



Council Communiqué

MOAA Outstanding Newsletter 1997 & 98, 2001, 03, 05 & 06
Runner-up Outstanding Newsletter 1999, 2000, 2002, 2004
Florida Council of Chapters, Military Officers Association of America



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PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

CAPT. BILL MONK, USN (RET)

SO LONG - FAREWELL - GOODBYE!

Spring is here and that means that I will soon be handing over the reins of the Council to a new President at the Convention at Cocoa Beach. I hope you're all planning to attend, but if you've drug your feet and haven't registered, call Bill Keeney at 321-779-2341 and get on the list of attendees. You won't be sorry!

In the meantime, though, there is a more important matter to discuss with you. On April 2nd, three teams from your Council participated in MOAA's annual

Storming The Hill. We talked to Florida's Senators and Representatives about the importance of their support to pass MOAA's legislative priorities. This year the priorities were:

1. Support a minimum DoD budget of 4% of the Gross Domestic Product. This is the lowest share of the national economy since the end of WWII and, because of the wartime stresses on personnel and material, is the absolute minimum that the nation can bear without catastrophic results on our overall national security.
2. Support a ban on disproportional military health fee increases. The DoD asserts that rising health care costs are competing with weapons programs - but the reality is that the country CAN afford to pay for both weapons and military health care. The civilian leaders in the Pentagon have forced the Joint Chiefs to endorse higher health care costs by forbidding them to request realistic budgets. This practice must be halted, otherwise there will be long-term effects in retention and personnel readiness.
3. Eliminate the financial penalties for military-caused disabilities and deaths. The Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission has recommended elimination of current unfair laws that make disabled military retirees and survivors forfeit part or all of their service-earned military compensation when military service caused the member's disability or death. You probably know these programs better by their common titles, "Concurrent Receipt" and "SBP/DIC Offset"

Although we gave it our best shot, we still need your help. Tear out and mail in the letters and cards you'll be getting in the Military Officer magazine. And pick up the phone and dial 1-866-272-6622 and ask for your Senator's or Representative's office. When you get it, ask for the staffer who handles military/veterans affairs and say you want him/her to support the three MOAA issues. While you're at it remind him/her that your personal representatives from the Florida Council came to call on April 2nd and you expect that they were well-received.

Now to the sad part of this column. This is the last one I'll have the pleasure of writing for you and it's the last time you'll be hearing my harangues on one subject or the other. Some of you might consider THAT a pleasure, but I hope that you'll remember what I have been hollerin' about and take the action that you were famous for during your time on active duty. The Florida Council is tops in the nation and it's up to you to see that it maintains that position. Don't let MOAA - or the Nation - down.

In the meantime . . . Please keep our Comrades in the Profession of Arms in your thoughts and prayers.
Cheers, Bill



MOAA ISSUES

LtCol John Feldmann, USAF (Ret)
Legislative Chairman

Our Florida Council president, Bill Monk, will have returned from "Storming the Hill" when you read this. As of March 7, 2008, both our senators and 25 representatives had cosponsored less than 22 percent of our total desired legislation. The representatives had cosponsored less than 33 percent of the five House bills being emphasized during his visit. The Pentagon is attempting to increase TRICARE fees and copays about \$2,000 per family per year.

Both MOAA and the "United Services Disabled Retirees" (USDR) have recently sent out alerts to ask members to all act opposing scheduled Medicare cuts. We need both Senator Nelson and Senator Martinez to become immediate cosponsors. Go to the MOAA WEB page : <http://capwiz.com/moaa/issues/alert/?alertid=10534466>. ACT NOW (takes less than 2 minutes and costs nothing!) USDR is quoted below:

"On 1 July 2008, Medicare will cut physician payments by more than 10 percent. This cut will be a disaster for both Medicare and TRICARE patients, as 60 percent of physicians say they will be forced to limit the number of new Medicare and TRICARE patients they can treat. Senator Debbie Stabenow has introduced S.2785 which is an excellent step to preserve seniors' and military retiree access to health care.

