

# MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

## ALAMO CHAPTER



# THE



# LARIAT

Volume 27, Number 9



September 2007



## President's Message

Another month has just flown by. As I author this, it is 3 hours before my wife, Ruby, and I leave on a 2 week land-cruise vacation to Alaska. Obviously we are excited about this trip but I must complete my article prior to leaving so that you will have another timely issue of the Lariat come September.

Perhaps you have noted the recent Lariat editions have been sent out on a much timelier basis. We are also posting the Lariat on our website. If you have the capability, I ask each of you to visit our website regularly ([www.alamomoaa.org](http://www.alamomoaa.org)). Our webmaster, Gene Culp, makes it a website of which we can all be proud.

Speaking of volunteers, I would be remiss if I didn't make special mention of our own Volunteer of the Year, Rhoda Philby, who has been recognized by the United Way and by the Ft Sam Houston leadership as being our Volunteer of the Year and a great American. Because of continuing health issues, she is passing the baton of Editor to Gene Culp who will be ably assisted by Trish Meserve, our outstanding contract administrator.

However, Rhoda will continue in an advisory capacity because of her superb talents and great attitude. Again, congratulations Rhoda, you are the best and our chapter membership gains much from your expertise and your enthusiasm for the organization.

It was exciting for me personally, and from the chapter perspective, for the Ft Sam Houston Garrison Commander, Col Wendy Martinson, to tell me she was so happy that accommodations could be made to keep our chapter on the post. For our branding efforts, I want to thank in particular Phyllis Smith and David Patrick for working so hard at putting our name out there. By the time you read this we will have participated in another fundraising venture with KLRN. I hope some of you saw our spirited volunteers in action.

I have been traveling significantly of late but, despite my absence, the organization is going forward with great vigor. I might even add that some of my good friends have told me that our recent staff meeting was

completed on a timely basis. I guess there is a message there! But none the less, I assure you members we have a leadership team that in my view is unparalleled in the history of the MOAA Alamo Chapter. It is a great team with wonderful camaraderie, a great spirit and with a can-do attitude that you just would not believe. This is a marvelous testimony to people who continue to give of themselves even after so many years of great service to our country. Take the opportunity to extend your hand to each of them at our luncheons and the various venues and say thank you for the service they provide to our chapter.

But as always there is room to improve and I continue to solicit ideas and suggestions that can make our chapter go forward.

We were honored again this year by receiving a 4 star recognition award from MOAA. That is a distinct honor for our chapter as only three chapters of twenty eight in Texas received the award.

(Continued on Page 5)



Rhoda Philby,  
Volunteer of the Year and  
out-going  
*Lariat* Editor.

Thanks,  
Rhoda, for a  
super job!!!

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### Welcome New Members!

Col Kerry Green  
Col Sam Hollenbeck  
Maj Guy Davis

## Volunteers Needed!

Can you spare some time? MOAA-AC needs you! Please help us make this the best chapter ever. Currently we need the following:

Assistant Webmaster  
Assistant Membership Chairman  
Assistant Programs Chairman  
Historian  
Transportation Coordinator  
Gardener(s) for Red Cross Bldg  
Active Duty Liaisons

Plus, we always need helping hands at the bi-annual picnics (before and after), the Retirement Days at the various bases, and the collection of items for the installation's Family Centers.

We welcome Joshua Jose who has volunteered to help with membership.

Please consider becoming a volunteer and call me (210) 497-3225, or Walter Grinfield (210) 674-5659 or the MOAA-AC office (210) 228-9955.

*Martha E. Curtis*

Please patronize our  
advertisers!

## In Memoriam

We received the news that the following members have passed away. We wish to convey our sincere condolences and best wishes to the families and loved ones:

Mrs Evelyn D. Carp  
July 21, 2007

CWO3 Hugh Cochran  
August 13, 2007



## Attention Golfers!

Alamo Chapter will host its first annual MOAA-AC Golf Tournament next spring on Friday, March 28<sup>th</sup> at the Fort Sam Houston Golf Club (Loma course).

Play (four person scramble format) will begin at 1:00pm with a shotgun start and will be followed by an awards dinner in the clubhouse.

Entry fee is \$75.00 with net proceeds going to the chapter's Scholarship Fund and other local military service organizations.

Mark your calendar and check future editions of the Lariat for more detailed information.

*St Col Gene Culp*



## Adopt a Program - WFSC

The following items are needed by the Warrior and Family Support Center. Any offerings will be collected at the September 26 Oktoberfest picnic supper at Eberle Park.

**School items:** pencils, notepaper, folders, notepads, ballpoint pens, crayons, rulers, non toxic glue, blunt scissors.

**Snack items:** Fruit that needs no peeling, crackers, microwave popcorn.

**Personal Items:** feminine hygiene products, hair products, shaving items, hair brushes, combs, sun screen, body lotion, lip balm.

**Misc:** Disposable cameras, phone cards



## Cookie Angels

Lots of angels sprinkled their wings with flour last month or provided needed items and thereby brought good cheer to the soldiers:

Jim Balogh  
Aina Blake  
Jerry Bonin  
Irene Collier  
Frank and Dolores DeVille  
Nita Felder  
Susan Filipini  
Dixie Flory  
Barbara Horvath  
Sue McCarthy  
Mac & Lori McDonald  
Claudia Milam  
Bo Mills  
Lolly Orlowski  
Frank & Helga Parks  
Herta Taylor  
Susie Tolman  
Phyllis Smith  
Phyllis Wallace  
Donna Wenz  
Dot Wise  
Tom and Evelyn Woods

## MOAA-AC Polo Shirts

Show your colors!  
(blue with red lettering)  
Show your pride!

Alamo Chapter Polo Shirts are here!

The shirts are a 60/40 cotton-polyester blend.

