



MOAA MATTERS IN REVIEW

By LtCol Fred Edwards, USMC (Ret)
Past President, Florida Council
Chairman, Councils and Chapters Committee
National MOAA Board of Directors

MOAA Deploys to Tampa

I don't know any place else in the country where you can participate in a star-studded national-level series of presentations for only \$15. Many of these individuals don't easily agree to any audience because they are so busy helping to run the United States of America. Others don't normally congregate right here in Florida like they will on Nov. 16 and 17 at the newly refurbished, upscale InterContinental Tampa Hotel in Tampa. But they'll be there.

It kicks off Friday, Nov. 16, at 1 p.m., with MOAA's second annual professional symposium, "The Role of the U.S. Military in Homeland Defense." Here the experts will tell you where we stand and what they think about it, and will give you a chance to question them. Experts? You bet. Coast Guard commandant Adm. Thad W. Allen; National Guard Bureau chief Lt. Gen H. Steven Blum; and NorthCom commander Gen. Victor E. Renuart Jr. Florida Governor Charlie Crist also has been invited.

If that's not enough VIPs, come back on Saturday morning, Nov. 17, for a Congressional breakfast. MOAA has invited both U.S. senators, along with six representatives whose districts are near Tampa. Following that is the annual meeting, featuring Air Force General Mike Carns, chairman of the board; and Navy Vice Admiral Norb Ryan, MOAA president.

And that's not all. Following the board meeting comes the chairman's luncheon. The scheduled speaker

is Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates. After lunch, MOAA's experts will host seminars about subjects such as legislative issues, military benefits, and financial planning.

Remember that all of this -- breakfast, luncheon and speakers -- costs no more than the \$15 registration charge.

While you are in Tampa, you might want to take advantage of MOAA Vacation's special seven-day Thanksgiving cruise aboard Holland America's ms Veendam, that gets underway the next day, Nov. 18. If you come with us, you can visit Key West, Belize, Guatemala, and Costa Maya, Mexico. Unfortunately, the cruise cost is not included in the \$15 for the events at the InterContinental Tampa Hotel. But for a seven-day cruise, the starting cost of \$749 for an inside stateroom is pretty doggone competitive. Plus, you'll have the chance to cruise with other MOAA folks.

Hope to see you there!

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL *(Cont'd from Page 2)* - - Use the MOAA Washington Capitol switchboard to reach the offices of our representatives at 1-866-272-6622 if you prefer direct contact with the staff liaison person from your district.

The Senate has approved \$794 million for military projects in Florida. The projects are contained in the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriation Act of Fiscal Year 2008. The bill now goes to conference to be reconciled with the House version of the bill.

MOAA members who are concerned about legislation beyond our specific charter will find the WEB site for "Taxpayers for Common Sense" at: <http://www.capwiz.com/taxpayer/home/> of interest. I suggest chapter legislative liaison committee chairpersons review the site for utility and comment to their members.

IMPORTANT DATES

- 2007** Nov 16 Fall Board Meeting - Tampa
- Nov 15-17 MOAA Annual Meeting - Tampa
- 2008** Jan 1 Chapter Roster Information Forms due to Council Secretary
- Jan 5 EC, SE, & SW AVP Nominating Committees formed - Nomination(s) for President due to Council Secretary
- Jan 9 Proposed Resolutions/Bylaw Changes to Bylaw&Resolutions Chairman
- Jan 19 Proposed Annual Business Meeting agenda items due to Council Secretary
- Feb 1 List of 2007 Chapter Deceased members/spouses due to Council Secretary
- Feb 4 Alternative nomination(s) for President due to Council Secretary
- Feb 8 - 9 Winter President's/Board Meeting - Cocoa Beach
- Mar 1 Chapter Dues payments due to Treasurer
- Mar 4 Annual Business Meeting Agenda due to Chapters/Clubs
- Mar 5 Proposed Resolutions/Bylaw Changes approved at the Winter Board Meeting sent to Chapters/Clubs
- Mar 25 EC, SE, & SW AVP Nominees due to Council Secretary
- Apr 21 Qualifying Chapter Absentee Ballots due to Council Secretary
- May 2 - 4 Council Convention - Cocoa Beach

Veterans Group Seeks More Money For Nursing Homes

By COL JERE MOORE, USA (RET)
State Legislative Affairs Chairman.

