

# Bridge View



## Charleston Chapter, Military Officers Association of America

January, 2010



Web site: [www.chasmoaa.org](http://www.chasmoaa.org)



**David A. Thomas**  
Guest Speaker for January

David A. Thomas was designated a Special Agent of the FBI in 1989. After completing more than a dozen years of supervisory and leadership roles in areas such as violent crime, domestic terrorism, and national infrastructure protection, Mr. Thomas was appointed Chief of the Cyber Division's Criminal Computer Intrusion Unit in 2001. He was promoted to Assistant Special Agent in Charge of the St. Louis Field Office in April 2003, and returned to FBI Headquarters in July 2004, as Chief of Counterterrorism/Counterintelligence and Criminal Computer Intrusion Investigations. In this capacity, Mr. Thomas has directed the FBI's efforts on all major transnational cyber investigations, and is responsible for the creation of Cyber Action Teams, which deploy domestically and internationally in response to major cyber events. In November 2007, Mr. Thomas was assigned as Special Agent in Charge of the Columbia Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, in South Carolina.

## January Luncheon

Make your plans soon for the January luncheon to be held Friday the 22<sup>nd</sup>. At the Charleston Club, CAFB. Our guest speaker will be Mr. David A. Thomas, Special Agent in Charge, FBI, Columbia. Mr. Thomas will talk on the subjects of cybercrime, frauds and protection of the United States' national security.

Place: Charleston Club, Charleston Air Force Base

Date: Friday, January 22 2010

Time: Social Hour 11:00 AM

Lunch: 12 Noon

Menu: Chicken Cordon Bleu, Fresh Greens with Tomatoes Peas & Carrots with Brown Rice, Rolls and Butter, Cheesecake, Coffee and Tea (Have special diet needs? Contact LCDR Mehard)

Cost: \$18.00 per person (\$16.00 for club members)

Make check payable to Charleston MOAA (Club members provide last 4 digits of member number)

Mail to : LCDR W.J. Mehard, 5926 Commonwealth Circle, Hanahan, SC 29410-2431

Contact Info: Home tel: 554-8391 Cell: 834-0974, email: [mehardw@bellsouth.net](mailto:mehardw@bellsouth.net)

## Christmas at Carrabba's



Chapter members enjoy the atmosphere at Carrabba's



**Who's this Month's MOAA Profile?**  
See Page Three

## Legislative Update

CDR John E. Nolan, SC, USN

### Hill OKs VA Funds, But Not DoD's

The House and Senate Appropriations leaders have reached agreement on a \$468.8 billion discretionary omnibus appropriations act, which melds together the Commerce-Justice-Science, Financial Services, Labor-HHS-Education, Military Construction-VA, State-Foreign Relations and Transportation-HUD spending bills.

The omnibus Bill, and especially the MILCON-VA provisions, covers a number of important priorities, including:

- \* \$110,000,000,000 for VA programs
- \* \$23,000,000,000 for military construction and family housing
- \* Over \$48,000,000,000 in advance VA appropriations for FY2011 to ensure programs don't have to be cut if Congress doesn't pass a new appropriations bill by Oct 1, 2010
- \* \$343,000,000,000 for DoD's Homeowners Assistance Program (HAO)
- \* \$1.7,000,000,000 to allow VA to hire 1,200 additional claims processors to address the nearly 397,000 claims backlog
- \* \$ 3.2,000,000,000 for healthcare and supportive services for homeless vets.

Conspicuously absent from the list of bills included in this omnibus package is the Defense Appropriations Bill (H.R. 3326). Congressional leaders are using the Defense Bill as a political football. Since this bill is considered must pass legislation, Hill leaders held back its passage so that various initiatives that are controversial items if considered as separate legislation could be attached.

Federal debt ceiling is one example of this type of shenanigans practiced in Congress. Hill leaders hoped that some of the spending critics would be reluctant to vote against a defense appropriations act in wartime. Congress should put country first rather than what benefits a political party.

The Defense Appropriations Bill should be a separate bill as should other controversial issues which should be thoroughly debated.

### Health Care Bills

The final status of national health care remains uncertain. MOAA remains committed to safeguarding military/VA beneficiaries' health care benefits. Members of both parties have responded by including provisions aimed at holding military/VA beneficiaries harmless.

However, both the House and Senate have proposed funding schemes that can do irreparable damage to Medicare and thus TRICARE FOR LIFE (TFL). Both the House and Senate proposals plan to cut Medicare by close to \$500 billion dollars. The money from these "Medicare" savings will be used to fund the expansion of health insurance coverage to those who don't have it now.

Medicare is already facing shortfalls, and a cut of this size can only add to the Medicare problem and thus effect TFL. In addition, it can only add to the number of doctors who are refusing to take new Medicare patients .

(Continued on page 4)

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## COL Benjamin Wham III 437th Mission Support Group Commander Citadel Graduate



Rarely can a military officer say he's never had a bad assignment, but Air Force Col. Benjamin Wham II claims that distinction.