To purchase, stop by the office any weekday morning or attend the Oktoberfest picnic supper on September 26<sup>th</sup>. The price of the shirt is \$25.00.

# LEGISLATIVE REPORT



The report this month is in two parts. The first part is a report on the Veterans Forum that was held August 5<sup>th</sup> at the downtown campus of UTSA. Our Deputy VP for Legislative Affairs, Ed LeFebvre, attended the Forum and has written the following report:

## **Veteran's Forum Held in San Antonio**

By Lt Col (Ret) Ed LeFebvre, USAF, BSC

A congressional Veterans Forum was held Sunday, August 5, 2007, at the downtown campus of UTSA before an overflow crowd. The forum featured the House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman, Bob Filner (D-CA) as well as Texas Congressmen Ciro Rodriguez (D-Dist 23), Charlie Gonzalez (D-Dist 20) and Henry Cuellar (D-Dist 28). The congressmen each opened with some brief statements.

Chairman Filner stated that his committee has added 30% to the VA budget. The additions include money for health care and an increase in the burial allowance. The increase also budgets for an additional one thousand claims processors since the VA has a huge backlog of unprocessed claims. The committee has renamed the concurrent receipt issue the Disabled Veterans Tax which has raised it to a new level of interest as Congress members react to taxes. Hopefully this relabeling will prompt Congress to pass full concurrent receipt.

A VA hospital for South Texas was a big topic although some of the members of the audience appeared to be confused about the role of the Veteran's Administration vs. the Department of Defense which is the governing agency for Brooke Army Medical Center and Wilford Hall Medical Center. The Texas congressmen at the forum are working with their colleagues in the Rio Grande Valley and have already drafted a bill to make it happen. The Express-News of 8 August 2007 reported this again after their visit to the Rio Grande Valley with US Representatives Solomon Ortiz and Ruben Hinojosa from that area. Unfortunately, my experience with a similar issue in Virginia is that least a five-year lead time is needed to get it done but that is five years sooner than if they never get started.

The issue of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was preeminent in the minds of many attendees. Chairman Filner wants to change the claims system to model it after the IRS. The VA would accept all claims subject to audit rather than continually ask for more information. He stressed the need to get the VA out of an adversary system for dealing with claims and change to a sys-

tem that accepts claims in a timely manner subject to a later audit.

The San Antonio Express-News, in an article starting on page one of the following day's edition, reported the shouting and accusations by a few veterans who were not interested in the submitted questions that the panel had hoped to address had personal axes to grind.

The vast majority of veterans present were from Viet Nam. Chairman Filner reported that there are at least 200,000 homeless Vietnam veterans. The most tragic statistic he reported was that there have been as many Viet Nam veterans who have committed suicide as were killed in the war.

I wish the congressmen the best of luck in making their proposed budget increases a reality.

The second part of this column is a report about a visit to Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison's San Antonio office. (As a part of our efforts to visit our two Senators and four Congressmen during the August recess, we mailed letters to the two Senators and Congressman Lamar Smith. When Ed LeFebvre attended the Veteran's Forum, he hand delivered the letters to the other three Congressmen).

I received a call from Senator Hutchison's Regional Director, Mr. Tony Jaso, and we arranged a visit for August 15. As our President was out of the city, our Executive VP, Jim Cunningham, accompanied me to Senator Hutchison's office. We spent just over an hour with Mr. Jaso. He has been on Sen. Hutchison's staff for about a year and is responsible for the San Antonio, El Paso, and Corpus Christi areas.

We discussed all the subjects that are currently important to MOAA National plus a few more things. We discussed the immigration problem for some time. Senator Hutchison had an immigration meeting in El Paso which Mr. Jaso also attended. He advised us that the Senator was very strong on border security and was able to get an amendment passed that called for input from local law enforcement personnel on the location and design of the fence that will be constructed along the border. (This is not one of the priorities of MOAA National, but certainly of interest to all of us here in Texas)

He also said he would send us a letter stating the Senator's position on all the items of interest to MOAA and some other bills that MAJ Cunningham identified as being of interest to the Alamo Chapter. Both Jim and I feel we were able to establish a good working relationship with Tony Jaso that will help us in the future. He is an energetic young man who likes his job with the Senator. (Continued on Page 5)





# Membership

As an old retired infantry officer, I often think of my thought processes while I was on active duty. The terminology used during operations was found in Field Manual 101-5-1.

As your vice president for membership, I am also in need of certain terminology for recruiting. Permit me to extract some of the FM 101-5-1 terminology and apply them to my MOAA job. Remember, FM 101-5-1's are primarily tactical terms; but for this article, I will tweak them slightly to apply these to our chapter. Here are a select few:

**MAIN BODY:** The principal part of a tactical command or formation. It does not include detached elements of the command, such as advance guards, flank guards, or covering force, etc. In our chapter, that would include the membership, our auxiliary, and solitaires.

**AREA of INFLUENCE:** It is a geographic area the size of which depends upon the mission, organization, and equipment of the force involved.

In our chapter, it is the greater San Antonio area.

**JOINT OPERATION:** An operation carried on by two, or more, of the Armed Forces of the United States.

In our chapter, it is the various branches of our members helping to bring together new members, for our chapters, from every branch of service. (I `really' tweaked this one, but you get the point).

**MOVEMENT to CONTACT:** An offensive operation designed to gain initial ground with the enemy, or to regain lost contact.

In our chapter, we must make contact with our fellow officers (certainly not the enemy), to let them know about MOAA and the Alamo Chapter. We must regain contact with those members who have dropped out for various reasons, and encourage them to rejoin us.

**PRIORITY of FIRES:** Direction to a fire support planner to organize and employ fire support means in accordance with the relative importance of the supported unit's mission.

