

OFFICERS CALL

ST. PETERSBURG AREA CHAPTER,

Military Officers Association of America
P.O. Box 7054 St. Petersburg, FL 33734



VOL IV No IV ★★★★★ Five Star Chapter - 2002, 03 & 04 ★★★★★ April 2006
Winner 2003 Newsletter Contest–Print & Electronic Media & Web Site !!

President's Message

CAPT Don Freese, USN (Ret), President

I am writing this message on the third anniversary of the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom March 20, 2003 and approximately 4 ½ years after the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom that began with air strikes October 7, 2001 less than a month after the 911 attacks. Once again the United States and our allies are fighting a War but unlike other Wars the United States is reducing not increasing the size of our Military and trying to cut benefits while fighting the War.



It is indeed a tribute to the men and women fighting the war with casualties that is also unlike previous Wars. As of February 4, 2006 over 1 million men and women have served in Iraq, Afghanistan and other Enduring Freedom combat theaters with total casualties of 2,502 killed and 17,338 wounded. While each casualty is tragic and cannot be diminished or forgotten it is a tribute to the men and women fighting this War that these numbers are low in comparison to the United States casualties of 605,000 killed in WW II, 36,500 killed in Korea and 58,199 killed in Vietnam.

Like all Wars some Americans disagree with the War as indicated by the protests organized the weekend of March 24 and 25, 2006. So far most of the protests, unlike Vietnam, are against the War and the President not the War Fighters but one wonders when that might change when you see protesters comparing the American Flag with a Swastika and statements like "We're killing innocent people just like Hitler did to the Jews."

Protests, cutbacks, lack of Military experience in the government leaders and the United States population (1 in 25 families have a relative with military experience) are reasons military organizations like MOAA and our chapter are so important to maintaining our military and quality of life of our military families. Whether it is Fred Edwards and Violet Smith joining others "Storming the Hill" the week of March 27, Carolyn Shields and her volunteers mailing packages to Help Our Troops or Hazel McGrath with 25 years volunteer service to the VA and 60 years to the American Red Cross your chapter and your membership is making a difference! Together we are "One Powerful Voice" for our military! God Bless America!

El Ahlwardt

Joint Military Science Leadership Center,
University of South Florida

Since February 6, 2006, El is the Director of External Relations for the Joint Military Science Leadership Center, located on the University of South Florida's Tampa Campus. For ten years prior to coming to USF, he was the Director of Development for Theta Chi Fraternity's public foundation, located in Indianapolis, Indiana. He concurrently served as the Editor of the foundation & Fraternity magazine.



El served for two decades on active duty as a U.S. Naval Officer, and is a retired Commander. He was a Surface Warfare Officer for the first portion of his career, followed by 17 years of duty as a Public Affairs Officer, or PAO, and Spokesman for the Navy. Warfare duties were in passive (SOSUS) and active Anti-Submarine Warfare (USS ALBERT DAVID (FF-1050), as well as Navigator of the same ship.

Public Affairs assignments included: Assistant PAO for the Commander, U.S. Naval Forces, Japan, located in Yokosuka, Japan; PAO for the Naval Regional Medical Center, located in San Diego, as well as for the Commander of the Naval Medical Command, Southwest Region; Plans and Policy Officer on the Public Affairs Staff of the U.S. European Command, located in Stuttgart, Germany; PAO and Plank owner of the Battleship USS WISCONSIN (BB-64); PAO and Faculty Member of the U.S. Naval War College, located in Newport, Rhode Island; and, he was the Navy Element Commander and Director of the Public Affairs Department, Defense Information School, located in Indianapolis, Indiana.

El has a BS from Florida State University, 1973, and an MS from San Diego State University, 1984. El has been married for 32 years to his wife and college sweetheart, Kathy, and they are proud parents of a pair of Indiana University graduates, 27 year-old daughter, Heather, and 24 year-old son, Ryan. Also a 1973 alumna of Florida State University, Kathy is one of only 1,700 drivers of a Mary Kay Cadillac in the United States. Both El and Kathy come from military families: El's dad retired from the Navy in 1960 and Kathy's dad retired from the Air Force in 1979.



Officers Call

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 VA Vol Svc **LCDR Hazel McGrath**, USN 545-3884
 Vet Liaison **LtCol Fred Edwards**, USMC 360-2936
 Visitation **LCDR Hazel McGrath**, USN 545-3884

and: Life Members Emeritus and Past Presidents

Chapter Statistics

Total Membership - 333
 Regular Members - 240
 Auxillary Members - 91

Military Services:

Army - 89 USMC - 13
 USAF - 81 USCG - 8
 Navy - 51

From the Editor

COL Roger J. Shields, USA (Ret)

Victory- While Congress scuttled increasing copays for military retirees under age 65 who subscribe to Tricare, our victory of no increases will last only one year. Under the pending legislation which is yet to be signed by the President against his wishes, he should realize that the Congressional vote for no increases is large enough to override his probable veto. What made the difference in swaying Congress to act in our favor? Our faxes, email, letters, phone calls and visits to urge them to vote for the military, the people who make any vote possible in a democracy. Please do not forget that your actions to make your voice heard by Congress are vital to protect our earned entitlements!



Convention 2006 - Your presence is wanted and needed at our Convention which takes place from 14 to 18 May this year. It is an opportunity to see your friends and to make new ones from other chapters as well as our own. The Clearwater Chapter as co-host will play a large part to ensure success and we owe them our thanks. Don't forget to order a souvenir shirt from **Pauline Edwards**. The shirt appears to be a keeper.

