

SOUNDINGS

Silver Strand Chapter of Military Officers Association of America

August 2009

Presidents Message MajGen Bob Butcher, USMC (Ret)

Our 15 June Joint Dinner Meeting with the Coronado Council of the US Navy League was cancelled. The Navy League was in charge, but due to a very unfortunate set of circumstances, they were not able to arrange for a speaker.

Our Level of Excellence award submission was sent to National MOAA on 30 April. Based on past experience, we believe we are well positioned to repeat as a Five Star Chapter.

I can not overemphasize the importance of members (numbers) that we represent when talking to legislators. Because we represent over 200 voters, our chapter leadership was able to arrange a meeting with Representative Susan Davis (CA-53) to discuss MOAA legislative priorities.

Speaking of membership, we are slowly making progress on renewals for 2009. Repeating my message from my last newsletter, if you received this newsletter by "snail mail," check the address label. If the number behind your name is 08,

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CDR Mark Sanders graduated from the Naval Academy in 1989. He attended Basic Diving and Surface Warfare schools before reporting as a plank owner in USS SCOUT. He qualified as a Surface Warfare and Mine Countermeasures Officer before transferring to Explosive Ordnance Disposal Training and being assigned to EOD Mobile Unit ELEVEN on Whidbey Island, WA. As an Officer in Charge, he deployed to the Republic of Korea and was later assigned to USS CARL VINSON Battle Group for an Arabian Gulf deployment. After two years at EODMU ELEVEN, he was transferred to Coronado, CA as an initial member of the Very Shallow Water Mine Countermeasures Test Detachment. He served in Okinawa as EOD staff officer in Amphibious Group ONE. He was then assigned to U. S. Joint Forces Command, Norfolk, VA as the Improvised Explosive Device (IED) Defeat and Counter-IED lead action officer. He then commanded EOD Training and Evaluation ONE. **His most recent assignment was in Iraq as Deputy Commander of Combined Joint Task Force TROY, Iraq's Counter-IED brigade task force.**

See Page 7 for more information on Chapter dinner Monday, 17 August

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Legislative Update

Senate Passes Defense Bill After more than a week of debate and consideration of more than 300 amendments, the Senate passed its version of the FY2010 National Defense Authorization Bill (S. 1390) late Thursday night, July 23 by a vote of 87 to 7.

One key amendment was Sen. Bill Nelson's initiative to end the deduction of VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) from military Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuities. Upon learning at 8:00 AM Tuesday that the amendment would be considered that same afternoon, MOAA sent out a special alert to legislative update subscribers. This alert generated nearly 13,000 messages to the Senate in support of the amendment in under 6 hours, resulting in the amendment's adoption. Thanks to all who participated in this time-sensitive action to help military widows.

Several other MOAA-supported amendments were adopted by the Senate including:

Sen. Joe Lieberman's (I-CT) amendment to increase Army manpower levels by 30,000, starting in FY2010.

Sen. Frank Lautenberg's (D-NJ) amendment emphasizing the need to sustain a military health benefit consistent with the unique demands and sacrifices inherent in a military career, and the need to find other ways of cutting DoD health costs besides shifting costs to retirees.

Sen. John Kerry's (D-MA) and Saxby Chambliss' (R-GA) amendment to provide reserve retirement age credit for all post-9/11 active service.

Sen. Charles Schumer's (D-NY) amendment (with inputs by Sen. John Cornyn, R-TX) to protect military absentee voting rights by authorizing electronic communications and limiting the counting of absentee ballots based on technicalities (e.g., lack of notarization).

Sen. Barbara Boxer's (D-CA) amendment (prompted by MOAA's discussion with her staff) expressing Congress's view that the Secretary of Defense should use existing authority to implement Flexible Spending

Accounts for currently serving members so they can set aside pre-tax money to pay out-of-pocket health and dependent care expenses, just as all other federal and major corporate employees can.

Sen. Richard Burr's (R-NC) amendment to give military spouses the option to elect the same state of domicile as their servicemember spouse.

Unfortunately, several other amendments MOAA supported were not acted upon, including Sen. Harry Reid's (D-NV) concurrent receipt amendments and Sen. Lindsey Graham's (R-SC) amendment to authorize a one-year reduction in the reserve retirement age for each two years served beyond the 20-year point.

The proposal to phase out the disability offset for medically retired members, regardless of length of service is still very much alive, though, as it was included in the House bill.

Next, House and Senate leaders will be appointed to a conference committee to resolve more than a thousand differences between the House- and Senate-passed versions of the defense bill, including difficult issues on procurement, detainees and more.

Hearing Highlights Family Needs A July 22 House Armed Services Military Personnel Subcommittee hearing reinforced that access to healthcare providers - both on and off installations - continues to present a serious challenge for many military families. With military medical personnel deployed, there's an increasing reliance on civilian providers. But many civilian doctors don't accept TRICARE due to low reimbursement rates and administrative hassles.