In our chapter, it is my job as VP Membership to identify the officers who can be recruited to MOAA. Included are active duty officers at Randolph, Lackland, Ft Sam Houston; the Guard and the Reserve, and the many retirees settling in the greater San Antonio area.

**REINFORCE:** To strengthen a force by committing additional forces, supporting elements, or supporting fires.

In our chapter, this is when I ask you, (the members), to help and support our recruiting and retention efforts. You are the key to success in membership. You are the force.

**STAFF ESTIMATE:** The staff officer's expert evaluation of how factors in his particular field of interest will influence the courses of



Deputy Exec VP, Gil Rodriguez, presents our July luncheon speaker, Col Richard Clark, 12TFW Commander, with a MOAA token following Col Clark's remarks about significant upcoming events at Randolph AFB.

action under consideration by the commander.

In our chapter, your staff meets monthly, to plan and conduct the operations of our chapter. Using the strategic plan as our guide, we come up with the operations to help our president to, successfully, implement our mission and vision.

**SUSTAINED RATE of FIRE:** Actual rate of fire that a weapon can continue to deliver for an indefinite length of time without seriously overheating.

In our chapter, I don't believe any one has worked that hard, in recruiting, to have reached the point of exhaustion....overheating. (I know; this is `really' tweaking), but the reality is there have been but a few members, who are very diligent, with their recruiting efforts. *Thank you for your sustained rate of recruiting.*

**WARNING ORDER:** An advance notice of an action or an order that is to follow. It is intended to give subordinates time to make necessary plans and preparation.

In our chapter, this call to recruiting new members has gone out long ago.

Well, as you can see; I am having some fun with these terminologies. But, in actuality, they are applicable to our recruiting and retention efforts. However, having said this; *I do not apply these terms at home!*

As always, thank you in advance for your efforts.

*Maj Josh Welch*

## President's Message

(Continued from Page 1)

I want to close with one particular request. Legislative advocacy is critical now and will always be critical in our mission. We have two wonderful leaders in our legislative area, Frank Parks and Ed LeFebvre, who are tried and true advocates in their own right, as well as our Exec VP Jim Cunningham who, as First Vice President of the Texas Council of Chapters, is their legislative arm. Contact them with your legislative concerns.

Also, please email or write your Senators and Representative to let them know how you feel about legislative issues. Remember, so many of them at the national and state levels have never sacrificed in the way each of us has, away from home, while serving our country under sometimes very adverse conditions. I ask all of you to regularly be strong advocates because you each vote.

Thank you for allowing me to be your President, it is a distinct honor and I take it very seriously. God bless America.

*LT Col Ed Marvin*

## Legislative Report

(Continued from Page 3)

So that you know what MOAA National is working hardest on, and what we discussed with Mr. Jaso, these are the five items:

1. SBP Inequities
2. Concurrent Receipt
3. Oppose TRICARE Increases
4. VA/DOD Transition Services
5. Active Duty Pay Raise.

*Maj Frank Parks*



Remembering the victims and the sacrifice of 9/11/01

## Exec VP's Corner



This month, I want to talk with you about some goals that we, as members of the Chapter, should all be working toward.

Earlier this year the Chapter officers created a Strategic Plan, approved by the Board of Directors, to guide the Chapter in the coming years. We did this to develop goals and "op-orders", if you will, for us to follow in developing the health and growth of the Alamo Chapter to be a force for advocacy in San Antonio and the State for our members, spouses, and widowers. In addition, we want to expand our participation with other veterans groups in the San Antonio area and to become a leader among them.

Each of your officers has set standards and goals to meet for his or her position. We revisit these each staff meeting to see where we are and to discuss areas where we may need to give additional emphasis or volunteer assistance. We are trying to create redundancy of jobs by involving two or three volunteers in selected positions to cover and lead when the primary officer cannot be there. This insures goals and assignments are met and trains replacements for current officers. I encourage you to call our volunteer coordinator, Martha Curtis, to determine what volunteer efforts you might be able to assist in. We have developed job descriptions for each area so that you will know exactly what you are getting into!

Another key element, which we can never emphasize enough, is that of membership. In order to remain a viable chapter and a leader in San Antonio and the State, we need to always recruit members to the Alamo Chapter. Josh Welch, our Membership Vice President, is trying valiantly to increase member-

ship, but he cannot succeed without OUR help. This means it is the **Duty** of all chapter members to look for opportunities to sign up new members. We meet former officers every day who may belong to MOAA National or may have never heard of MOAA. We need to educate them about MOAA and get them interested in joining both the national organization and Alamo Chapter. I ran into a former officer quite by accident the other day in a sporting goods shop. As we talked, I found that he belonged to MOAA but was not aware that there was a local chapter. I had a membership application with me and he is now a member of the Alamo Chapter! It is as simple as that. Carry a copy of the membership form with you! You might just as likely run across potential members at Church, the Commissary, the Rotary, etc. The old Boy Scout adage of "being prepared" holds true here. Keep copies of the membership applications with you! Our brethren in the El Paso Chapter have gone so far as to sign members up in the latrine, and it works!!

I also want to comment on our luncheons. I understand there have been complaints that our luncheon costs are too high. I can understand that this might be such a perception. However, I assure you the cost of our luncheons, believe it or not, is very inexpensive compared to other organizations. For example, MOAA chapters in Houston and the DFW area charge from \$25 to \$35 for their luncheons. The Alamo Chapter charges only for the cost of the meal, including any surcharge by the club, and the cost of entertainment, if any. This allows most of our luncheons to cost only \$15 to \$16. The only time that we charge more is our Christmas Party, which we try to keep at \$25. The luncheons are not, and are not (Continued on Page 13)



## Deputy Executive VP

### LTA: The Other Pilot's License!

Many of us in MOAA have served our country as pilots. Did you ever want to get a totally different flight rating like the LTA? I almost did. LTA stands for Lighter Than Air, a bona fide FAA regulated license. I am speaking of hot air ballooning.