Operation Help Our Troops (HOT) - suffered a slight setback with a mixup over the destination address. Thanks to Maj Gen **Earl Peck** and to his son, who is also Maj Gen Peck, the glitch is fixed and now **Carolyn Shields** has 20 boxes ready to ship. Carolyn will accept your donations at the monthly chapter luncheons. If you have "goodies" to donate please make them unopened, no flammables, seals on containers and in first class conditions. Our troops are first class and we want to treat them in a first class manner. Checks are most welcome.

Chapter Luncheons - We are happy to see that attendance at our monthly luncheons is increasing. It is likely that most of us wish to sit with our friends and are sometimes frustrated when they arrive late and see that most of the seats at the tables are already taken. Please plan to arrive early to avoid disappointment. As you may notice, there are more than a few members who are working - accepting money for your meal, issuing tickets for the drawings of prize money, helping to set up the room for speakers and others . . . To make their lives a bit easier, we recommend that our members avoid sitting at the immediate left of the entry way - unless you are also a worker. Thanks. **RJS**

2006 Florida Council of Chapters Convention May 14 to 18, 2006

Tradewinds Resort, St. Pete Beach, FL

You have two things you have to do by **April 17** this year: **one, file and pay your 2005 income tax (not fun!), and two, register and pay for the 2006 Convention (lots of fun!).** So quit procrastinating, spend that income tax refund (if you are lucky enough to get one) and join the nearly 100 people from across Florida, Georgia and the DC Area who have already registered!

Please join us at the Convention along with your fellow chapter members who have already registered and paid: **Earl & Margaret Peck**, **Fred & Pauline Edwards**, **Tom & Anita Harrow**, **Don & Sherry Freese**, **Hazel McGrath**, **Janice Mogan**, **Al & Johnnie Neville**, **Richard & Natalie Oliver**, **Roger & Carolyn Shields**, **Violet Smith**, **Martha Willis**, **Paul & Betty Finley**, **Marie Lorence**, **John & Marjory Milford**, **Brent & Connie Gudmundson** and these that have pre registered **Pete & Linda Dawson**, **Gary Gilchrist**, **Charles & Margery Kaniss**, **James & Barbara King**, **Rose Munchbach**, **Ralph & Asa Myers**, **Richard & Ruth Newton**, **Anne Reilly**, **Pat Tamalis**, **Ron & Shirley Wildes**, **Basil & Eleanor Burrell**.

Now is the time to act! Get your taxes in by April 17 or you get a penalty. Get your registration in by April 17 and get your Tradewinds Resort discounted rooms! All the forms you need can be found at www.MOAAStPeteArea.com or Call **Pat Tamalis** (727) 392-1066 or **Don Freese** (727) 360-3102.

Come join the fun and "Just Let Go!" at the 2006 Florida Council of Chapters Convention

Flying Seaplanes # 2

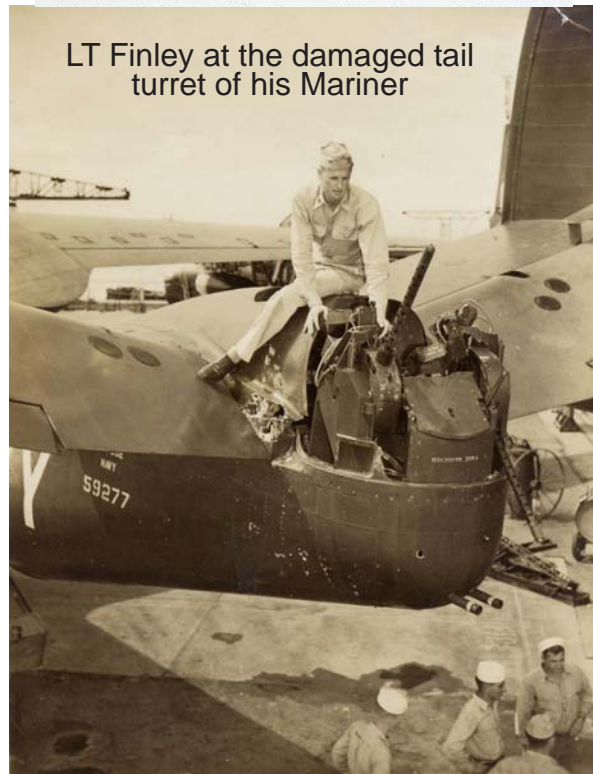
LCDR Paul Finley, LCDR, USN (Ret)

It's 11:00 A.M. on July 31, 1952, a beautiful, sunny day in the YELLOW SEA. There are a few white cumulus clouds floating in the blue sky. We are on patrol in a Navy seaplane, a PBM Martin Mariner, heading for the coast of China to conduct electronic surveillance. Suddenly, the tail gunner, SMITH, screams "We're under attack; we're under attack". Then, an instant later "I'm hit, I'm hit". Then silence.

It quickly became apparent that we were under attack by two Russian MIG-15 jet fighters with Chinese insignia. They made three coordinated attacks from behind and below, firing 20MM armor piercing and 37MM projectiles with explosive shells. The attack created a dilemma in the cockpit. What to do? The PBM was not designed for dog fighting:

We reversed course and dove down to sea level to prevent attacks from below. Our Mariner, call sign SUGAR FOX proved to be a tough old bird. One 20MM burst went through the main spar of the right wing. We were told later that it was a miracle the wing had not folded in flight.