Rep. Carol Shea-Porter (D-NH) raised the issue of compensation for caregivers of injured troops, observing that many family members must give up their jobs to support wounded warriors.

The panelists also expressed their concern regarding the funding of family readiness programs. Currently the programs are funded through supplemental appropriations. The panel stressed the importance of funding these programs through base-line budgets.

NJROTC Topic At Joint Dinner in April



LtCol Jan Janus, JROTC Program Manager SDUSD, speaks to members at a joint dinner meeting of the Silver Strand Chapter MOAA and the Coronado Council of the Navy League at Coronado Yacht Club on April 20. LtCol Janus discussed the threat to JROTC programs throughout the state due to a decision by the California Department of Education that would cause the loss of physical education (PE)-credit for JROTC participation. The severe drop in JROTC enrollment in San Francisco from 1,600 to 500 in just one year after the loss of PE Credit is indicative of what would happen program-wide unless JROTC is accepted as a PE substitute or exempted. Assembly member Mary Salas (79th District) has introduced AB No. 351 - Physical Education. This bill would exempt students taking specified programs and courses, including

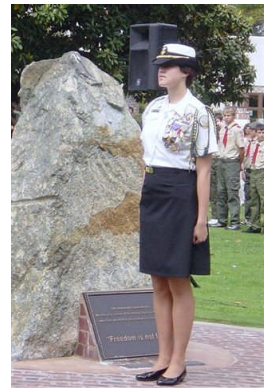
JROTC, from courses in physical education. This bill has cleared the Education Committee and is headed to the Assembly floor. MOAA Chapters across the state are encouraged to call their Assembly member and voice support for this bill.

Memorial Day Service in Coronado 2009



Vice Admiral Thomas Kilcline, Commander, Naval Air Forces was the guest speaker at this moving and memorable tribute to our Nation's fallen service members. Over four hundred seats had been set for the Memorial Day Service on May 25 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 801, Troop 806, Coronado Girl Scouts, Coronado High School NJROTC, Marine Corp Band San Diego, and the Marine Corp Recruit Depot Honor Guard.



Cadet LCDR Silverthorn, CHS NJROTC ordered the presentation of colors

Silver Strand Chapter 2009 Dues Report

We currently have 32 out of 206 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!**

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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.)

Again, from my last newsletter, 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.

Our dues have been \$10.00 for regular members and \$5.00 for auxiliary members since the chapter was formed. The key to keeping our dues at this level has been the electronic delivery of the newsletter. If you have an email address and would like to receive the newsletter electronically, please send Jim Strickland (jos1048@sbcglobal.net) an email to that effect.

Every year, we team up with the other five MOAA chapters in San Diego County and present a joint luncheon at the MCAS Miramar Officers Club. These luncheons are always great events, with very interesting speakers. This year should be no exception, as the guest speaker is Jack Ensch, the Military Liaison Officer for the San Diego Padres. Jack spent time in the Hanoi Hilton as a POW and he's a dynamic speaker. We've included a form for you to sign up for that luncheon on page 5.

Our speaker for the August meeting, CDR John Sanders, USN, has just recently returned from a tour in Iraq. Please plan to attend and hear him discuss the Navy's contribution to defeating the enemy's use of IEDs.

Warm personal regards, Bob

TAPS

CAPT Peter Litrenta, USN (Ret)

CDR William Stames, USN (Ret)

Retiree Appreciation Days

Camp Pendleton

19 September 2009

0830 to 1200

All military retirees and family members – to include widows – are strongly encouraged to attend this important event. Briefings on veterans' benefits brought about by Congressional action and funding, particularly medical benefits and restoration of pay for retirees receiving Veterans Administration disability payments will be provided, to include representation by local military veterans' organizations. Additionally, updates on base realignment and closure issues and base transformation will be provided as they affect retirees in the local community. This event will be held at the South Mesa Club. Signs will be placed to direct you to the location. For additional information call (760) 725 – 9791.



**Eighteenth Annual Area 8 Cal-MOAA Joint Luncheon
Saturday, 26th September, 2009**

Heartland (Host), Miramar, Pendleton, San Diego, Silver Strand and Sweetwater Chapters

Where: MCAS Miramar Officers' Club

Time: 11:00 Hours Registration
11:30 No host cocktails
12:00 Hours Lunch

Price: \$23.00 Per person

Menu: 2 Choices, Chicken Morel or Charbroiled Wrangler Steak
(includes potatoes/rice pilaf, green garden salad, vegetables, rolls & butter, dessert, tea, coffee or decaf coffee)

Speaker: Captain Jack C. Enschede, USN, (Ret) S. D. Padre's Director of Military Marketing. (Navy Cross, L of Merit(3), Bronze Star, POW Medal & many more)