"My most challenging assignment was my last assignment," Wham said recently when asked to list his toughest post. "All construction throughout the Middle East — about \$1 billion worth — fell under my purview."

"I was busy traveling during 43 of the 52 weeks I was in the theatre."

Wham (pronounced Waum) took command on July 15 of the 437th Mission Support Group at Charleston Air Force Base. His job title once was "base commander" but that's changed over the years. As Mission Support Group commander, he has seven units under his command: the 437th Communications Squadron, the 437th Civil Engineer Squadron, the 437th Security Forces Squadron, the 437th Contracting Squadron, the 437th Logistics Readiness Squadron, the 437th Aerial Port and the 437th Force Support Squadron.

Wham is a senior Air Force commander which makes him an honorary member of Charleston MOAA. He's also a 1986 Citadel grad with a degree in civil engineering.

"I went to The Citadel because I was looking for something different," he said. "I found it; it was challenging."

Wham's first post as a second lieutenant was as a civil engineer at the military hospital at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. He also met and married his wife, Ellen, while posted to Texas.

Two years later, he moved to Spain where he was chief of Engineering Design for the civil engineer squadron at Torrejon Air Base.



Benjamin Wham and his wife Ellen, when they were both lieutenants

The Whams returned home in 1991 to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, where Ben earned a master's degree in Astronautical Engineering. He remained in Ohio until 1995 as part of the System Program Office for the F-15 and F-22 fighters.

Over the years, Wham's career took him to Peterson Air Force Base, Colo.; Osan Air Base, Korea; Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii; and the Pentagon. In 2005, he deployed to Iraq. He then spent the next two years at Shaw Air Force Base, S.C., where he was deputy director of Installations for the Combined Air Operations Center that covers the Persian Gulf region.

Wham then spent a full year in the war zone as director of Installations.

"I spent much of my time either planning for the draw-down in Iraq or the plus-up in Afghanistan," he said.

Wham's assignment in Charleston comes as something of a relief. He's still very busy, he said, but now he's also busy with his family.

In the meantime, the job at Charleston is about to change. The 2005 base closures commission ordered what amounts to a top-level merger with the Charleston Naval Weapons Station.

Next month, Wham ceases being the 437th Mission Support Group and becomes Mission Support Group commander for the newly formed 628th Air Base Wing. He will be working for Col. Martha Meeker who will become commander of the new air base wing.

Wham said he doesn't know where his next assignment will take him. "I don't do this (work) for the money or the prestige," he said. "I do it because I like doing it."



COL Benjamin Wham, at his office at Charleston Air Force Base



## President's Pen

As we look forward to 2010 I would like to wish everyone a happy and prosperous New Year.

Two issues critical to the health of our chapter in the coming year are (1) finding ways to increase membership and (2) recruiting from within our membership rolls for individuals who are willing to serve on the Board of Director's. Current board members have all served extended tours in office and only two board positions have changed in the past four years.

Virginia Chinnnes has agreed to serve another three year term as our Hospitality Director and I am hopeful that Terry Joyce will continue as our Publicity Director. Our Director Personal Affairs, Roy Corderman, is home bound but continues to fulfill his duties. If you have time please give him a call and thank him for his contributions to the chapter.

I urge each of you to pay close attention to John Nolan's legislative update concerning the importance of the proposed health care bill which is currently being considered in congress. Our MOAA leaders are asking that each of us send a letter to our congressmen and senators expressing our individual concerns about that potential bill's content. The national website MOAA.org contains a suggested letter which you can sign and send or you can use it to personalize your specific concerns. Alternatively you can call the local offices of our elected representatives and express your concerns verbally. I urge you to do one or the other!

Our January meeting will feature the installation of chapter officers and we will also have a guest speaker. Details of the meeting are on the front page of this newsletter.

*Cliff*

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



## Legislative Update (Continued from Page 2)

Let our legislators know how you feel about this. Call the MOAA toll free capital switchboard ,1-866-272-6622 and ask to be connected to our Senators and Representatives. This will take three separate calls, or call their local offices:

Senator Lindsey Graham  
530 Johnnie Dodds Blvd  
Mt. Pleasant, SC  
Tel. 849-3887

Senator Jim DeMint  
112 Custom House  
200 East Bay St  
Charleston, SC 29401  
727-4525

Congressman Henry Brown  
5900 Core Ave, Suite #401  
North Charleston, SC 29406  
747-4175

## More Photos from the Christmas Luncheon at Carrabba's



## Charleston Chapter Delivers Toys for Annual Toys for Tots Drive

For the 14th year, the Charleston Chapter has participated in the annual drive for Toys for Tots, thanks in no small measure to the donations received from our members through collections at our various functions and from mail in donations. This year, you contributed over \$700 toward our project, and we are eternally grateful for your generosity. Without you, we could not do it. Also, our thanks go to T and T Sports, who go out of their way to get us good products at very reasonable prices.