Sugar Fox 11 was eventually put on an aircraft carrier and returned to the States, where it was declared unsalvageable. Two of our crewmen were killed and two were wounded, so we decided our priority was to seek medical aid. Our radio equipment was destroyed, except for one VHF transmitter/receiver. Our desperate calls on an emergency frequency were soon answered by the radar station on the island of PAENGYONG DO, just



off the coast of North Korea, about 100 miles behind the front lines. The island was defended by a few ROK troops and the radar tower guided the B-29 bombers on their missions to flank

alley. We were told they had a small clinic attended by a Navy doctor, an Ensign. We were given permission to land and beach our plane. The crew stuffed a mattress in a large hole in the hull for the landing. The plane grounded in waist deep water. The next day at low tide, it was high and dry on the beach. They hauled our wounded crewmen to the clinic, and the young Navy doctor confirmed that two were dead. He patched the other two up as best he could. An hour later, an Air Force C-47 landed on the beach and evacuated them. A U. S. Marine helicopter unit was assigned to the island, and the two pilots invited me to sleep in the spare cot in their tent. They were expecting an invasion at any time, as the enemy had amassed assault boats on the mainland. The night before, radar had detected a fleet of boats headed toward the island from the direction of the mainland. An old rusty LST with a 40 MM radar controlled gun had sunk the fleet. It turned out to be the fishing fleet from the island returning from weeks at sea. They had been warned to identify themselves on return. Over 200 bodies floated in the offshore surf. When I crawled down the nose of the plane and jumped into the surf, my feet straddled one of the bodies. When it was discovered where we were, our Squadron Commander flew over with a maintenance crew and spare parts. They replaced the rudder and elevator cables, which were frayed from shrapnel. After three hectic days, the Skipper flew our plane back to our home base at Iwakuni, Japan. We flew his back - gratefully.

HOT News

Enthusiasm for **Help Our Troops** is running high. Many bags of items were donated at our last luncheon. Good ideas are always welcomed. Mrs. Beth Fenstermaker donated and suggested sending Band Aid brand of Blister Healing Ampules for feet and hands. Because the Chapter wants to keep a record of contributors, she also suggested that the donors place their return address label on the donated bags of items.

Some suggested items are small bags of peanuts, chewing gum, beef jerky, travel size shampoo and conditioner, mouth wash and tooth paste. At this writing, thirty boxes have been prepared for shipment. Please help us to continue building momentum with your much welcomed donations of goodies, cash and checks. Carolyn Shields

HOT (Help our Troops) \$679+(Stuff) – Through — 270 March 2006

Andrews, Carroll, Lt Col USAF
Barton, Ann, Mrs. AuxMbr-A
Burrell, Basil, CWO4
Christy, Marjorie, Mrs. AuxMbr-A
Couture, Bertrand, COL USA
Dawson, Peter, Maj USAF
Diedo, Edward, LTC USA
Eynatten, Robert, CAPT USN
Fenstermaker, Beth, Mrs. AuxMbr-N
Freese, Donald, CAPT USN
Gudmundson, Brent, LTC USA
Isley, Anne, Mrs. AuxMbr-A
Jessup, John, COL USA
Kaniss, Charles, BG, USA

Lanier, Laurie, Maj USAF
Lorence, Marie, LTC USA
McGrath, Hazel, LCDR USN
Neville, Albert, Col USAF
Oliver, Richard, LT USN
Peck, Earl, Maj Gen, USAF
Polk, Bob, Col USAF
Potter, Charles, Col USAF
Shields, Roger, COL USA
Smith, Violet, Mrs. AuxMbr-A
Stenehem, George, COL USA
Tondreau, Herbert, CW4 USA



Luncheon Meeting

17 March 2006

Reported by **Basil Burrell**

Attended—81: Members—38, Wives—20, Guests—5, AuxMbrs-16; Walk-ins—5, No shows—1, Cancellations—0

Our Chaplain, COL George Brown USA (Ret) gave the invocation at 1145 hours and our President CAPT Don Freese USNR (Ret) got us underway with a few comments about what is happening here in the St. Petersburg area. At 1200 hours he called us to pledge our allegiance to Old Glory, our national ensign. Don called our attention to a TV Channel 8 piece about our own LCDR Hazel McGrath USN (Ret) who was honored for 60 years of volunteer service to the Red Cross. We can

all be very proud of Hazel and her service both to our country and the Red Cross. Way to go Hazel! Don then introduced Carolyn Shields who is leading the Help Our Troops (HOT) program. She says that 13 boxes have been processed and 6 boxes have been shipped to Afghanistan. Walgreen Drug Store in Seminole is giving a 15% discount for HOT items purchased there. MG Earl Peck USAF (Ret) has received another address to which we can send boxes. Carolyn has written a note to the addresses in Afghanistan asking them what they really need so that we don't send a lot of unnecessary items. Carolyn has enlisted Col Roger Shields USA (Ret) to deliver the boxes to the Post Office for shipping. These retired guys are good for something!

A count of attendees by CAPT Bob Eynatten USN (Ret) revealed that we had 81 people at today's luncheon. He was ably supervised by Maggie Eynatten so we are confident in the number being correct.

Our head table was manned by CAPT Don Freese, Col Al Neville, COL George Brown, Col Charles Potter USAF, Maj J.B. Barker USAF and Capt Jeff Vaughn USAF, the latter three gentlemen being from the 6th Medical Group at MacDill AFB in Tampa.