As both a senior with Medicare and military retiree with TRICARE, I strongly urge you to sponsor companion legislation for S.2785, the Save Medicare Act of 2008. This legislation impacts both seniors on Medicare and military retirees on TRICARE. Realize that TRICARE reimbursement ratios are keyed to, but may not be greater than Medicare reimbursement ratios.

As you are aware there looms a great health care crisis in our country. A physician operates a small business: a medical practice. While the costs of doing business continue to increase, Medicare physician reimbursements have been decreasing according to the defective Sustained Growth Rate (SGR) formula of Medicare law.

This is a problem for patients, military retirees, and their families, because it will force doctors to refuse new Medicare patients, discourages many from being able to invest in new health technology and makes many consider cutting staff or closing their medical practices altogether.

S.2785 would suspend the Medicare physician reimbursement cuts for 18 months and will not increase the cost of permanently fixing the fatally flawed SGR formula. The 18 month suspension will allow some stability into the system for seniors and physicians forced to make difficult practice decisions because of now scheduled payment cuts."

Our benefits are under severe attack. Every one of you will pay if we lose. Get Active Now! I'll report in June what effect, if any, you've had on increasing co-sponsorships.

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2008 FCOC CONVENTION

LT Bill Keeney, USN
2008 Convention Chairman

Registration for the 2008 Florida Council of Chapters (FCOC) of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) Convention has been good, but not spectacular. As of March 31st we have 135 personnel registered, not including some folks that are sure to attend (including the Council Communiqué Editor, who [I'm assured] mailed his the day that this was written).

The registration "cut-off" is April 18th, but we can probably accommodate some "late-comers" after that date. Please be aware that Cape Canaveral Chapter (the host chapter) representatives will be on the telephone to Chapter Presidents (who have not signed up) during the next couple of weeks to encourage *your Chapter's* participation.

We believe that we have developed a superior program for the "new" three-day convention format - - and that *your* attendance will benefit you, your Chapter, the FCOC and the MOAA.

Registration Forms are available on-line at the FCOC Web Site (under Convention or The Council Communiqué) - - so sign up today for business, camaraderie, education, and/or just a darn good time in Cocoa Beach on May 2nd thru May 4th. You may well be glad that you did

**STATEWIDE VETERAN
BENEFIT PICNIC**

Claudia Moriarty
Tavernier Elks Lodge

My name is Claudia Moriarty, and I am on the Veterans Committee of the local Tavernier Elks Lodge. I love being a part of it - the Elks built the first VA hospital and have been helping veterans ever since. On May 3 they are holding an all day picnic (*Army of HOPE Picnic*) with music, food, beer activities and more for \$20 for adults and \$10 for children 10 and under at lodges around the state of Florida. All the funds go to helping veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts. Funds go to amputees, families of recently deceased, are used to help families of the deployed with expenses such as car repairs or replacing a refrigerator that they can't afford and more. I thought your members might want to attend or participate, tickets are available now -- the locations of the participating Elks Lodges and phone numbers are:

- ◆ Pompano 954-781-2300
- ◆ Eustis 352-343-5000 or 352-343-4692
- ◆ Punta Gorda 941-637-2606 or 941-639-8180
- ◆ Sebastian 772-589-1516 or 772-589-6426
- ◆ Warrington 850-455-5522 or 850-453-3825
- ◆ St. Augustine 904-471-2829 or 904-471-4123
- ◆ Fla. Keys 305-852-1872

If any of your people want to help -- ask to speak to the people organizing the Army of Hope Picnic when calling the lodge.

EDITORS NOTE: President Bill Monk thought that this might interest members who would *not* be attending the 2008 FCOC Convention in Cocoa Beach. Sure looks like a worthy effort.

