

alive and able to travel and we needed 35 veterans for the trip. Next we forwarded a list of January-June 2008 applicants. We still didn't have our 35 veterans. Finally, we forwarded the list of July-December 2008 applicants and filled our 35 veteran slots.

Our next task was to find eighteen guardians from somewhere. We "drafted" our wives, Hilde and Jean along with Sarah Smart. Hilde and Jean served as guardians on our first Honor Flight South Georgia trip and as staff on the next two. Sarah was our "Red" Team Leader on all three flights. We **only** needed 15 more guardians. Our Honor Flight Network Chairman, Jim McLaughlin put me in contact with Janice Sweet, an RN with the VA Hospital in Orlando and Janice recruited eight more guardians from the hospital staff. We had four second generation guardians who wanted to travel with their dad, one caregiver traveling with her veteran and one guardian from the Orlando area who had an application on file in Springfield. We had our 18 Guardians!

Now all we needed was a staff. I was the "Virtual" Hub Director, RD was our Trip Director and Dean Cone, who flew on all three of our Honor Flight South Georgia trips as lead paramedic, volunteered to be our Medical Captain. Now we had a **TEAM!**

We launched out of Orlando on Wednesday, March 10. Our veterans got a Firefighter water cannon salute as we taxied out of Orlando, another arriving in Miami and yet another arriving in Washington's Reagan

International Airport. The reception we received at all three airports was tremendous. We visited the WW II Memorial on Thursday. Stephen Spielberg, Tom Hanks and Elizabeth Dole spoke and later visited with our veterans. A wreath-Laying ceremony was held at the Pacific Arch, terminating with Taps. After leaving the WW II Memorial, we visited the Korea and Vietnam Memorials, US Marine, US Navy and US Air Force Memorials and Thursday evening our veterans were treated to a banquet and the premiere of HBO's *The Pacific*.

After what had to be the *Trip of a Lifetime* for our veterans, we arrived safely back in Orlando on Friday, March 12.



Sarah Smart, Buddy & Jean Johnson, Dean Cone Hilde and RD Martin...The "A" Team



Buddy, Dean, Larry Blackmore (Springfield HQ volunteer who pulled applications and called veterans for us) and RD Martin.



Elizabeth Dole, Pacific Theater WW II Veteran Irwin Abelson and Guardian Jean Johnson



Pacific Theater WW II Veteran John Kraus at the US Navy Memorial. He had a "P" coat "Just Like This".....and Duffle Bag too.

Membership Chair Report

By: Don McArthur Maj. USAF, Ret.

According to the calendar, spring has sprung! However, as I write this column, temperatures still remain below normal and the azaleas are straining to display their beautiful blooms.

We know MOAA is made up of seven branches of service consisting of the Navy, Marines, Army, Air Force, Coast Guard, NOAA Commissioned Corps, and the US Public Health Service. However we really do not hear much about the latter two, but they played a major role in the humanitarian effort in Haiti when the earthquake devastated Port-au-prince and surrounding areas.

The Coast Guard was the first to arrive at the capital to evacuate US citizens. The other four military branches followed shortly to assist in the rescue effort including our Moody AFB personnel. Deployed NOAA personnel provided high resolution aerial imagery of Haiti to relief workers on the ground enabling them to navigate in and around devastated areas. The Public Health Service was part of the initial assessment teams and also manned emergency operations centers providing linguistic support.

At the peak level over 13,000 uniformed service personnel served in the direct support of US relief operations in Haiti. We can be very proud of our service members wherever they serve. Too often the general public and media dwell on the war fighting aspects of those who wear the uniform and overlook the irreplaceable humanitarian service they provide here and abroad.

The ROTC award ceremonies are fast approaching. The two high school ROTC units are having theirs this month and the VSU ROTC unit on May 1. We are still short several hundred dollars so please write those checks and mailed them to Buddy or bring them to the April meeting. Our goal is to present each ROTC unit with a \$500 stipend at their awards night. Remember the gift is tax deductible.

Food for Thought

From: "A Gentleman Entertains"

By: John Bridges and Bryan Curtis

When a gentleman serves takeout, he serves it on his own plates.

April Meeting

Our next meeting is Thursday April 8, **6:00 pm**, at the Rainwater Conference Center on Norman Drive. Dinner is **at 6:30 PM**

Lt Col Patrick Wells, Moody JAG, will present the program

Please make your reservations through chapter secretary Buddy Johnson

Phone 229-561-0690(c) email buddy1612@bellsouth.net

Not later than Noon Monday, April 5

We are required to provide an accurate meal count **prior to** the conference center staff meeting at **1:00 pm Monday**. Cost is \$20 per person.

Sorry, we must bill no-shows

President Ron Borders, Former USA CWO	Vice President Bill Piper, Former USAF Captain
Secretary Alton "Buddy" Johnson, Lt Col USAF, Ret.	Treasurer John Salter, Former USAF Captain
Directors Norm Conant, Maj. USAF, Ret. Jack Sinnott, Col AUS, Ret. Glenn Walden, Col USAR, Ret.	Personal Affairs Gil Gjertsen, Former USMC Capt.
Tops Officer Tim Oliver, Lt Col USAF, Ret.	Legislative Affairs James Smith, Lt Col USAFR, Ret
Chaplain Rev. John McGowan, Lt Col USAF, Ret.	Programs Dr. Hugh Bassham, Former USA Captain
Remembrances and Memorials Mrs. Jacque Clark Past Presidents: Alton Johnson, Don McArthur	Membership Don McArthur, Maj. USAF, Ret
	Auxiliary Advisory Chair Mrs. Rose Marie Sinnott

SGAMOOA
PO Box 5941
Valdosta, GA 31603