The first recorded hot air flight was conducted in France in October of 1783. The first pilot – and passengers (take your pick) – were a duck, a rooster, and a sheep. They landed safely. So, on November 21, 1783, the Marquis d'Arlanders and Pilatre de Rozier earned the honor of being the first humans into the air (fire and smoke).

That was more than a century before the Wright brothers got off the ground. In the U.S., the Navy was the first to explore balloon flight as a possible war tool and brought it into the modern age.

Naval Aviators rated LTA were only one Gold Wing on their chest rather than the normal Gold Wings. They flew blimps, which were lovingly called "poopy bags" and, you guessed it, they were called "poopy bag pilots". Today, there are more than 6000 LTA-rated pilots in the U.S.

The training consists of 8 hours of instructor training and 10 hours of ground training, all at a cost of around \$3500. If you're diligent, you can get your solo in on a long weekend.

The next step is to buy a balloon. They range in price from \$25,000 to custom-made beauties for \$250,000. Add to that a trailer to haul your balloon and tools (including lots of duct tape!), ballast, helium tanks, etc. Then there's the cost of traveling to competitions or shows plus motels and food for you and the crew. As you can see,

only someone with a lot of money really endures in this sport.

My wife, Andy, went to Albuquerque on business and ended up in a balloon as thanks for helping "crew". Never mind the business part of the trip – it was during the National Balloon Festival and no one worked!

She was so excited about the sport, she and I went to Plano Texas for a balloon flight safety day, and I'll admit I was tempted. Then, like hot air balloons cooling off, we came to realize that one could never launch a balloon in Harlingen, where we lived at the time.

You can't launch in winds stronger than 8 mph, and anyone who knows anything about the Valley knows the wind NEVER blows less than 20 mph. And that's on a calm day!

Andy and I abandoned our dream of ballooning around Texas and I of having another kind of pilot's license. To be perfectly honest, if you ever get me in one of those things, I'm going to have to take my CD player along. I need the sound of aircraft engines just to feel safe!

I'm told rides are great gifts for birthdays and anniversaries. And, if you want to see something spectacular, go to the National Balloon Festival in Albuquerque coming up the second week in October.

You'll not only see regular balloons, big and small and colorful, but all the Services have balloons (for recruiting purposes I assume), and the special shapes are really 'special', i.e., soda cans, tennis shoes, cartoon characters, and the like. Hopefully it won't rain!

*LDCR Gil Rodriguez*



## Treasurer's Tid Bits

### Tax Issues with Capital Gains and Dividends

Under the Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003, generating long-term capital gains or investing for dividend income could be two of your big opportunities to save on taxes. Be aware that the Act of 2003 created "sunset provisions," however, meaning that the tax rates on both capital gains and dividends may go up again unless congress acts to extend the rates. The lower rates are currently only legislated through 2008, although many observers believe these rates will eventually be made permanent.

#### Capital Gains

**Rates:** The maximum tax rate on net capital gains from assets held 12 months or more has been reduced to 15% (from 20%) for most taxpayers and reduced to 5% (from 10%) for taxpayers in the 10% and 15% tax rate brackets for property sold or otherwise disposed of after May 5, 2003 (and installment sale payments received after that date). The reduced rate applies for both the regular tax and the alternative minimum tax.

(Note: The higher rates that apply to unrecaptured section 1250 gain, collectibles gain, and section 1202 gain have not changed.)

**Tax Treatment of Capital Losses:** If you incur losses from the sale of a capital asset, you can deduct those losses to the extent they offset capital gains from the sale of other assets. If your losses exceed your gains, you can only deduct up to \$3,000 (\$1,500 if you are married and filing separately) of capital losses in a tax year against other income on Form 1040. You can carry losses forward and continue to deduct \$3,000 (\$1,500 if filing separately) annually against other income until your losses are used up.

**Other Issues:** A long-term gain generally applies to assets held for a  
(Continued on Page 7)



## Treasurer's Tid Bits

(Continued from Page 6)

minimum of one year or more. Short-term capital gains are considered as part of your Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) and taxed at your ordinary income tax rate. Investors must avoid "wash sales" (selling and repurchasing the same or virtually the same asset), and you should also be aware of potential Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) implications of taking large capital gains.

### Dividends

**Changes Create Tax Savings Opportunities:** In the past, dividend income was treated as just another source of ordinary income, and taxed at your normal tax rate. Now, the same 15% (or 5%) maximum tax rate that applies to net capital gain also applies to dividends paid by most domestic and foreign corporations after December 31, 2002. For taxpayers in higher brackets, this represents a significant reduction. Certain dividends from regulated investment companies such as mutual funds, real estate investment trusts, and certain foreign corporations do not qualify for the reduced rates. There are also some holding requirements. Consult your tax professional for more details.

As with capital gains, the Tax Relief Act of 2003 also created "sunset provisions" for dividend rates, so tax rates may go up again unless Congress acts to extend the rate reductions. The lower rates are currently only legislated through 2008.

*LJC Dan Cummings*

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*Although the information has been gathered from sources believed to be reliable, please note that individual situations can vary therefore, the information should be relied upon when coordinated with individual professional advice.*

*Source: Financial Visions, Inc.*



## Solitaires



September brings Texas potential tropical storms and even hurricanes.

Yes, it's stormy weather time, reminding me (who would have guessed) of yet another great song, 'Stormy Weather', sung initially in 1933 by Ethel Waters at Harlem's Cotton Club and later recorded in 1941 by Lena Horne, who continues to be widely associated with the tune, both in sheet music and CD recording remakes.

