



Charleston Chapter, Military Officers Association of America

June, 2011 Issue 6-2011

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Web site: www.chasmoaa.org

June Dinner Meeting

Let's welcome Summer with a dinner meeting at North Towne Grill and Seafood – AND.... provide an opportunity to join us for those among our members still working who cannot make our noon lunches! We're pleased that Mr. Bo Bowman, Director of the SC branch of Angel Flights Soar, Inc., has agreed to speak. Join us and learn more about this very worthy organization!

Place: North Towne Grill & Seafood, 2093 Eagle Landing Blvd., North Charleston

Date: Friday, June 17th, 2011

Time: 1730 Social Hour

Supper: 1830

Menu: Lasagna, slow roasted chicken, vegetable medley, focatia (bread), Greek salad, coffee or tea, chef's choice of dessert (baklava or cheesecake)

Cost: \$23.00 per person. Make checks payable to Charleston **MOAA**.

Dress: Casual.

RSVP: Check to arrive NLT Tuesday, June 14th, 2011.

Mail to: Dave Farley, CDR, USN (ret)
126 Cainhoy Landing Road
Wando, SC 29492

For additional information, call 881-9452 (home) or 708-8110 (cell) or E-mail: defarley@bellsouth.net

About Angel Flights

Angel Flights serves the community by flying patients to distant medical facilities, delivering supplies to disaster areas and reuniting families during desperate times. *Angel Flights Soar is the original volunteer pilot organization that has been serving the states of Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee since 1983.* The organization consists of over 900 volunteer pilots, over 400 earth angels, and an office staff of 4 full-time and 3 part-time persons. In 2010, 320 missions were coordinated for South Carolina patients. Angel Flights opened their SC Branch Office in Greenwood in January of 2009, and has consistently had the second highest percentage of patient residency and missions.

JROTC Awards Photos



JROTC Cadet Alexandria Bobo shares a laugh with Terry Joyce at Fort Dorchester High School's annual awards ceremony.



Butch Fuller presents Outstanding Cadet Award at Colleton County High School.

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

Legislative Update CDR Gordon B. Hobgood, USN Ret

Defense Bill Mark-Up

(*mark-ups are working points and do not necessarily indicate endpoint legislative agreement/passage*)

Taking a phrase from a current HBO program ...
“WINTER IS COMING”.

Budget deficit hand wringing and political posturing has been the battle cry over the last twelve months and will continue right up to the next presidential election. At last read, all programs appear to be on the table (e.g. taxes, DoD FY funding, government pensions, social security, and medicare ... just to list a few. The mantra is ... all must share the burden. But just what does all this mean? Simply put ... **“WINTER IS COMING”.**

New projections show Social Security will no longer be able to pay at current rates in 2036 and Medicare (Part A) in 2024. Short of a new law of economics, the current way of doing business will need to be seriously curtailed. That being said ... DoDs point man (Sec. Gates) will change in May ... and the new kid on the block (Sec. Panetta) will be behind the power curve going into critical budget negotiations. Additionally, the Chairman Joint Chief of Staff will also change.

The House Armed Services Committee just approved its version of the \$690-billion FY2012 National Defense Authorization Bill (H.R. 1540). In the process, the Committee dropped a Military Personnel Subcommittee provision that would have frozen TRICARE fees for another year and replaced it with a provision that allows modest increases for FY12, but adds important protections against disproportional increases in the future.

The new provision would allow DoD to raise the TRICARE Prime enrollment fee by \$5 a month and raise retail pharmacy copays by \$2 or \$3, while eliminating the copay for generic drugs in the mail-order pharmacy program. More important, it adds a state-

ment that Congress recognizes that career military people pay the bulk of their premiums up-front and in-kind, through decades of service and sacrifice. In recognition of that, the Committee bill language specifies that the percentage fee increase in future years may not exceed the percentage increase in military retired pay.

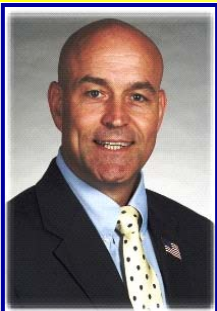
In addition, the bill proposes increasing the Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA) payable to survivors whose Survivor Benefit Plan annuity is reduced because they also receive a survivor annuity from the VA for their sponsor's service-caused death. The current \$70 monthly SSIA payment will rise to \$80 on Oct. 1 under existing law, and then grow to \$90 for FY13, \$150 for FY14, \$200 for FY15, \$275 for FY16, and \$310 for FY17. Under current law, the program will expire as of Oct 1, 2017.

