ALS Association at:
(866) 492-4821 or (843) 971-0933

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Help Our Chapter Help Low Country Kids



We are selling decals and license plates and the profits from these sales will go back to the community through programs such as the annual Toys for Tots program.

These beautiful red, white and blue decals and license plates will enable you to show your MOAA colors.

They are guaranteed not to chip, crack or fade for three years.

Decals are \$5.00 each (2 for \$9)
Plates are \$10 each (two for \$18)



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Mission Complete

2007 MOAA ROTC Awards Program Enjoys Successful Season

There's no better time to review our Chapter's ROTC awards program than during this patriotic time of the year. Annually, the MOAA Charleston Chapter recognizes outstanding Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) cadets in the area's schools.

This year we presented a total of 41 awards to deserving cadets in 20 different high schools and colleges. Our commitment to recognize these fine citizens and future leaders is a positive aspect of the Chapter's role in the community.

Ten different MOAA Charleston Chapter officers and auxiliary members represented us from February 24th through May 23rd in ceremonies scattered across the Low Country. They are Cliff Abbey, Madge Davis-Sherman, Butch Fuller, Terry Joyce, Don Lovelace, Rudy Smart, Al Smith, and co-directors of this year's program, John "Pappy" Griffin, and Steve Rowe. All expressed their enjoyment in being part of these positive events, and we thank them for their willingness to represent us so well.

The MOAA certificates and medals for Senior and Junior ROTC programs are produced and provided by our national organization. This year, our Charleston Chapter created our own certificate to accompany the previously existing presentation of a \$50.00 check to one cadet per JROTC program. Cadets who received the MOAA certificate and medal seemed genuinely appreciative. They typically were among the best within their schools' programs, and several were rising seniors assuming key leadership positions in their respective programs. The cadets receiving our Chapter certificate and check were also typically top performers, and in a few instances were the current year cadet Commander. They too appeared appreciative of the certificate, and were definitely grinning to the approving sighs of fellow cadets and crowd when provided with the accompanying check.

The presentation ceremonies, usually on a weekday, ran the gamut from daytime school assemblies to military formations with pass in review, fancy drill exhibitions, and evening ceremonies. While most were at the respective schools, at least one was done at a local community church, one was a Spring Military Ball and dinner in the school's gym, and another was a formal evening gala dinner and dance at the Charleston Air Force Base club.

Plan ahead for your chance to participate in next year's program as a volunteer presenter. The desire is to have presenters for each school who are from the same service as the ROTC program, live in the nearby community, or have a relationship of some sort with the school.

Well Done

John, Pappy and all the Chapter Members who took part in the Awards Program




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Independent Financial Advice - Investments, Insurance, Planning

"CDR, U. S. Navy (Ret.), Member Charleston Chapter MOAA"

Continued from Page 1:

Because of the documented relationship of ALS to military service, the Department of Defense, Veterans Administration and the National Institute of health need to finally step forward and aggressively fund a comprehensive research program.

What a cruel irony. People who dedicated their lives to defending our country now succumb to a disease that prevents them from even lifting a finger or raising their voice in their own defense. It's time Congress and the administration support our heroes in the war against ALS by committing the resources needed to learn what the cause the disease, how it can be treated and to find a cure. This is the enemy we have known about for more than 100 years. We must now fund the weapons developments accordingly. How many more have to die in the war against ALS?

Brigadier General Tom Mikolajcik, who was diagnosed with ALS in October 2003, is also an active member of the Charleston Chapter MOAA.

Give Me Ten

Just a reminder that National MOAA is having a nation wide recruiting campaign for new members. Some of the rewards for signing up new members include a financial reward to our chapter.

On that same note if you sign up any active duty officer, their first years dues are free.

Remember an organization is only as strong as its membership base. There's strength in numbers.

Do you know a officer active or retired, do him or her and the chapter a favor, sign them up. As a member of MOAA you know what the organization does.
Happy Recruiting

Chapter Visit To The VA Hospital 14 June 2007



Butch Fuller with Vietnam Army Vet Joseph Cory



Don Lovelace With WWII Navy Vet John Buzogany II

Many thanks to our members for giving
Up their time to visit our Veterans.
And Many Thanks to Our Veterans
for their Service

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The USS La Salle (AGF-3) was stricken from the Naval registry in May 2007. And in the fine tradition of the Navy she was used as a target and sunk.