With our recent hot, humid, and on and off rainy or stormy days, a slight paraphrase of the song's words seems appropriate, *'Don't know why — There's no sun up in the sky, Stormy weather. Just can't seem to get my stuff together. Keeps rainin' all the time. When you went away, the blues walked in and met me; If you stay away, old rockin' chair will get me; All I do is pray, the Lord above will let me, Walk in the sun once more...'*

Let us hope in the next several weeks that we'll have a minimum of stormy weather during our Solitaires and other chapter events.

In August, we had our luncheon on the 7<sup>th</sup> at the Sam Houston Club, and our Sunday Brunch on the 26<sup>th</sup> at Randolph. As we stated last month, in September, the luncheon will be a potluck and pool party at the home of Susie Tolman on the 8<sup>th</sup>, at 11 a.m. Partaking of the pool aspect is optional (and the swimming will be moved inside in case of stormy weather — just kidding).

As is our group's tradition, ladies please bring a dish or wine and men please bring even more wine. Please call Mary Gossage if you haven't yet obtained directions to Susie's home.

September's Sunday Brunch will

be at the Randolph AFB Officers Club on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, beginning at 11 a.m. for champagne and brunch at 11:30.

Also in September, Oktoberfest will be held at the Eberle Park picnic area on Randolph AFB on the 26<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. So please plan on joining your fellow chapter friends and acquaintances for some good camaraderie, a festive atmosphere, and fine outdoor served cuisine.

In October, the Solitaires regular luncheon will be at the Sam Houston Club on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the Sunday Brunch will be at Randolph on the 28<sup>th</sup>. We also plan to attend a play at the Harlequin Dinner Theater in mid-October. The exact date will be provided at upcoming Solitaires events and in the October Lariat.

For the above and any other activities, members will be contacted by our callers. Questions or new inquiries should be directed to Mary Gossage at 830-249-2374, e-mail: [fourche@gvtc.com](mailto:fourche@gvtc.com).

*— If you are a single man or lady and like to eat, chat, make new friends, experience or provide sometimes brief impromptu or scheduled interesting demonstrations, talks, or discussions, whether you are: visiting the area; active duty or retired; widowed or divorced; or a Nurse; the SOLITAIRES is the group for you.*

*This is a wonderful opportunity to enjoy camaraderie with other single men and ladies whose backgrounds and experiences are or have been with the military.*

*Maj Len Mull*

*You have earned this...  
Relax, Enjoy,  
Escape.*



*friends • family • festivities • fun*

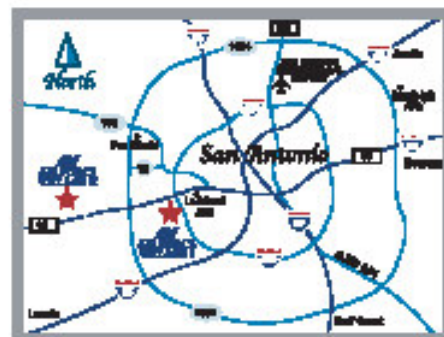
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## Benefits, Health & Welfare

## HCAC Update



### No SBP premiums in 2008

ARLINGTON, Va. (AFRNS) – Participants in the Uniformed Services Survivor Benefit Plan for retired military members now have a new milestone to mark on their calendars.

Effective October 1, 2008, SBP participants who reach 70 years of age and have made 360 payments (30 years), will no longer have to pay premiums for continued SBP coverage and will be placed in "Paid-up SBP" status. Paid-up SBP provisions were mandated by the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal 1999. The law also established a paid-up status, also beginning on October 1, 2008, for participants in the Retired Serviceman's Family Protection Plan once they reach 70 years of age.

No action is required of SBP participants to be placed in Paid-up SBP status. Once the eligibility criteria has been met, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service will automatically stop deducting premiums from qualifying military retired pay accounts.

The law establishing Paid-up SBP does not allow for refunds of premiums paid before October 1, 2008, even though a retiree may have reached age 70 and made 360 or more premium payments.

DFAS is currently developing changes to the military retiree pay systems that will monitor the number of SBP premiums paid and the age of the participant. The system updates are targeted for a May 2008 completion date. At that time, SBP participants who will be eligible for Paid-up SBP status on October 1, 2008, or will meet eligibility within a short time of the implementation date, will be notified by mail of their impending paid-up status.

Those military retirees who become eligible for Paid-up SBP status after the initial group will be notified of their SBP status on their December 2008 annual Retiree Account State-

ments that will note the number of premiums paid to date. Each RAS issued after December 2008, whether annually or as a result of a pay change, will include the Paid-up SBP premium "counter," based on DFAS records, to help retirees monitor their eligibility status.

More information on Paid-up SBP, including frequently asked questions and news updates, should be available at the DFAS Web site at [www.dfas.mil/retiredpay.html](http://www.dfas.mil/retiredpay.html) within the next several months.

*(Courtesy of the Defense finance and Accounting Service)*

\*\*\*\*

### VA Establishes Suicide Hot Line

WASHINGTON – To ensure veterans with emotional crises have round-the-clock access to trained professionals, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has begun operation of a national suicide prevention hot line for veterans.

"Veterans need to know these VA professionals are literally a phone call away," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson said. "All service members who experience the stresses of combat can have wounds on their minds as well as their bodies. Veterans should see mental health services as another benefit they have earned, which the men and women of VA are honored to provide."

The toll-free hot line number is 1-800-273-TALK (8255). VA's hot line will be staffed by mental health professionals in Canandaigua, N.Y. They will take toll-free calls from across the country and work closely with local VA mental health providers to help callers.

*Source: Dept of Veterans Affairs Press Release*

\*\*\*\*

I recently attended the quarterly Health Care Consumer Advisory Council at FSH chaired by BG Gilman, Commander of the Great Plains Regional Medical Command (GPRMC).