Under the new Committee proposal, the allowance would increase to \$163 instead of \$90 for FY13, then jump to \$200 in FY14. It would offer significantly more modest increases for FY15-FY17, and extend token payments of \$9 to \$27 per month through FY21. The latter small amounts are intended as “placeholders” to establish Congress' intent to continue the program beyond FY17, while seeking additional funding sources in the meantime.

Another amendment approved by the Committee would delay implementation of the “don't ask, don't tell” repeal until the President, the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the four service chiefs all certify that repeal wouldn't hurt military readiness. Under current law only the President, SecDef, and CJCS must certify.

The final bill passed with a strong bi-partisan vote of 60-1.

(Continued on page 6)



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**COL Martha Meeker, US Air Force
628th Commander
Charleston Air Force Base**



Air Force Col. Martha Meeker is a military commander who can describe her job in a few words: “I’m more like a mayor” of a large military city, she said recently.

The term seems apt, especially when you consider that more than 80,000 people and 53 organizations fall under her purview in what is now Joint Base Charleston.

“I don’t own any one or any thing,” Meeker said in her office at what once was Charleston Air Force Base. “We’ve all come together to reduce the friction” that might have occurred when the Air Force and the Navy merged the air base and Naval Weapons Station into Meeker’s wing.

The Pentagon’s Base Realignment and Closure Commission in 2005 ordered the merger. More than five years passed, however, before the move finally took hold.

A key element fell into place early last year when Meeker assumed command of the newly formed 628th Air Base Wing. The wing is an umbrella-like unit that supports the active duty and reserve wings that fly Charleston’s C-17 cargo jets. The Navy, of course is also part of Meeker’ command.

“The commanding officers of the flying wings still report to their higher headquarters,” Meeker said.

But under the Joint Base concept, those C-17 wing commanders don’t have to worry about fixing the plumbing or mowing the grass. Units that fall under 628th Wing handle those and other chores.

Meeker’s tenure at Charleston is quite an undertaking for someone who may have never seen anyone wearing a military uniform until she decided to join the Air Force.

“I was raised in Hidalgo, Ill., a town of about 100 people east of Effingham,” Meeker said.

She attended Eastern Illinois University where she studied math and computers.

“I decided I wanted to do this (math and computers) full time, but how? I could get an advanced degree (as a civilian) or join the Air Force.”

Both Meeker and the Air Force won that debate. She entered Officer Training School in 1986, earned her commission, then trained as a communications officer at Keesler Air Force Base, Miss.



Left: COL Meeker when she was pinned a second lieutenant in 1987

The next two years found her stationed at Lowry Air Force Base near Denver, working in computer programming for a satellite system.

“Three of us (Meeker and two friends) decided we wanted to fly,” she said. “We all applied and all three of us went to Nav school.”

She finished navigator training in 1990 and started a successful career path. Starting in 1991, Meeker spent five years at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb., where she worked on the Looking Glass project that kept an airborne command post in the air continuously.

Next came two years as a cadet squadron commander at the Air Force Academy, followed by a year at the Air Force Command and Staff School in Alabama. In 1999, she was assigned to Geilenkirchen, Germany, a base that handles NATO’s airborne warning and control planes. She remained in Germany for two years.

The next 10 years found Meeker assigned to Fairchild Air Force Base, Wash., Scott Air Force Base, Ill., and a year at the Air War College in Alabama.

Her last post before Charleston was at the Pentagon.

“I’ve had no bad assignments,” Meeker said. “My most rewarding assignment was at the Air Force Academy where I helped turn out young officers. They were genuinely motivated and smart.”

Meeker is an honorary member of MOAA Charleston but her time here may expire before the end of the year. Her successor has already been selected.

In the meantime, Meeker is obviously proud of the reorganization that led to Joint Base Charleston and the 628th Wing.

“There are only 12 Joint Base arrangements around the nation, but I think you’re going to see these Joint Bases stand out in the crowd,” she said.