**IN MEMORIUM**

Capt John R. Watts, USMC (Ret)
28JUL1935 - 20MAR2008

Passed away at home in Port Charlotte, Florida.

A "Mustang," John Watts, who retired from the United States Marine Corps in 1972, had served his beloved Corps as a Drill Instructor at Parris Island - - and in two (2) tours in the Republic of Vietnam.

According to his daughter, Linda LeClair, he had recently purchased a set of "Dress Blues," which he dictated be "given to some who can't afford them."

"Military, family and helping other people. That was his goal and his way of life." according to his daughter, Linda - - who also said that (the doctors) "could not understand why he was still here - - He just still had work to do."

Very involved in his community, John served on the Regional Planning Council and chaired the Board of Zoning Appeals and the Planning and Zoning Board. He was also a member of the Marine Corps League, the Military Officers Association (MOAA), and the Charlotte County Veteran's Council - - and was a Past President of the Florida Council of Chapters, MOAA.

John is survived by his wife of 51 years, Norma; a son Frederick of Venice; daughters Mary E. Shepard of Chapel Hill, NC, and Linda of Deep Creek, FL; and sister Ellen J. Shaw of Baltimore, MD.

Donations in his memory may be made to his church, the Hope Lutheran Church, 14200 Hopewell Avenue, Port Charlotte, FL 33981.

EDITOR'S NOTE: My thanks to Norma Watts and Neil Hughes of the Charlotte Sun-Herald for their contributions to the above.

CHAPTER/CLUB HAPPENINGS

◆ **ST. PETE AREA CHAPTER** earned two awards in the MOAA Communications Competition. Their Military Message Center (MMC) won a "Unique Communications" Award for Category II (300-399 members).

The chapter's newsletter, the *Officers Call* was also recognized as 2nd Runner-up in the Print Newsletter Category.

◆ **CAPE CANAVERAL CHAPTER** won a 2nd Runner-up Award for Large (600+) Chapters for their Web Site (www.moaacc.org).

The chapter's newsletter, the *Intercom* was awarded the Best Legislative Coverage - Print Newsletter Award.

◆ **SARASOTA CHAPTER** won the Best Print Newsletter Award for

Category I (400-599 members) for *The Sarasota Breeze*.

◆ **TAMPA CHAPTER** tied for Second Runner-up (Category I) for their Web Site.

The Chapter was also recognized with a Unique Communications Award for their Wives Club's *Chit Chat*, a monthly print and electronic newsletter for Auxiliary Members and Military Spouses.

◆ **PENSACOLA CHAPTER** was awarded Best Legislative Coverage - Print Newsletter for the *PMOAA Beacon*.

◆ **MAYPORT CHAPTER** won Best Web Site for Category III (200-299 members).

The chapter was also named 1st

Runner-up, Print Newsletter for their *Highlights*.

◆ **CLEARWATER CHAPTER** took 2nd Runner-up, Print Newsletter, Category IV (120-199 members) for their *Drumbeat*.

◆ **LAKE AREA CHAPTER** took 2nd Runner-up, Print Newsletter for Category V (less than 120 members) for their *Lake Area Newsletter*.

◆ **FLORIDA COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS** won the Best Print Newsletter Award for the *Council Communiqué*.

We were also recognized with a Unique Communications Award for the Florida Military Message Center/Interstate Military Message Center (FMMC/IMMC) - - and took 2nd Runner-up for our Web Site.

The **COUNCIL COMMUNIQUÉ** is the newsletter of the Florida Council of Chapters and is published bimonthly: February, April, June, August, October, and December with a special convention issue published in March. A current issue of the Council Communiqué can be found at the Florida Council of Chapters Web Site: <http://www.moaaf.org/>. Opinions expressed by writers are their own, and may not express the positions of the FCOC or the MOAA.



Council Communiqué

FLORIDA COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS

MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

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Quotable Quotes: Spring is nature's way of saying, "Let's party!" - - Robin Williams

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