After our lunch was served, Corned Beef and Cabbage, what else, our President Don Freese introduced our speaker Col Charles Potter USAF who is the Commander of the 6th Medical group. For those of you old enough to remember the TV program MASH, this Col Potter did not have a horse. Col Potter gave us an excellent presentation of what is going on in the Defense Department concerning proposals for increasing fees for Tricare recipients under age 65. It doesn't look good but there will be a lot of opposition to any increases from Congress. Let us hope so. For us old geezers, he is sure that we will be safe from any changes to our benefits. Ex-

cepting pharmacy charges, that is. It is pretty certain that certain medications will carry a higher co-pay from retail pharmacies and the mail-in pharmacy. On the other hand, the co-pay may be eliminated for some generic medications. Col Potter told of his recent attendance at a DoD conference chaired by Dr. William Wenkenwerder who is Deputy Secretary of Defense for Health Care. The good Doctor is rather pessimistic about the rising expenses for medical care versus the cost of weapons. Col Potter said that Dr Wenkenwerder was advised of the negative thoughts of other participants at the conference regarding that conflict of priorities. Who knows what will happen, but if we as members of MOAA and the Chapters don't keep the fire under our Congressional folks, bad things can happen.

Col Potter took some questions from our chapter members and after some questions were answered by him, Maj Barker and Capt Vaughn turned the meeting back to CAPT Freese. Don asked COL Brown to give the benediction and the meeting was adjourned at 1326 hours.

Basil



Col Chuck Potter, CO
MacDill Hospital



New members: Ed Lillich, Bobbie & Jim Donovan



El Ahlwerdt (April speaker) & Dick Newton



Vaughn, Neville, Barker



Freese, Potter, Brown



Janice Mogan, Dawn Johnson, George Stenehjem



Dolly Couture, El Burrell, Bert Couture, Marj Christy



Dick Koch recovering from skin cancer surgery

THE BUZZ

COL Roger J. Shields, USA, (Ret)

Kudos -To LCDR **Hazel McGrath** who was singled out for special attention at a Red Cross ceremony recently. She was recognized for sixty years of volunteer service, apparently a record. She probably would not mention this since she is a modest person, but she appeared on TV at our local NBC affiliate news broadcast. Congratulations, Hazel. We're very proud of you.

An Outstanding Chapter – Did you know that you belong to a Five Star Chapter among other chapters of MOAA nation wide? Did you know that our chapter won this distinction for three years in a row starting with Year 2002? Do you think we can do it again – with only three members of our Board of Directors? We do not have a First Vice President whose main duty is to find interesting programs for our luncheons nor do we have a secretary to record the machinations of our Board. **Al Neville** and **Basil Burrell** are doing well at covering the vacant positions but they deserve a break from double and triple duty. Who do you think prepared our outstanding directory of members by himself while also formatting the newsletter every month and maintaining the data base of members? **Al Neville. Basil Burrell** provides us with professional grade photos of our members and visitors while also acting as secretary and correspondent. Please see **Don Freese** and volunteer for one of these vacant positions.

Project HOT - Thank you for your recent donations of goodies and money at our recent luncheon. The cost of sending each box is \$8.10. It adds up faster than we would like. If you donate goodies, please avoid glass bottles. Other containers must be sealed and leak proof. No chocolate or any candy vulnerable to melting in hot areas. Please do not donate items that appear old, used or dirty. Those items send the wrong message to people who deserve our best. Thanks again for your help.



MOAA March Legislative Update

Edited for brevity by
COL Roger J. Shields, USA (Ret)

MOAA Publishes Fee Hike Brochure Military MOAA has published a new 6-page brochure titled “Premiums Already Paid - In Full” that we’ll be taking to Congress next week. It’s subtitled, “Why the administration’s plan to tax military retirees for health care is unfair and unwise - and what the better options are.” With our national Board of Directors meeting next week and more than 50 state Council and Chapter leaders coming to town for their annual meeting, we’ll have a cast of more than 130 MOAA leaders visiting nearly every U.S. Representative’s and Senator’s office to discuss the fee hike issue as well as the continuing need for TRICARE and Survivor Benefit Plan fixes, among other key goals. In addition, MOAA President VADM Norb Ryan, Jr. (USN-Ret) will testify at a March 29 TRICARE hearing before the House Armed Services Military Personnel Subcommittee. The brochure lays out what the Department of Defense has proposed, the specific reasons why MOAA doesn’t support the proposed fee increases, more than a dozen alternative ways to hold down military health costs without hurting beneficiaries, and the need for restrictions in the law that now gives the Secretary of Defense virtually unlimited authority to impose certain TRICARE fee increases. The brochure will be printed as a pull-out insert in the May issue of Military Officer Magazine. In the meantime, you can check it out on MOAA’s Web site at <http://www.moaa.org/lac/TRICARE-FeeHike>. A similar brochure on needed SBP fixes is at <http://www.moaa.org/lac/UndueSacrifice>.

MOAA Highlights Reserve GI Bill Inequities Hearings held in the nation’s capital and in Arkansas on March 15 and 22, respectively, offered contrasting perspectives on a proposal to modernize educational benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB). The Partnership for Veterans Education - a broad-based group of military, veterans and higher education associations (including MOAA) - is urging Congress to combine the reserve and active duty MGIB programs, which are now overseen by different committees under different laws. We think synchronizing benefits to the length and type of service performed will better support military recruiting, reenlistment, and readjustment objectives. Reserve MGIB benefit value has fallen far behind its original relationship to active duty benefits. And many Reservists say they really can’t use the benefit — they deploy too much to be able to use it while serving, and their eligibility under current law ends when they get out. Unfortunately, senior DoD officials who testified before the full House Veterans Affairs Committee (HVAC) on March 15 don’t share those concerns. They told the Committee they see no “significant shortcomings” in the Reserve GI Bill program. Rep. Vic Snyder (D-AR) noted the disconnect between that input and the statements of National Guard and Reserve commanders at the same hearing. Committee Chairman Steve Buyer (R-IN) and Snyder were skeptical of DoD’s argument that it would hurt retention to let Guard and Reserve members use their benefits after leaving service.