Much of the discussion related to the Wounded Warrior population, reaffirming that group as being the #1 priority for medical care at BAMC. New (at least new to me) acronyms were used at the meeting. They are: WT (Warrior in Transition), WTU (Warrior in Transition Unit) and SAMSM (San Antonio Multi-Service Market).

A major amount of time was dedicated to discussing the current priorities at BAMC for "Access to Care." This hierarchy, as presented, follows:

- 1) WT assigned/attached to BAMC
- 2) WT assigned/attached to WTUs in the SAMSM
- 3) WT assigned/attached to other GPRMC WTUs
- 4) Advanced Individual Training (AIT) students
- 5) AD permanent party assigned to FSH
- 6) AD permanent party in the SAMSM
- 7) AD permanent party in the GPRMC
- 8) TRICARE Prime enrolled at BAMC
- 9) TRICARE Prime enrolled in SAMSM
- 10) TRICARE Prime enrolled at MTFs in GPRMC
- 11) Non Prime referrals with GME value
- 12) Space Available (Standard, Extra, TPlus, TFL.)

BAMC is not accepting new retiree enrollees with the exception of active duty FSH assignees who retire locally.

It was announced that as of 15 September 2007, WHMC will also no longer accept new retirees.

It was not mentioned whether WHMC will adopt a similar program to BAMC for new active duty retirees.

The specific date for the LAFB Health Care Consumer Advisory Council meeting has not been officially announced.

*Col Stuart Myers*

# Chapter Events Calendar

## SEPTEMBER

3 *Volunteer Hours Due*

**5-7 AETC Training Symposium RAFB**

5 *Staff Meeting 9am MOAA-AC Office*

5 *Veterans Administration Volunteers Mtg 1pm*

**8 Solitaire's Pot Luck 11am**

12 *Volunteer Advisory Council Mtg 9am*

14 *Lariat Article Deadline*

**20 PX/Commissary Mtg**

20 *Lariat to Printer*

**23 Solitaire Brunch 11am Randolph O Club**

25 *Extravaganza Recruiting - Sam Houston Club*

**26 Oktober Fest Eberle Park 5:30pm**

27 *HCAC Mtg Lackland*

Ongoing:

Cookie Angels delivering to Warriors & Family Support Center

## OCTOBER

1 *Volunteer Hours Due*

**2 Solitaire's Luncheon 11am Sam Houston Club**

4 *Staff Meeting 9am MOAA-AC Office*

**5-6 TCC Meeting Grapevine, Tx**

10 *Volunteer Advisory Council Mtg*

10 *MOAA-AC Board Meeting*

15 *Lariat Article Deadline*

**18 Membership Luncheon Sam Houston Club**

25 *Lariat to Printer*

**28 Solitaire Brunch 11am Randolph O Club**

30 *Extravaganza Recruiting - Sam Houston Club*

Ongoing:

Cookie Angels delivering to Warriors & Family Support Center

Note: Events **bolded** are for the **general membership** and *italicized* are for *staff*, though members are always welcome.

## NOVEMBER

1 *Volunteer Hours Due*

1 *Staff Meeting 9am MOAA-AC Office*

**3 Retiree Days Ft Sam**

**6 Solitaire's Luncheon 11am Sam Houston Club**

**11 Ft Sam Cemetery Veteran's Day Ceremony**

14 *Volunteer Advisory Council Mtg*

15 *Lariat Article Deadline*

20 *HCAC Mtg Ft Sam*

23 *Lariat to Printer*

**25 Solitaire Brunch 11am Randolph O Club**

27 *Extravaganza Recruiting - Sam Houston Club*

**29 Chapter Luncheon RAFB O Club 11am**

**30 Decorate VA Hospital Hospice Ward**

Ongoing:

Cookie Angels delivering to Warriors & Family Support Center

## DECEMBER

3 *Volunteer Hours Due*

**4 Solitaire's Luncheon 11am Sam Houston Club**

**5 Christmas Party 6:30pm Randolph O Club**

6 *Staff Meeting 9am MOAA-AC Office*

6 *VA Volunteers Meeting 1pm*

12 *Volunteer Advisory Council 9am*

15 *Planning Meeting*

17 *Lariat Article deadline*

20 *PX Commissary meeting*

23 *Lariat to Printer*

Ongoing:

Cookie Angels delivering to Warriors & Family Support Center



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## Benefits of Membership

- Our monthly newsletter, the *Lariat* which includes a calendar of events, is sent to each member, and includes both MOAA and Alamo Chapter news. Stay informed!
- Monthly luncheons, which rotate between the Randolph, Fort Sam Houston, and Lackland service clubs, feature informative speakers and are also open to guests.
- Benefit information of all kinds is provided through the Alamo Chapter. We have an experienced Vice President of Personal Affairs who can give quick answers to your and family members' questions, or who can research the more complex issues.
- The opportunity to enjoy the camaraderie of meeting fellow chapter members and their guests. We also plan for various social events, open to families and guests. In addition, our chapter features a singles group called the Solitaires, some of who are surviving spouses. The Solitaires have a busy social calendar.
- Automatic enrollment in MOAA national for one year, which includes the MOAA magazine, the *Military Officer*.
- Make your voice heard on proposed state and national military legislation which may affect you and your family. Both the Alamo Chapter and MOAA national welcome your views!
- Enjoy many benefits, discounts, and services, to include career planning. The Alamo Chapter also provides college scholarships to those who qualify. MOAA Travel helps you plan that great getaway, and is available for members.