Meeker declined to say where she might go when she leaves Joint Base Charleston, but we’re willing to bet she’ll stand out from the crowd once more.



Captain Meeker explains the aircraft controls to a young visitor.



COL Meeker today



President's Pen

There are a couple of events that I would like for more members to take advantage of as your time permits:

The first is presentation of MOAA Awards to deserving JROTC students around our area. The Charleston Chapter presents two separate awards to each JROTC unit. A medal and certificate are awarded to a student for having demonstrated exceptional potential for military leadership as a member of the JROTC program. We also present an Outstanding Cadet Award, to include a \$50.00 check, for demonstrated excellence during the academic year. The JROTC instructor provides input for these awards. Presentation of these awards is a great experience and if you are interested in participating, please get in touch with Don Lovelace.

The second opportunity is our chapter visits to the Charleston VA Hospital. Terry Joyce sets these visits up on a quarterly basis and the Dorchester Air Force JROTC unit has been joining us recently. It is a fulfilling time for both the patients and us. Please feel free to join us in the future.

I recently attended the SC Council of Chapters meeting at Fort Jackson and the Myrtle Beach (Grand Strand) Chapter is hosting the MOAA Conference this year. It is scheduled for October 9 – 11 at the Hilton Myrtle Beach Resort. Special rates are in effect for two days prior to, during and two days after the conference for those who wish to extend their beach trip. Several informative speakers are already lined up and it will give everyone an opportunity to mix and mingle with friends from around the state. Please visit www.grandstrandmoaa.com and click on the conference link for additional information. There are also advertisement opportunities for the Conference Program should any of you want to take advantage of this.

Again, please take time to write your congressman and senators to ask them to honor past promises to our nations service members and retirees. The MOAA magazine provides examples of correspondence in their issues. The squeaky wheel gets the grease and there are a lot of wheels out there gunning for your tax dollars!!

Ernie

Upcoming Events

Mark your calendars for these upcoming chapter events:

Friday, June 10th - Chapter Board Meeting, 12:15

Friday, June 17th - Dinner meeting at North-Town Grill and Seafood. See page 1.

Friday, July 8th - Chapter Board Meeting, 12:15, CAFB Club

. Chapter Board Meetings

Your Chapter Board conducts its meetings monthly at the Charleston Club. Meetings are held on the second Friday of the month, and begin at 12:15. The meetings are open, and members are welcome to attend, so stop in and see us as we discuss the business of the Chapter.

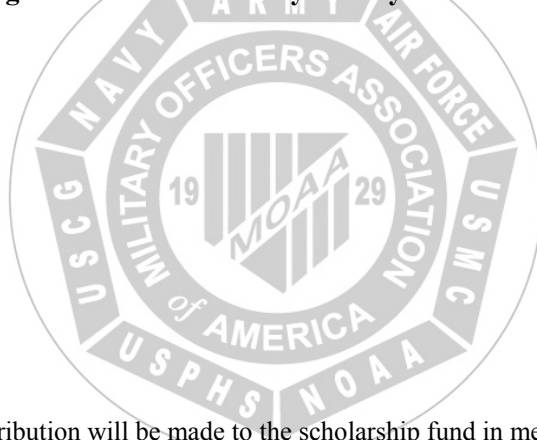
Help Your Survivors Now

How, you ask? Where is your DD214? Your survivors may not receive all the entitlements for which you have worked so hard. MOAA has the answers in many publications available to members.

For more information on these publications, call (800) 234-MOAA (6622) or visit MOAA online at www.MOAA.ORG. You may also contact LCDR William J. Mehard, Director of Chapter Personal Affairs at 554-8391 or at mehardw@bellsouth.net.

REST IN PEACE

A grateful nation thanks you for your contribution



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

A salute to the military

In 1949, the American Armed Forces united under the Department of Defense. A day of appreciation for the Armed Forces was also created. It is celebrated on the third Saturday of May and encompasses the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard. They have all sacrificed greatly for our freedom and safety.

The third Saturday of May is past. However it's not too late to take some time to thank the military personnel you know. When you pass a military person, say "Thank You For Your Service." It will make that person feel great.