A week later, Rep. John Boozman (R-AR), Chairman of the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee held a field hearing in Rogers, Arkansas - Boozman’s home district. A panel of Army

and Air National Guard Iraq War veterans recommended starting Transition Assistance Program (TAP) briefings before redeployment. Asked by Rep. Stephanie Herseth (D-SD) for their comments on a new program that provides increased benefits for mobilized members, they told her they’d never heard of it. It’s extremely disappointing that these returning veterans were unaware of new benefits designed specifically for them. They can hardly use them if they’re not being told about them. A second panel testified on problems in administering MGIB benefits, including lengthy delays in processing Reserve benefits. MOAA Deputy Director Bob Norton (USA-Ret) urged the Subcommittee to work with the House Armed Services Committee to forge a total force MGIB that scales benefits in proportion to service performed and allows a post-service use by reservists who earn mobilization upgrades to their MGIB benefits. Norton noted that failure to raise Reserve benefits along with active duty benefits has cost Reservists about \$200 a month. Rather than the current \$297 monthly maximum, they’d have been eligible for \$500 a month. As for barring use post-service use, he noted that current law will make the earlier Guard witnesses forfeit the \$22,300 benefit they earned during mobilization. Norton’s statement can be viewed on MOAA’s Web site.

Disability Commission Hits the Road On March 16-17, the Veterans Disability Benefit Commission (VDBC) heard feedback from visits to Tampa/St Petersburg and San Antonio and received interim study updates from the Center for Naval Analysis (CNA) and the Institute of Medicine (IOM). The trip reports will be posted on the VDBC website at www.vetscommission.org/

Service representatives provided program details on their Injured Support Programs. Chairman LTG James Terry Scott (USA-Ret) solicited any legislative recommendations the Service representatives might have to offer. The commission will return to the road next month, hosting a public town meeting in Chicago on Tuesday, April 11. The meeting will run from 7 to 9 PM at the National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum, 1801 South Indiana Avenue. Follow-on field hearings will be held in St. Louis (May 9-11), San Diego (Jun 5-7), Seattle (Jul 19-21), Boston (Aug 2-4), and Atlanta (Sep 5-7).



Beth Fenstermaker and Laurie Lanier



And, a Healthcare Victory!

Area military retirees won't have to worry about cost increases in their health care any time soon. The Department of Defense has told Tricare contractors to cancel plans for an Oct. 1 rate hike. Last week, Rep. Chet Edwards (D-Texas) and Rep. Walter Jones (R-N.C.) introduced the Military Retirees' Healthcare Protection Act to block increases in Tricare health care fees for military retirees under age 65. The bill quickly garnered 77 cosponsors and support from 13 organizations representing military retirees within days of its introduction to the House.

Following the strong bipartisan support for the legislation, DoD announced that they would halt the proposed increases for now. "This is great news for military retirees," said Edwards, ranking member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs. "We look forward to working with the Pentagon on our subcommittee to help find health care savings, but we intend to move forward with our legislation requiring congressional approval of any fee hikes in Tricare because we want to make sure that large hikes aren't put in place right after the November elections.

"The bill establishes the principle that it is the responsibility of Congress, not the Pentagon, to establish when and by how much military health fees will be increased. "This legislation is about offering protection for the men and women who are willing to protect our nation from its enemies, and keeping promises to those who have promised to put themselves in harm's way when called upon," Jones said. "The families of our armed forces deserve consistent health care benefits." The bill would block the Pentagon from dramatically raising health care fees on military retirees by removing the Secretary of Defense's current authority to make virtually unlimited increases in four specific areas: Enrollment fees for retired members and survivors in TRICARE Prime, pharmacy co-payments, enrollment fees for the new TRICARE Reserve Select program that was implemented last year to maintain health coverage continuity for Guard and Reserve families, retiree and survivor co-payments for inpatient care. If enacted, the bill would block a proposal to double and triple health care premiums for about 3 million enlisted and officer retirees under Tricare, the military's health insurance system, and require requests for future increases to pass through Congress. Tara_Roberts@link.freedom.com.



Hudson High grads: Al Neville & Charlie Parsons



Welcome our new Members

- CAPT **Richard H. "Dick" Funsch**, USCG (Ret) (**Jane**)
4462 Trout Dr, SE, St Petersburg, FL 33705
727 896-3514 djfun@webtv.net
- MAJ **Edward R. "Ed" Lillich**, USA (Ret) (**Chris**)
6530 68th Ave, N, Pinellas Park, FL 33781
727 546-2246 elillich@aol.com
- Lt Col **Allan V. "Val" Mahan**, USAF (Ret) (**)**
819 Island Way, Clearwater, FL 33767
727 642-2174 val1958@aol.com
- Lt Col **Robert D. "Bob" Trudell**, USAF (Ret) (**Terry**)
4950 Gulf Blvd, # 602, St Pete Beach, FL 33706
727 367-1546 None
- LT **Richard A. "Dick" Ardvany**, USN (Fmr) (**)**
701 Starkey Rd, # 714, Seminole, FL 33777
727 393-3766 ardvany@msm.com
- 2nd Lt **Allen E. Kline**, USAAF (Fmr) (**Betsey**)
Kipps Colony Drive #206, Gulfport, FL 33707
727 345-1236 Grandee27@comcast.net

2006 Officers Call BOOSTER \$100 – Through — 26 February 2006

- Brown, George, COL USA
- Gudmundson, Brent, LTC USA
- Neville, Al, Col USAF
- Shields, Roger, COL USA
- Smith, Violet, Mrs. AuxMber-A

FINANCIAL STATEMENT (23 FEBRUARY 2006)

OPERATING ACCOUNT:

- Income: \$911.00 (\$771.00)
- Expenses: \$2,512.94 (\$1,532.41)
- Cash Flow out: -\$1601.94 (-\$761.41)
- Operating cash on hand: \$6,252.37(\$6,529.43)

SCHOLARSHIP FUND:

- February 28: \$312.87 (\$100.00)
- Donations: \$0

BASEBALL Fund

- March 27 balance: \$467.45

Help Our Troops Fund:

- March 1 balance: \$50.00
- Donations: \$613.30
- Spent: 229.77
- March 27 balance: \$433.53

Comment: Directory printing and mailing expenses plus sound system purchases raised expenses to an unusually high level in March.