Referred by: \_\_\_\_\_

The **Give Me 10! Campaign** offers some new options for membership. Two options (the second with a sub option) for joining are available:

1. You can join the local MOAA chapter (the Alamo Chapter) for one year membership for the price of \$25.00 (\$15.00 auxiliary - surviving spouse) and receive one year free membership in MOAA National (if not already a member). Please fill out the local chapter membership application form. Please make out a check for \$25.00 (\$15.00 auxiliary member) **payable to MOAA-AC** and **mail the form and check to our local chapter office**.

2. You can join MOAA National receiving two years membership for the normal price of one year - \$27.00 (\$24.00 auxiliary - surviving spouse). Please fill out the local chapter membership application form. Please make out a check for \$27.00 (\$24.00) (or Life Member dues) **payable to MOAA** and **mail the form and check to our local chapter office**. We will then initiate an additional separate national form for you and forward it and your MOAA National check to the national headquarters.

2.a. Then if you choose, you can additionally join the local MOAA chapter (the Alamo Chapter) for one year membership for the price of \$25.00 (\$15.00 auxiliary - surviving spouse). Please make out a separate check for \$25.00 (\$15.00) **payable to MOAA-AC** and include it with the form and check described in paragraph 2 above.

## Membership Application

(Annual Membership – renews January 1<sup>st</sup>)

Are you a member of MOAA National? \_\_\_\_\_



### Military Officers Association of America Alamo Chapter

Circle Status: Commissioned & Warrant Officers of all services - Active, Reserves, former, or Retired, National Guard, NOAA, PHS, Survivor.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(Print) Last First MI Spouse

Residence Address City State Zip

Rank/Grade Service Date of Birth

Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Business phone \_\_\_\_\_

Civilian/Military Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Firm/Unit \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail\* \_\_\_\_\_

\* May we have your permission to publish this information in the Chapter Membership Directory? \_\_\_\_\_

(\*This directory and your e-mail address are exclusively for the use of the chapter and will not be sold or used for any other purpose than chapter communications and/or board approved activity.)

Would you like to access our monthly newsletter (The Lariat) at our website versus having it mailed to you? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you be interested in being active in chapter volunteer activity? \_\_\_\_\_

In what area(s) would you like to assist (e.g., member recruiting, personal affairs, JROTC awards, public relations, programs & events, phone calling, other or wherever the need is greatest)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

### CHARITABLE OUTREACH PROGRAM

Please accept my tax-deductible donation of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to (check one)

# Outreach Fund \_\_\_\_\_ As designated by the Alamo Chapter \_\_\_\_\_

# a fund for a yearly college scholarship and other charitable programs and services.

**Send To:**

**MOAA-AC, P.O. Box 8037, San Antonio, Tx 78208-0037**

**For questions please call (210) 228-9955 or e-mail: moaa-ac@sbcglobal.net  
Also visit our chapter's website at [www.alamomoaa.org](http://www.alamomoaa.org)**

**Please feel free to copy and provide this form  
to prospective members.**

8-15-07

## Vice President's Corner

(Continued from Page 5)

intended to be, a money making endeavor of the Chapter. I emphasize though, that if you make a reservation and don't attend or don't pay for the luncheon meal, you hurt the Chapter, because we are still charged for your meal. In future, when making reservations by telephone, please leave your name, address, telephone number, number attending, and meal selection, as applicable.

I also remind you that the Congress is on vacation during August. Now is the time for you to review the legislative goals that MOAA has laid out and which I covered last month. Once you have done so, call your Senator or Representative. Tell him or her or a staff member how you feel about these legislative goals and the items that are coming up with the Military Authorization bill in September. We can only affect the changes that we want if you, as a member of MOAA and the Alamo Chapter, make your views known. Make these elected officials understand that we are in favor of long overdue benefits and fixes of problems for current service people and veterans.

*Maj Jim Cunningham*



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Scholarships	Wounded Warrior Report Released	
<p><b>MOAA Alamo Chapter offers three scholarships:</b></p> <p><u><b>The Colonel Clarence T. Torrey Community Service Scholarship</b></u> awards \$2,000 to a graduating high school senior. Information and application is available through the Bexar County Scholarship Clearing House – see the senior high school counselors in San Antonio and Bexar County. If the applicant lives outside Bexar County, applications will be available at the MOAA-AC Office. Application deadline is Nov 3.</p> <p><u><b>The MOAA-AC Scholarship</b></u> awards a \$500 scholarship to a graduating high school senior whose parent/grandparent is a member of MOAA. Additional information and application is available through the Bexar County Scholarship Clearing House – see the senior high school counselors in San Antonio and Bexar County. If the applicant lives outside Bexar County, applications will be available at the MOAA-AC Office. Application deadline is Nov 3.</p> <p><u><b>The MOAA-AC ROTC Scholarship</b></u> awards a \$500 scholarship to a graduating high school senior who is enrolled in one of the Junior ROTC Programs supported by MOAA-AC. Applications will be available through the MOAA-AC Office and full details and application deadlines will be available at a later date.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>LtCol Dan Cummings</i></p>	<p>President Bush's Wounded Warrior Commission recently released its findings and recommendations. Former Senator Bob Dole and former Health and Human Services Secretary to President Clinton, Donna Shalala, chaired the panel. MOAA testified before the Commission in April.</p> <p>The Commission was established to find ways to improve care and services for wounded troops following reports of substandard outpatient care and administrative problems at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. The Commission made six major recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Create a patient-centered recovery plan for every seriously injured service member</li> <li>2) Establish a single disability rating system, with DoD/Services determining fitness for continued service and the VA assigning disability ratings for those determined to be unfit for duty</li> <li>3) Aggressively prevent and treat post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI)</li> <li>4) Significantly strengthen support for families of the wounded</li> <li>5) Rapidly transfer patient information between DoD and VA</li> <li>6) Strongly support Walter Reed by recruiting and retaining first-rate professionals through 2011</li> </ol> <p>MOAA strongly endorses the majority of the recommendations. We do, however, have significant concern over two recommendations. First, the Commission would distinguish between disabilities incurred in combat or combat-related events from those from non-combat related events. Non-combat disabled retirees would be given only VA care and their spouses/dependents would be ineligible for any government health care (except if the servicemember later died of a service-connected cause).</p> <p>MOAA strongly objects to distinguishing between combat-related dis-</p>	<p>abled and other service-disabled retirees for the purpose of awarding basic military benefits such as earned retired pay and TRICARE coverage. DoD has an employer's responsibility to all military retirees. If they're injured badly enough to be retired, then health care is part of the retirement benefit. In the process of trying to honor the combat-related wounded, we must guard against dishonoring thousands of others who are no less disabled in service to their country. The purpose of the Commission was to improve care. The last thing we expect to come out of it is a benefit cut for non-combat-disabled retirees and their families.</p> <p>The second major concern is that the Commission proposes new VA earnings-replacement payments that would cease at age 65 and be offset or replaced by Social Security payments. Social Security and other "safety net" social insurance programs available to all Americans are not a substitute for VA disability compensation. In addition to paying into Social Security like all other Americans, disabled servicemembers paid huge premiums of service and sacrifice in defending their country. There's a huge difference between becoming disabled in defending your country and becoming disabled for General Motors. Those who earn VA compensation have earned it as a supplement to other benefits available to the general population. Congress has long recognized that, and shouldn't backtrack from it now.</p> <p>With these reservations, MOAA wholeheartedly endorses the Wounded Warrior Report recommendations, and we urge the President to task DoD and the VA to implement its major recommendations as soon as possible.</p> <p><i>Source: MOAA Legislative Update, July 27 2007</i></p>





