

THE SOUTHERN MARYLAND **NEWSLETTER**

MOAA-SOUTHERN MARYLAND CHAPTER

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February 2009

Taps

Marilyn Eastwood passed away on 02 February 2009 from complications of pancreatic cancer. She was 73. She became a nurse in 1957 and practiced her profession until she became ill in 2007. Her husband, CAPT Gerald W. Eastwood, USN-Retired, resides in Lusby.

Presidents Corner

Last month, Major Evelyn Widmer, USAR-Ret, was installed as our new Chapter President. Let's welcome Evelyn as she takes the helm and charts the course for our voyage for the next year (or two). In the meantime, I wish to thank each of you for your contributions and efforts during my tenure as President for 2007-2008.

Semper Fidelis,

Joseph Bush

The Dining Out

The good news is that those who attended the annual Chapter Dining Out last November all had a wonderful time. The food was great, the guest speaker (Maryland Secretary of Veterans Affairs James A. Adkins) was great and a good time was had by all! The bad news is that a total of only thirty-six people attended the event, which is billed as "the high point of our social calendar"! Of those thirty-six, twelve were guests (both paying and non-paying), twelve were board members and their spouses and only twelve were other chapter members and their spouses. (For reference, the chapter has 164 members and over 100 spouses.) The Dining Out this year cost the chapter almost \$440 and is a tremendous amount of work for the Board of Directors. As a result, the Board has decided that there will be some major changes to our final event of 2009. It will probably be on a Saturday afternoon instead of the evening and it may be at a local restaurant instead of the O'Club. We will probably drop the formal Dining Out format. We may continue the toasts, but alter the toasting procedures. We will provide more details as our plans firm up during the year, but if you have any strong feelings on the subject, feel free to talk with any of our Board Members.

Congratulations

Tony Blankenship, our Chapter First Vice President, officially retired from the Navy on 01 February 2009. Our congratulations to Tony.

Annual Dues

We are in the middle of our annual Membership Renewal Campaign. Membership renewal letters were sent out in January and many of our members have already responded. If there is "08" under your name on the address label of this newsletter, we are still waiting to hear from you. Please send in your dues today while you are still thinking about it! (The address is at the top of this newsletter.) Dues are still only \$15 for Regular Members (active duty, retired and former officers) and \$5 for Auxiliary Members (surviving spouses of deceased officers who would, if still living, be eligible for membership). Please remember that dues are our only source of income and we thank you for your continued support of our chapter.

Year of the Chapter

National MOAA is running a program this year called "The Year of the Chapter". The objective of the program is to increase chapter membership. Only about 20% of national MOAA members are also chapter members. That means that nearly 300,000 MOAA members do not belong to a chapter! If you know of anyone who is an MOAA member, but is not a member of the chapter, please encourage them to join our chapter. Ask them to contact our Chapter President, Evelyn Widmer, at (301) 737-6313. Membership in the chapter is free for new members for the first year.

MOAA Membership

Increasing membership in national MOAA is critical to the success that MOAA has influencing legislation on Capitol Hill. Some recent successes include TRICARE For Life, repeal of the age 62 "Widows Tax" on the Survivor Benefit Plan and an increase in pay for active duty personnel from 3.4% to 3.9%. If you know of any military officers (currently serving, retired or former), or the surviving spouses of military officers, ask them to contact our Chapter President, Evelyn Widmer, at (301) 737-6313. Membership in national MOAA is free for the first year and the chapter gets credit for recruiting new members to national MOAA.

Call For Action

Lately, there have been some messages flying around the Internet saying that the Obama administration is planning to eliminate TRICARE For Life as a cost cutting measure. This is not true! There are some cost cutting ideas floating around Washington that could have a significant impact on health care for military personnel and veterans. These include charging active duty families (and some veterans) a fee for using military hospitals and clinics, establishing an enrollment fee for TRICARE For Life, doubling TRICARE fees for military retirees under the age of 65, imposing an enrollment fee for TRICARE Standard and increasing TRICARE Standard deductibles. First of all, it's important to know that these ideas are not new and some of them were in the Bush administration's annual budget in 2008. In fact, Chapter Board Members Jack Fringer and Tom Smith discussed all of these issues with our Senators and Representatives at MOAA's "Storming the Hill" in April 2008, and none of these ideas got off of the drawing board. So, are we saying there is no cause for concern? Absolutely not! We have no idea what the new President might put into his first budget proposal to Congress (which should come out sometime this spring), but there is no guarantee the new budget won't include such proposals. We do know that with the nation's economic problems and skyrocketing annual budget deficits, every area of the national budget will be coming under scrutiny for possible cutbacks. What can you do, as an individual, to see that the military and veterans communities don't bear an unfair proportion of solving the nation's economic problems? The February issue of Military Officer Magazine (which you should have already received) contains four tear-out letters to send to key Congressional leaders, urging them to sustain a defense budget that will fully fund both personnel and weapons systems, and protect beneficiaries against unfair health care cost shifting. Pull out the letters, sign them (if you want to add a personal note, that's even better), put your return address on them, stamp them and mail them. It's that easy, and together, we can make a difference! Besides, if you don't do it, who will???

Chapter Meeting

There will be no Chapter Meeting in the month of February. The details are not yet firm, but we plan to hold a luncheon meeting on Saturday, 21 March, probably at Petruzzi's Italian Bistro in the Wildewood Shopping Center (where Perkins Restaurant used to be). Look for all of the details in the March newsletter.

*****BOARD OF DIRECTORS*****

The Board of Directors will meet
at 1830, 17 February, at the home of
Tom and Evelyn Widmer.

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