Please detach the reservation form below and mail to MOAA, Heartland Chapter, San Diego East County, P.O. Box 2974, El Cajon, CA 92021 - 0890. A check is to be included for the total cost made out to Heartland Chapter. Answers to questions: Allan Goodman (619) 443-3535

NAME: _____ **PHONE #:** _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ **ZIP:** _____ **CHAPTER** _____

SPOUSE/GUEST: _____

Menu Selection: Wrangler Steak # _____ **Chicken Morel #** _____



MOAA Annual Meeting 2009

MOAA Annual Meeting and Year of the Chapter Symposium, San Diego; Coronado Island Marriott Resort

Oct. 22-24, 2009

You can register for the Annual meeting on line and see the full schedule of events at:

http://www.moaa.org/moaa_deploys

Coronado NJROTC Completes Banner Year in True Navy Tradition

The cadets of Islander Company, Coronado High School's Navy Junior ROTC unit, recently closed out another banner year. Recognized for the third consecutive year as an "NJROTC Distinguished Unit with Academic Honors", this year's award ceremony moved from the comfortable but somewhat sterile environment of the school's theater to a venue much more applicable to the awards and recognition given to such an accomplished group of cadets. Captain Roy Kitchener, the Commanding Officer of the AEGIS guided missile cruiser, USS PRINCETON, offered up the small but cozy flight deck on the stern of USS PRINCETON on the afternoon of Thursday, May 21 for the CHS NJROTC awards day. Vice Admiral Derwood Curtis, a long-time strong supporter of youth programs, attended.

Come the day of the event, there could not have been a more fitting setting for what is believed to be the first ever San Diego NJROTC Awards Ceremony and Change of Command to be hosted on the deck of an active duty, deployable Navy ship. With the ship decked out in patriotic bunting, 50 states flags unfurled, and all the pomp, honor and tradition that goes into an actual Change of Command ceremony, Islander Company enjoyed a ceremony like no others before them. Under a clear blue sky, with breezes blowing stiffly but gently enough, and a view that commanded San Diego Bay and the Bay Bridge as a backdrop, over 200 visitors enjoyed watching Islander Company as a unit and 26 cadets individually receive due recognition for their many accomplishments this past year. These accomplishments included four top 5 finishes at area drill meets. They included 2,232 community service hours completed in support of such organization as the Coronado Schools Foundation, Islander Sports Foundation, the Coronado Coffee, Friends of the Library and the annual Flower Show. Additionally, the unit's marksmanship team earned a top 3 finish out of over 30 teams. Islander Company cadets also completed 27 field trips to include embarkations on ships like USS NEW ORLEANS and fun trips like paintballing and travel to Knott's Berry Farm. Of course no year is complete without the legendary Islander Company Military Ball which was attended by more guests than ever and robustly hailed as "the best Ball ever."

None of this would have been possible without the outstanding leadership of the Company's Commanding Officer, Cadet Lieutenant Commander Melissa Silverthorn, and Executive Officer, Cadet Lieutenant Commander Ian McRae.



*C/LCDR Melissa Silverthorn
addresses the audience*

Both were recognized during the ceremony with prestigious awards for their distinctive, strong leadership of the unit. Together, these two mature, accomplished leaders led their charges to the greatest year Islander Company has ever enjoyed since opening their doors in August of 2003.



*C/LCDR Ian McRae receives Meritorious
Service Award from VADM Curtis*

Yet, all good things must come to an end and as the Awards portion of the ceremony wound down, it became time for Cadet Silverthorn to turn the pride and joy of Islander Company over to their new Company Commander. Although chosen well before the topic of a ceremony on a Navy ship ever came up, it is perhaps a fit ending to this tale that Melissa's relieving C.O. turned out to be the daughter of Captain Kitchener himself, Cadet Lieutenant JG Kimberly Kitchener.

From the ice sculpture, to the meatballs, to the lumpia and carved steamship round, at day's end no one was quite sure if they had just attended a high school NJROTC function or a full blown fleet change of command ceremony.



Joint Silver Strand Chapter MOAA /Coronado Navy League Dinner Meeting

Date: Monday, August 17, 2009

**CDR Mark Sanders, USN
Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Operations in Iraq: Countering the IED**

Where: Coronado Yacht Club, 1631 Strand Way

When: 1800: Social Time

1900: Dinner

1945: 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:

- August 17 Dinner Meeting Reservation
- Pay 2009 Dues
- Donate to NJROTC & Naval Sea Cadets
- Donate to MOAA Scholarship Fund

Chapter Meeting Monday, August 17, 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, 14 August (Firm)**

Indicate your choice (s) of entrée _____

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

2009 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

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**Dates to Remember
2009**

Chapter Meetings

August 17

October 21

December 8

Board Meetings

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