Maj. **Pete Dawson**, USAF(Ret)
Treasurer



Minutes: Executive Committee Mtg St Petersburg Chapter, MOAA; 6 March 2006 Reported by Basil Burrell

At 1130 Hours President CAPT Don Freese USNR (Ret) called the meeting to order and asked MG Earl Peck USAF (Ret) to give the invocation. President Freese then led us in our Pledge of Allegiance to our Flag. LtCol Dick Koch USAF (Ret) made a motion that the minutes of our 17 February 2006 board meeting be approved as published in Officers Call. Motion was seconded and passed. Member Attendees were: Don Freese, Al Neville, Bob Eynatten, Roger Shields, Brent Gudmundson, Earl Peck, Fred Edwards, Paul Finley, Violet Smith, Marie Lorence, Hazel McGrath, Dick Koch, Pete Dawson and Basil Burrell.

Don attended the Convention meeting at the Tradewinds Resort last week and reported it to be a good productive meeting. Basil has volunteered to be responsible for collection of various flags at the convention and returning them to the Master at Arms. Maj Gen Peck questioned seating priorities at the convention functions. LCDR Paul Finley USN (Ret) said he had volunteered to be responsible for seating arrangements. Col Al Neville USAF (Ret) suggested that someone with internet access should do the seating arrangements because of likely last minute changes in attendees.

LCOL Fred Edwards USMC (Ret) asked for clarification on the nominating committee membership. Does the rule require a Chapter Officer or just a member? The answer was that a regular member was intended and not an elected Chapter Officer. Maj. Pete Dawson USAF (Ret) informed us that the Baseball Program at the Devil Rays games has been cancelled. So no more pizza sales. Don told us to be careful about selecting "Reply to All" when we send e-mail responses. Our speaker this month, 17 March 2006, is Col Potter USAF the Commander of the Hospital at MacDill AF B. It should be an interesting and informative program. CDR El Ahlwardt USN will be our speaker in April. That too should be an interesting program. Don asked for suggestions about criteria for selecting future speakers. So if there is something or someone you would like, let our President Don Freese know about it.

In our effort to repeat as a five-star Chapter, COL Roger Shields USA (Ret) says that MOAA requires our Chapter membership to have at least 98% members of MOAA national to win an Outstanding Chapter Award. We are close, but as you know, close only counts in horse shoes. Don has ordered an audio system for us so we don't have to depend on other systems. He has also speaker's gifts for the coming year. Don will check on Chamber of Commerce membership for our Chapter in the St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce. We need to know if such membership is worth the expense. Don visited the Fisher House at Bay Pines VA Hospital. It is full at the present time. The Fisher House is not a part of the VA Hospital, but works with the Hospital to house visitors to VA Hospital Patients. Fisher House is funded by the Fisher Family Foundation. Al Neville reports that over 25% of our members are Auxiliary Members and this may trigger a need

for a different legal entity for our Chapter. Apparently nothing is pressing now. Pete Dawson gave his Treasurer's Report. Basil made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. Motion seconded and passed. Fred Edwards informed us that under Florida Law as pertains to Veterans Organizations such as ours, we cannot solicit monetary contributions outside our Chapter. We must be organized under a 503(C1) statute in order to do that. Fred clarified a point about our Policy Book: It must be approved by the Chapter Board and held by the Secretary for distribution to the Chapter Officers. Fred will make a change to make the Commander of the Sixth Medical Group at MacDill AFB an honorary member of our Chapter. He says that we should clarify the Policy Book regarding a spouse's eligibility to hold an office in the Chapter. MOAA National's position on this is that a Chapter should have the option to elect a spouse as an officer. A motion was made by MG Peck to make Life Members Emeritus, Regular and Auxiliary members eligible for election as Chapter Officers. Motion was seconded and passed. Fred Edwards will ask our Law Officer to clarify the different sections of the law concerning our organization, i.e., 501 C (3) or 501 C (19). Lt Col Larry Fernald USAF (Ret), our Web Manager, wishes to know our preference regarding the type of information our wired members would like to receive from him. A discussion followed. LCDR Hazel McGrath USN (Ret) spoke about student volunteers at Bay Pines VA Hospital. Donations are solicited for gifts to outstanding student volunteers. She made a motion to donate \$100.00 for this purpose. Seconded and passed. A request for money for bonds as gifts was denied. Mrs Violet Smith Aux Mbr USA, MOAA Auxiliary Advisory Committee member, asked if we had a book about our Chapter's history. No such book exists except for a historical summary up to about 1992 that is in the possession of LCOL Fred Edwards USMC(Ret). He will try scanning it into his computer although he reports that it is pretty ragged. The St. Petersburg Museum of History has a booklet about the Chapter's founding. Violet reported on the selection of outstanding Family Readiness Groups by the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Reserve Affairs). A local unit selected was the Coast Guard Reserve Port Security Unit 307 of St Petersburg, Florida. In a note from Vice Adm Norb Ryan USN (Ret), President of MOAA, he informed Violet about the meeting with Gen. Peter Pace USMC, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and his standard DOD response to questions about proposed Tricare changes and SBP/DIC offsets. In other words, nothing much. Under HOT before the meeting closed, Roger Shields, COL USA (Ret) mentioned that Carolyn Shields had shipped 6 boxes to the troops and was ready to ship a 7th box. She cannot proceed further without funds.