## Chaplain's Corner



A few weeks ago, in many of our churches, we heard a couple of stories about being persistent.

The first was an Old Testament story where Abraham was trying to talk God out of destroying the evil city of Sodom. He asked God if He would destroy the righteous along with the evil. He asked God if He would spare the city if there were 50 righteous people. God sort of agreed and Abraham asked if 45 would be enough to save the city "Would you destroy the city for the lack of five?"

Abraham really worked at it -- he was very persistent, albeit it unsuccessful. He had also been persistent asking God to allow him and his wife Sarah to have a son. He became the father of many - he was persistent.

In the second story, a man is visited during the night by a neighbor who needs a favor - some bread for a visitor. The neighbor won't take "no" for an answer and after a while the first man gets out of bed to grant him the favor. The bothersome neighbor was, like Abraham, persistent.

Both men were persistent about doing good. MOAA-AC is working very hard - it has been for many, many years, trying to do good. And we have been persistent in speaking with legislators and politicians and groups with intentions like ours to do what is right for our brothers in uniform.

We are being persistent about doing good. And that is good - very good. We need to continue to be persistent, as our small voices have a great impact. Blessings.

*R. K. Ames +*

The Reverend Richard K. Ames, Lt Col, USAF (Retired)



## MOAA-AC "Stars"

August 6, 2007 provided a wonderful opportunity for the Alamo Chapter to assist our community. If you watched the McNeil News Hour that evening, you saw your fellow chapter members in action.

The participants were: Top Row: Barry Martin, Mac McDonald, Jerry Gonzales, Jim Cunningham, Jack Downey, Jack Neal, Irene Collier.

Bottom Row: Carl Marmion, Randy Hoff, Nancy Platzner, Todd Platzner, Gene Culp, Phyllis Smith, Gil Rodriguez.



## Alamo Chapter

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	Tue Col Irene Collier
	Wed LTC Ken Vandergrift
	Thur CPT Walter Grinfield
	Fri CWO2 Barry Martin

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### Statement of Publication

The Lariat is the newsletter of the Military Officers Association of America—Alamo Chapter. It is published once each month to inform the membership of issues and activities of interest to all.

MOAA-AC is a non-profit organization within the state of Texas organized to represent the membership and to support the activities of the Texas Council of Chapters and MOAA National.

Advertising contained in the newsletter is not endorsed by the Chapter and does not represent any recommendation to the membership.

Opinions expressed in articles contained herein are not necessarily those of the membership as a whole or the Chapter. Questions should be directed to the Editor, at the Chapter office.

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**Wednesday September 26, 2007**

**Picnic Supper**

## **Oktober Fest**

**Eberle park**  
**Social Hour beginning 5:30pm**

**Entertainment by Rennie Guenther & Company**

**Catering by The Bavarian House Restaurant**

**Weiner Schnitzel**

**Red Cabbage, German Fried Potatoes, Green Beans**

**Iced Tea, Bread & Butter**

**Wine, German Beer, water and some sodas provided**

**\$20.00 per person Enclosed: \$\_\_\_\_\_**

**RSVP By Noon Monday, September 24th**

**Name(s)\_\_\_\_\_**

**Non members are welcome with reservations & contact info**

**Send Reservation slip & check made payable to**

**MOAA-AC, P.O. Box 8037, San Antonio, TX 78208**

**Or notify us of your reservation by email moaa-ac@sbcglobal.net**  
**or by phone (210) 228-9955.**

**Reservations not cancelled by noon Monday 24th will be billed.**



### **Directions to Eberle Park** **Randolph Air Force Base**

Enter RAFB at main gate (Pat Booker Rd & FM78).

Make a left at the first intersection onto First Avenue East.

Turn left again onto First Street East. Follow road in front of enlisted housing area towards the fence and FM78.

Turn right onto FF Street. Continue on until it turns into Perimeter road, follow this road for 2.5 miles to the park.

### **On Line Lariat Only?**

If you would prefer to read your Lariat on-line rather than receive a printed copy, sent us an email with the subject line as OLLO and we'll gladly remove you from the printed version mailing list. We will notify you when the new issue is available for viewing.

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