It took 12 hours and tons of ordinance to sink her. They fired every weapon in the inventory including several Harpoon missiles and 1000 lbs bombs. In the end it took several cruisers and destroyers using their 5 in guns to finally sink her.

The USS LaSalle was the former flagship of the Middle East Force And the 6th Fleet.



Many thanks to CDR Doug Hatley Former XO of the USS LaSalle (AGF-3) for these photographs.

To all our Navy members and brethren, consider this fact.

There was no crew on board!!

Can you imagine who long it would take with a crew on board to sink. I believe if this ship was a fully manned warship, she would have been saved to fight another day.

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News and Views herein are not necessary those of any Government Department or of other Chapters or Members. **Prospective Chapter Members:** if you are not a member of the Charleston Chapter, MOAA, you have received this copy as a courtesy invitation to call any Officer or Director for information about joining.



Lynn Brown
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Air Force ROTC Cadet
 Sarah Spies
 University of Nebraska



Sarah is the current recipient of the Chapters Future Military Officers Scholarship Fund.

Sarah is the second cadet to receive our annual Scholarship.

Adam Paul a Citadel graduate now serving as a USCG Officer in Hawaii, was the first recipient of the chapters scholarship.

It should give you a good feeling, knowing that your donations to the

“Future Officers Scholarship Fund”
 Have helped and continues to help outstanding students achieve their goals to be an Officer
 In the Armed Forces of the United States

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Future Military Officers Scholarship Fund

The chapter always accepts and appreciates donations to our Scholarship fund.

It’s a great way to remember someone special, or a great event such as birth of a grandchild. Or simply because you just feel like it.

Rudy Smart, our Director of Scholarship, can give all the information you need to make a donation to the fund.

You can find Rudy’s contact information in the Board of Directors list on page 8 of this newsletter.

Charleston Chapter MOAA *Membership Application Renewal Change of Address* (circle one). Chapter Dues: \$10.00 a year for Regular membership. Auxiliary membership \$5.00 per year. Multiple year dues are encouraged in order to reduce paperwork. Make check payable to “Charleston MOAA”. Mail to: Charleston MOAA, P.O. Box 70421, Charleston SC 29415-0421.

Last Name _____ First Name _____ MI _____

DOB _____ Rank _____ Service _____ Spouse’s Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____ - _____

Phone Number _____ Email _____

If you are a member of National MOAA, please provide your membership number _____

Your status (circle one) Retired Active Duty Reserve National Guard Former Officer Auxiliary

Dues for Year (s) _____ Signature _____

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Total Membership: 520
Auxiliary Members: 100
Honorary Members: 37

BE THE NEXT IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD!!

Did you know that this newsletter is on line and in living color? Check out our website at:
www.chasmoaa.org.

You will need the latest version of Adobe Reader which is available on our site, and it's free If you choose to access the newsletter from the web on a regular monthly basis instead of the U.S. Post Office "snail mail", you will:

- Be notified as soon as the newsletter is on the web.
- Receive your copy 5 to 7 days earlier.
- Help the environment by reducing paper waste and diminishing the number of trees needed to make paper.
- Help your Chapter to reduce the price tag involved in the cost of postage and printing!

I hope this sounds like something you would like to do to help your chapter. If so, let Al Smith know at:

alandmarty@comcast.net.

If you select this option you will receive a personal e-mail in October and December of each year showing you your annual dues expiration date.

Dues Questions

Questions concerning your status should be directed to:
Al Smith, Membership VP. 572-2011
alandmarty@comcast.net



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Survived by Spouse Carolyn

Holt Kiser, Jr., LCDR, USN, (Ret.)

Survived by Spouse Peggy

Mildred Mitchell, Aux

Widow of Capt Vincent J. Mitchell, USCG

A contribution will be made to the scholarship fund in memory of our lost member

MEMBERS WHO HAVE PAID DUES FOR 5 OR MORE YEARS

One additional member have joined the ranks of those who have paid their dues for five or more years. In addition to those previously recognized, we are pleased to extend our wholehearted thanks to the following member:

Mrs. Caroline B. Lown, AUX

www.chasmoaa.org

What does that bunch of letters mean?

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