You can find more information about Armed Forces Day at the DoD's Website (www.defense.gov). See the history of Armed Forces Day and pictures going back to the 1950's. Take a moment to become more familiar with this special day.

Here is a special site for military members and veterans (www.military.com). You can learn all about your military benefits, plus, you can network with other military personnel. There is also a list of companies offering military discounts.

Need to get in touch with the chapter?

Call one of the Board members listed on page 6 or mail us at

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Legislative Update (Cont'd)

The next step will be for the full House of Representatives to take up the Committee's bill. The Senate Armed Services Committee will begin work on its version of the bill in mid-June.

Time waits for no one. "**WINTER IS COMING**" Now is a critical time to begin a letter/email campaign expressing your opinion on these issues to our elected officials. Review of proposed DoD active duty/retiree legislation indicate a reluctance on the part of our South Carolina elected officials in Washington to step up and co-sponsor these key bills. MOAAs national website has many examples of letters/emails addressing these and other issues of interest to members. The examples can be edited to fit your position. Don't forget, your significant other might want to weigh in also. Vote early ... and ... vote often!

COLA Good/Bad news depending on one's view point. CPI continues to rise (one projection for April is up 0.4% and another is up 0.8% for a total year to date value up 2.5/2.9% respectively) signaling the possibility retirees could receive a COLA increase in January.

TRICARE At a health care discussion panel sponsored by the Center for American Progress, a Washington think-tank, MOAA President VADM Norb Ryan Jr., USN-Ret., challenged the perspectives of other panelists that military beneficiaries should be socked with large TRICARE fees and have their benefits means-tested.

The other panelists included former Deputy Secretary of Defense Rudy deLeon as moderator, former Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Dr. David Chu, and former Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower, Reserve Affairs, Installations and Logistics) Dr. Lawrence Korb.

Chu asserted health care "isn't why young people join the military," and military health benefits should be means-tested, with more senior retirees paying more. He also said there should be penalties (in terms of higher fees) for beneficiaries who don't use programs that are the lowest cost for the Defense Department.

Korb went further, urging raising **TRICARE** fees to at least \$1,000 a year, means-testing of retired beneficiaries who have access to civilian health coverage, and implementing fees and coverage caps for **TRICARE For Life** to discourage overuse of health benefits. He asserted there's no evidence to show that retiree healthcare fees have any impact on recruiting and retention.

Ryan took strong issue with such statements. While MOAA hasn't taken the position that retiree fees should never rise, he insisted that proposals for significantly higher fees fail to adequately recognize that career military people pre-pay huge premiums for their health care in retirement through decades of service and sacrifice.

Congress shares this perspective even when DoD leaders haven't, Ryan said, and that's why Congress has repeatedly rejected proposals to dramatically increase fees. They believe, as MOAA does, that retirement and health benefits are a key career incentive for enduring the adverse conditions of a service career. He rejected means-testing as inappropriate for the military, since it's not done for federal civilian health care and is very rare in the private sector.

Rather than focusing on jacking up beneficiary fees, Ryan said Pentagon leaders should focus on delivering care more efficiently, including greater efforts to positively incentivize use of the lower-cost mail-order pharmacy and developing a joint-service medical system.

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CHAPLAIN	CAPT Henry Lovelady, USN	553-9581	capthensyl@comcast.net
SCHOLARSHIP	COL Rudy Smart, USAF	824-1263	rsmart1@gmail.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.

**Sam Stafford III, M.D.
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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.

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DOB _____ Rank _____ Service _____ Spouse's Name _____

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Phone Number _____ Email _____

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

Dues for Year (s) _____ Signature _____

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Total Membership: 462
Auxiliary Members: 100
Honorary Members: 26

Receiving E-Mail Newsletters: 90

Dues Questions

Questions concerning your status should be directed to:

Al Smith, Membership VP. 572-2011
alandmarty@comcast.net

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- Be notified as soon as the newsletter is on the web.
- Receive your copy 5 to 7 days earlier.
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- Help your Chapter to reduce the price tag involved in the cost of postage (postage rates up will go up again!!) 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.

ADDRESS CHANGE

Lt.Col Forrest E. Ott, USAF (Ret.)
104 Allegheny Circle
Goose Creek, SC 29445-7261

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:

Lt Col Albert E. Combs. USAF (Ret.)



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