

The South Georgia Voice



South Georgia Chapter
Military Officers Association of America
June, 2010



www.sgamoaa.org

A Memorial Day Message

*It is the **veteran**, not the preacher,
who gives us freedom of religion.*

*It is the **veteran**, not the reporter, who
gives freedom of the press.*

*It is the **veteran**, not the poet, that
gives us freedom of speech.*

*It is the **veteran**, not the campus
organizer, that gives us freedom to
assemble.*

*It is the **veteran**, not the lawyer, that
gives us the right to a fair trial.*

*It is the **veteran**, not the politician,
that that gives us the right to vote.*

*It is the **veteran** that salutes the flag
and serves under the flag.*



The POW/MIA Table

The table occupies a place of dignity and honor. It is set for one, symbolizing each member of our armed forces missing from our ranks....comrades.

The small size table symbolizes the frailty of one prisoner alone against suppressors.

The white tablecloth indicates the purity of their intentions to respond to their country's call to arms.

The single red rose signifies the blood they may have shed in sacrifice to ensure the freedom of our beloved United States of America.

The yellow ribbon tied on the vase represents the demand for proper accounting of comrades not among us.

The lemon slice reminds us of their bitter fate.

The sprinkled salt on the plate is symbolic of the countless fallen tears of families as they wait.

The glass is inverted.....our comrades cannot toast with us.

The chair is empty...they are not here.

The candle glows with the light of hope which lives in our hearts to illuminate their way home.

Membership Chair Report
By: Don McArthur Maj. USAF, Ret.

A big THANK YOU to the membership for your outstanding support of the ROTC stipend project for 2009-10. I enjoyed presenting the \$500 checks to VSU and Lowndes ROTC units in May. The commanders were very appreciative of our gifts. The MOAA medals were also presented to the chosen cadets.

I am happy to report that eight newly commissioned Second Lieutenants joined national MOAA in May. There are three more VSU cadets to be commissioned this summer so hopefully they will join. I also presented a \$500 check to VSU ROTC unit.

Please continue to keep your "eyes and ears" open for new prospects for chapter membership. Invite them to a monthly meeting and maybe we can "snag" a new member or two each month. Gaining new members is the life blood of any organization. Remember to meet, greet and seat potential new members and guests.

News you can use from MOAA
As I See It:

By: Col. Steve Strobridge, USAF-Ret.

We shouldn't be surprised, I guess, to see Pentagon leaders once again ratcheting up their complaints about rising military health care costs, and asserting those costs inhibit funding for weapon system procurement.

They've been beating the same drum for the past five or six years, after all.

To be fair, it's not as if there was no justification for fee increases. Anyone who thinks military health care fees should never go up is living in a dream world. There's just no way to argue that service members whose retired pay might double, triple, or even quadruple over the course of several decades never should have to pay a single dollar more for health care than they did the day they left service.

But there are reasonable ways and unreasonable ways to approach that issue, and we haven't seen any reasonable proposals from the Pentagon yet.

What's particularly troubling is the seeming insensitivity and lack of perspective in the comments from the most senior defense leaders — military and civilian alike — the very people responsible for putting millions of service members in harm's way over the past decade.

Let's give them the benefit of the doubt and speculate some kind of fee adjustment might save hundreds of millions of dollars a year in health care costs.

That's a relative drop in the bucket compared to the hundreds of billions (with a "b") that study after study (including many by the Defense Department inspector general) has documented is wasted by the Pentagon's broken procurement and accounting practices.

But it's always easier to try to shift blame to others than to put your own house in order. So defense leaders miss no public opportunity to try to shift their budget responsibilities to military retirees and families.

The tone and implications of those comments are objectionable to career service members who repeatedly answered the call to protect our national interests in hot and cold wars over several decades.

The undersecretary of defense for policy recently was quoted as saying, **“[Many military retirees] in the private sector forego their private-sector benefits because it's better for them to stay in TRICARE. ... If there was an infinite pot of money, that would be fine. The problem is that there is not an infinite pot of money. So those dollars are dollars we can't invest in equipment. ... We have the military carrying people who have a private-sector alternative to health care because we've got the incentive structure wrong.”**

Now let's get straight who's been “carrying” whom.

For the past 60-plus years, in order to induce enough people to meet the national need for large standing forces, defense and service leaders have been telling men and women in uniform that, in return for putting up with the extraordinary demands and sacrifices inherent in a service career, they'd be provided lifetime military health care coverage.

But after they've completed those decades of service — often including multiple combat tours in Afghanistan and Iraq (during periods when the Army was desperately paying \$40,000 enlistment bonuses for any new recruit) — Pentagon leaders view them as undeserving drains on the budget if they have the effrontery actually to use their service-earned health benefit.

When defense leaders say such things, the message to troops — past, present, and future — is that no sacrifice is too great to demand of those currently serving, and no government commitment is too firm to forget after their service has been completed.

Once again, thanks but no thanks for your service.



Welcome New Members Dr. and Mrs. Owen Youles



Congratulations to Chapter Treasurer John Salter and wife Ruth on the graduation of sons Jeff and Josh from Valdosta State University.

June Meeting

Our next meeting is Thursday June 10, **6:00 pm**, at the Rainwater Conference Center on Norman Drive. Dinner is **at 6:30 PM**

Colonel Bill Boone will present our program. We enjoyed his presentation previously and look forward to another informative evening.

Please make your reservations through chapter secretary Buddy Johnson
Phone 229-561-0690(c) email buddy1612@bellsouth.net

Not later than Noon Monday, June 7

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

SGAMOAA
PO Box 5941
Valdosta, GA 31603