President Don Freese adjourned the meeting at 1310 hours. Respectfully, Basil Burrell, CWO4 USCG (Ret)

And more Zen Thoughts

I drive way too fast to worry about cholesterol.
Support bacteria. They're the only culture some of us have.
Monday is an awful way to spend 1/7 of your week.
A clear conscience is usually the sign of a bad memory.
Change is inevitable, except from vending machines.
Get a new car for your spouse. It'll be a great trade!



Pentagon Losing Battle Over Health Fees

WASHINGTON — A Pentagon plan to raise health-care premiums on military retirees younger than 65 appeared all but dead on Capitol Hill after key lawmakers signaled their opposition Tuesday. The dramatic proposal to increase fees and deductibles by as much as threefold in some cases - part of the Defense Department's 2007 budget - has weathered a storm of protest from veterans groups since it was unveiled last month.

"That's obviously something I don't think is going to happen over a two-year period," said Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., chairman of the Senate Armed Services subcommittee on personnel, who held a hearing on the plan Tuesday. "To me, this is a long-term process." Military retirees - veterans with at least 20 years of service - complained it was unfair to ask them to absorb steep increases in health-care costs in the next two years. Many say they had been promised free life-time health care when they enlisted. The proposed increases would hit an estimated 3 million retirees younger than 65, including thousands in Hampton Roads. Active-duty personnel would not be affected. "We see the proposed health-care increases as inappropriate and disproportionate," said retired Vice Adm. Norb Ryan Jr., president of the Military Officers Association of America. Referring to his members, Ryan said, "They know they already paid huge up-front premiums in the form of years of sacrifice."

Veterans groups appear to have beaten back the Pentagon plan barely a month after it was first introduced. Leaders of the House Armed Services Committee have already criticized the proposal and other House members are scheduled to introduce legislation today to block the plan. Pentagon leaders have pushed hard for the measure, which they say is needed to curb soaring health-care costs that threaten to siphon money away from critical weapons programs.

The Defense Department's health-care costs have nearly doubled over the past five years, from \$19 billion in 2001 to more than \$37 billion this year, according to congressional testimony. By contrast, this year's shipbuilding budget is about \$11 billion.

Military leaders noted there has been no increase in annual premiums for Tricare - the military health insurance system - for 11 years. As a result, they said, premiums have not kept pace with inflation. Beneficiaries paid 27 percent of their total health care costs in 1995, compared to just 12 percent today. The Pentagon proposal, officials said, would adjust current fees and deductibles to account for inflation since 1995. But many retirees would be hit with a new enrollment fee for the first time. Tricare Standard, the military's traditional fee-for-service option, currently has no enrollment fee. The Pentagon plan would impose a fee for retired officers next year of \$150, or \$300 for a family. The fee would be less for retired enlisted personnel. "It would move the earned medical entitlement into an insurance program," said Tanna Schmidli, who heads the National Military Family Association. "Unless retirees pay this premium, they will be locked out of any care at a military treatment facility." Graham, the subcommittee chairman, said he was open to fee increases in the future but


would not be rushed into an increase this year. "Erosion of benefits is coming," he said. "The question is, will it come in a way that people can afford? Representative Walter B. Jones (R-NC), and other leaders from The Military Coalition at a press conference today to announce H.R. 4949, the Military Retirees' Health Care Protection Act H.R. 4949 was introduced by Edwards and Jones in response to proposals in the President's budget for Fiscal Year 2007 that would affect military retirees under the age of 65 by increasing certain fees in the military's health care program. Under the proposals, TRICARE Prime annual enrollment fees would double for senior enlisted personnel and nearly triple for officer retirees. A third tier of fees and deductibles for retirees at the E-6 level and below would increase their out-of-pocket costs by more than 40 percent. Furthermore, the President's budget calls for an increase in annual deductibles for TRICARE Standard, the military fee-for-service option, and, for the first time, an enrollment fee for the plan.

The Military Retirees' Health Care Protection Act would prohibit the Secretary of Defense from enacting these fee increases, now or in the future, without the express authorization of the United States Congress. The act would also express the Sense of Congress that the Department of Defense (DoD) has an obligation to retired uniformed service members that exceeds the obligation of corporate employers to civilian employees; and that DoD has many additional options to constrain the growth of health care costs without seeking large fee increases for beneficiaries. Speaking on behalf of the 130,000 members of the Air Force Association, Peterson agreed with these sentiments and stated that, "now is the time to put a hold on any and all (TRICARE fee) increases until this issue receives a thorough review and hearing and all parties are heard." "We should not ask our military retirees to bear the burden to balance the budget and to provide resources that the services need for aircraft modernization."