Delivery Day at Channel 2. On December 16th, members of the Charleston chapter delivered 160 sports balls to Channel 2 and the USMC Reserve. Shown are Cliff Abbey, Bill Mehard, Butch Fuller, Terry Joyce, Captain Matt Verdin, USMC active Duty OIC Instructor, and Ed Knowles.

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## Contacting Your Legislators

You read how to contact your legislators by phone in John Nolan's column. Here is another way to contact our legislators via MOAA. It is especially good for contacting our legislators via MOAA generated e-mails.

1. In Google enter [www.MOAA](http://www.MOAA.org) org. When the page comes up, click on Welcome to MOAA-The Military Officers Association of America Web.
2. When the page comes up, click on Legislative Action.
3. When the screen comes up, click on the topic you are interested in. Most current info will be in the Issues and Update Section. This will give you 3 choices. Click on the one where your interest lies. Most MOAA alerts are in the Action Alert sections. You can send MOAA generated e-mails by clicking on the appropriate issue and following the screen direction to send the message. You may also add your personal comments to MOAA's e-mail.

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### 2009-2010 OFFICERS and BOARD OF DIRECTORS

<b>PRESIDENT</b>	LT Clifton R. Abbey, USN (thru 2010)	553-2644	cliffabbey@att.net	
<b>1st VP PROGRAMS</b>	LCDR William J. Mehard, Jr. USN (thru 2010)	554-8391	mehardw@bellsouth.net	2nd
<b>2nd VP MEMBERSHIP</b>	COL Allan T. Smith, USAF (thru 2010)	572-2011	alandmarty@comcast.net	
<b>SECRETARY</b>	COL Clinton L. Noren, USAF (thru 2010)	552-7579	cnoren@earthlink.net	
<b>TREASURER</b>	LTCOL. Ed Knowles, USAF (thru 2010)	553-5299	r66837.comcast.net	
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<b>DIR. LEGISLATIVE</b>	CDR John E. Nolan, USN (thru 2010)	821-5767	sandlappers@sc.rr.com.	
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<b>PAST PRESIDENT</b>	COL Josiah (Butch) Fuller, USA (thru 2010)	821-0169	ButchFuller@aol.com	

### REPRESENTATIVES TO THE BOARD (Appointed by the President)

<b>EDITOR</b>	COL Josiah (Butch) Fuller	821-0169	ButchFuller@aol.com
<b>CHAPLAIN</b>	CAPT Henry Lovelady, USN	553-9581	capthryl@comcast.net
<b>SCHOLARSHIP</b>	COL Rudy Smart, USAF	824-1263	rudy@thesmartsplace.com

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.

## Wanted: ROTC Awards Presenters

Spring is not that far away, and one thing that Spring brings in the Lowcountry are the annual Award Presentations at the various schools in the area.

Again this year, we are looking for volunteers from the Chapter to be presenters at one or more of these events. Ceremonies are usually on a weekday, daytime or evening, during late March, April or early May. Those who have presented in the past say the event is typically enjoyable.

Volunteers can contact Steve Rowe at 843-303-7438, or at [srowe@carolinaone.com](mailto:srowe@carolinaone.com).

## Donald Hurley

**D.O., F.A.A.F.P**  
Commander, USN, MC (Ret)  
Member of MOAA

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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: 470  
Auxiliary Members: 97  
Honorary Members: 23

## MEMBERSHIP DUES 2009

To those members who have not yet paid their annual dues, please note that your Membership is highly valued and we sincerely hope to continue counting you among us as we press on to further the goals and objectives of this Chapter. To remain a Charter member, please submit your dues by **1 January 2010**.

Please remember that the Chapter's annual dues are expected at the beginning of each year. Check the mailing label on this newsletter, where it says, "**DUES PAID THRU.....**" **date** to see if your dues are current for the year 2009 or beyond.

If not, please mail your dues at your earliest convenience (\$10.00 for members or \$5.00 for Auxiliary members) payable to **Charleston MOAA**. Along with your dues please complete the Membership Application/Renewal form inside the back page of this Newsletter. Attach your check to the application and mail both to:

**Charleston Chapter, MOAA  
P.O. Box 70421  
Charleston, SC 29415-0421.**

**Thanks in advance.**

## Dues Questions

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

## MEMBERS WHO HAVE PAID DUES FOR 5 OR MORE YEARS

Six additional members 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 members:

LTC Harvey M. Dick, USA, (Ret.)

CDR David E. Farley, USN (Ret.)

Mrs. Mary W. Koob, AUX  
90 Yrs Young!!

Mrs. Caroline Legare, AUX

LCDR Charles B. Martin, USN (Ret.)

Col Gerald W Musselman, USAF, (Ret.)

## WELCOME ABOARD!

Lt.Col Mark J. Rencher, USAFR (Ret.)  
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