The State Veterans Planning Group has endorsed legislative proposals from the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs to seek more money for veterans' nursing homes and developed its own requests to help returnees from Iraq and Afghanistan.

At its 20SEP meeting, the advisory group composed of representatives of veterans organizations in the state endorsed FDVA proposals to:

w Give preference to businesses owned by disabled veterans in state purchasing, hoping to overcome objections in the Legislature to previous bills by avoiding conflict with preferences for minorities and women and limiting the preferences to state purchases rather than including cities and counties.

w Increase to \$200,000 per year from \$100,000 the payment to the nursing homes from so-called "stamped tags" such as for tags for wounded veterans, National Guard members and Iraq war veterans. Unlike the service tags, the stamped tags do not cost extra.

w Exempt the nursing homes trust fund from the annual 7.3 per cent assessment that goes to general revenue.

w Give nursing home administrators flexibility in providing personal care such as haircuts beyond the \$35 monthly allocation for each patient.

w Establish a standard for display of POW/MIA flags on state buildings, with the U.S. flag on top, state flag next and POW/MIA flag below. This would apply only to state buildings.

w The FDVA budget request that will be released later by the Governor's Office..

The proposals from veterans service organizations would:

w Provide a tuition reduction at state community colleges and universities for Florida veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom and the Global War on Terror, the amount to be decided in the legislative process.

w Provide state financial support for vans that take veterans to VA hospitals particularly the 54 operated by the Disabled American Veterans.

w Allow veterans who entered service after 1987 to add their wartime service time to state retirement by contributing to the state pension fund as now allowed for pre-'87 veterans..

w Provide a cash bonus for Florida veterans of OIF, OEF and the GWOT.

The group decided that proposals to require schools to take a holiday on Veterans Day that failed in the Legislature in recent years should be dropped in favor of local veterans organizations getting school boards to observe the holiday as 56 counties do now.

Finally, the Governor and Cabinet have approved the

design for the Support Our Troops auto tag and it should be available soon - - but remember, buying the service tags provides more support for the veterans homes.

Military Officer

By VIOLET M. SMITH
MOAA Auxiliary Member Committee

The Military Officer magazine is considering doing an article on the experiences of survivors of military members killed in combat from WWII to the present and how those experiences may be different or similar over time and the impacts of changes in survivor benefits and support available. Our focus is on stories from WWII, Korea, Vietnam and the current War on Terror in Afghanistan and Iraq. We are looking for MOAA auxiliary members (if possible) who lost their spouses in these conflicts and would be willing to share these experiences. A subsequent remarriage does not disqualify interested persons. Please talk to your chapter membership to see if you have members who would qualify and be willing to be profiled for this article. You can contact us at auxiliarycommittee@moaa.org. Please provide the survivor's name, address, phone number and e-mail address if one is available. Also let us know in which war/conflict the Military Officer's life was lost. So far we have one or two survivors from Vietnam and the present War on Terror; however, we will accept more names as they become available. We would really at this time like to have some names from WWII and Korea.

On behalf of all the members of the MOAA Auxiliary Member Advisory Committee, I thank you for your interest and any help you may be able to provide.

Something To Think About!

By Rush Limbaugh:

I think the vast differences in compensation between victims of the September 11 casualty and those who die serving our country in Uniform are profound. No one is really talking about it either, because you just don't criticize anything having to do with September 11. Well, I can't let the numbers pass by because it says something really disturbing about the entitlement mentality of this country. If you lost a family member in the September 11 attack, you're going to get an average of \$1,185,000. The range is a minimum guarantee of \$250,000, all the way up to \$4.7 million.

If you are a surviving family member of an American soldier killed in action, the first check you get is a \$6,000 direct death benefit, half of which is taxable.

Next, you get \$1,750 for burial costs. If you are the surviving spouse, you get \$833 a month until you remarry. And there's a payment of \$211 per month for each child under 18. When the child hits 18, those payments come to a screeching halt.

Keep in mind that some of the people who are getting an average of \$1.185 million up to \$4.7 million are complaining that it's not enough. Their deaths were tragic, but for most, they were simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. Soldiers put

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