David Lerman (202) 824-8224 March 15, 2006S



Bobbie Walkers and Pauline Edwards

TAPS

None as of March 27, 2006

Sick List

(Contact LCDR Hazel McGrath, 545-3884)

* 1Lt **Robert L. Alvarez**, USMC (Ret)
6070 80th St, N, #401, St Petersburg, FL 33709

* LTC **Richard H. Natzke**, USA (Ret)
530 59th Ave, St Pete Beach, FL 33706

* Lt Col **Charles R. Hedrick**, USAF (Ret)
12136 Kay Dr, Seminole, FL 33772

* Mrs. **Mary Eisenhart**, Spouse
1734 72nd Ave, N.E., St Petersburg, FL 33702

* Mrs. **Jane Gaugh**, AuxMbr-N
427 39th Ave, N.E., St Pete Beach, FL 33706

Your cards, prayers and thoughts are welcome.



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Dawn Johnson



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Martha Willis, Hazel Murphy, Anne Reilly

April Birthdays

(Up to 95 years)

Day	L NAME	F NAME	RANK	SVC
05	Alderson, John		Lt Col	USAF (Ret)
06	Andrae, William		LTC	USA (Ret)
11	Bax, Giles		COL	USA (Ret)
09	Bowley, Carl		Col	USAF (Ret)
16	Brink, Charles		LCDR	USN (Ret)
13	Caton, Edward		Col	USAF (Ret)
27	Cushing, Arthur		WO	USCG (Ret)
23	Dabney, Tom		CAPT	USN (Ret)
13	Fee, Doris		Mrs.	AuxMbr-A
25	Flynn, Martin		CAPT	USN(Ret)
22	Gaugh, Jane		Mrs.	AuxMbr-N
09	Gilchrist, Gary		Lt Col	USAF (Ret)
01	Green, Richard		CWO	USA (Ret)
14	Gudmundson, Brent		LTC	USA (Ret)
21	Hermann, Peter		Col	USAF (Ret)
14	Hofacker, William		Lt Col	USAF (Ret)
28	Holecek, John		LTC	USA (Ret)
16	Johnson, Marjorie		Mrs.	AuxMbr-AF
29	Kelly, Jacob		LT	USNR (Ret)
07	Koch, Richard		Lt Col	USAF (Ret)
29	Menyhert, Louisa		LTC	USA (Ret)
18	Newton, Richard		Col	USAF (Ret)
04	Perkins, LaTrelle		Mrs.	AuxMbr-N
30	Pynn, Frances		Mrs.	AuxMbr-A
19	Reilly, Anne		Mrs.	AuxMbr-N
07	Sartorio, Salvatore		Maj	USAF (Ret)
07	Shields, Roger		COL	USA (Ret)
09	Tamalis, Patricia		Maj	USAF (Ret)

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Gudmundson, Brent, LTC USA
Neville, Al, Col USAF

And more Zen Thoughts

Plan to be spontaneous tomorrow.

Always try to be modest, and be proud of it!

If you think no one cares, try missing a couple of payments.

How many of you believe in telekinesis? Raise my hand...

OK, so what's the speed of dark?

How do you tell when you're out of invisible ink?

If everything seems to be going well, you have obviously overlooked something.

When everything is coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.

Hard work pays off in the future. Laziness pays off now.

LUNCHEON MEETING

11 AM - 1:30 PM, Friday, April 21st
Banquet Master, 8100 Park Blvd.

• Reservations by Wednesday April 19th

Your name _____

Each reservation \$10:

Ham: _____.

Tillapia Piccata: _____.

*** **CLIP and MAIL**, with check to **SPMOAA**,

to=> **CAPT Bob Eynatten,**
507 Plaza Seville Ct, # 16
Treasure Island, FL 33706

For late reservations, call either

CAPT Bob Eynatten 360-4637

or

CAPT Don Freese 360-3102

Calendar of Events

Luncheon Meetings are on the 3rd Friday of each month—mixer 1100 - 1145; luncheon and program 1145 - 1315; at Banquet Masters, 8100 Park Blvd., Pinellas Park.

April 21st, Friday, 11:00 El Ahlwardt, Director of External Relations for the Joint Military Science Leadership Center

May 17th, Wednesday, 5:45 - 1100 P.M., Our Chapter's monthly meeting is in conjunction with our Convention's **Military Ball** at The TradeWinds Resort, St. Pete Beach.

June 16th, Friday, 11:00 BG Albert "Al" Riggle, USA, J-3, CENTCOM

July 21st, Friday, 11:00 Annual Memorial service; plus a weather briefing for the hurricane season.

August 18th, Friday, 11:00 TBD

September 15th, Friday, 11:00, TBD

Business Meetings are on the 1st Monday of the month 1130 - 1230 at Perkins Family Restaurant on the NE corner of Starkey Rd. and Park Blvd. in Seminole.

April 3rd Monday

May 1st Monday

June 5th Monday

July 10rd Monday (2nd Monday)

August 7th Monday

September 11th Monday (2nd Monday)

ROWC

Luncheon—(2nd Tuesday) meet 11:30 AM, lunch 12:30 PM

•**Reservations:** LTC Rose Munchbach 397-4146

•**Membership:** Martha Willis 579-4116.

•**April 11th**, Shells, 17855 Gulf Blvd., N Red. Bch

•**May 9th**, Alfano's 1720 Clw Largo Rd

•**October**-Luncheons resume

Bridge – (1st Wednesday) of the month 10:00 AM Banquet Masters, Pinellas Park. •**Reservations:** Evelyn Hamilton 399-1272, or Margaret Peck 525-1688

2006 Convention (May 14-18, 2006) MOAA 2006 Florida Council of Chapters Convention in St. Pete Beach, Trade Winds Island Grand Resort.

More information: MAJ Pat Tamalis, phone: 392-1066 or by e-mail: ptamalis@tampabay.rr.com

The St. Petersburg Area Chapter, MOAA
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Convention 2006

Tradewinds Resort, St Pete Beach
May 14-18