



SENCLAND SENTINEL



Military Officers Association of America
SENCLAND Chapter
P.O. Box 3971
Wilmington, NC 28406
January 2012 – Editor, Ken Finch (910) 395-5189

COMING EVENTS

JANUARY MEETING and PROGRAM:

Date / Time / Place: Tuesday, 3 January 2012 at 1130 hours. *The Bluewater Grill* at Wrightsville Beach

Menu: Blackened Salmon Wrap with beans/rice, Greek Salad with Roasted Chicken, Bluewater Fish and Chips or Italian Chicken Melt sandwich with Pasta Salad side. Price - \$14.00 when you make your menu selection at the door. This price includes your entrée, beverage, tax and gratuity.

Program: **MR. TIM WIPPERMAN**, an attorney and U.S. Army veteran, was appointed Assistant Secretary for Veterans Affairs and Director of the N.C. Division of Veterans Affairs on 11 July 2011. He comes to this position with 21 years of active duty in the U.S. Army both as an officer and an enlisted man. He served with conventional and unconventional units. As an attorney, he has represented clients at all levels of the North Carolina state court system in criminal and civil cases. Wipperman earned his law degree in 2005 from N.C. Central University School of Law. He is a life member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, AMVETS, Association of the U.S. Army and Military Officers Association of America Association, as well as a member of the American Legion, the American Bar Association and the N.C. Bar Association. You'll want to hear about the top issues on his plate and how he is representing you and the almost 800,000 veterans in N.C.

We have opened this program to other veterans throughout southeastern NC. This program has been coordinated with the New Hanover County Veterans Council. We urge your speedy RSVP.

RSVP: Bob Jones – 910-508-3331 or rjones@ec.rr.com NLT Friday, 30 December 2011.

FEBRUARY MEETING AND PROGRAM..

Date/Time/Place: 7 February 2011, 1130 hours, **Cameron Art Museum**. Due to major renovations upstairs at the Bluewater, we had to find an alternate location for one or two meetings. Our luncheon will be catered and as you know, this site is an excellent one and we'll have a wonderful program. Thanks for your understanding.

Message from the President..

Mrs. Claus and 89 others had a great time at the December meeting and Holiday party! The food was scrumptious, merriment was abound, the Coastal Christian High School Chorus was absolutely fantastic and the Ashley JROTC team performed a most inspiring Old Glory Flag ceremony. We did a Beach House raffle and raised \$335 for the USO 70th Anniversary – Wilmington Celebration event. We will do the drawing at

the January meeting as we had mail-in actions.

We're expecting a full second floor of attendees for our January meeting. A great way to greet the New Year. You will very much enjoy meeting Mr. Wiperman. And it seemed a good idea to give other veterans the opportunity to share in this occasion so I am sure that we'll have many new faces.

Our Honorary Member, Tom Russell (Step Up For Soldiers) hosted a fantastic holiday event the other night. Tom is heavily involved with the National Guard Family Readiness work and so there were a number of NG families there as well as many volunteers, etc. Great work Tom!!

Our work preparing for the 31 March 2012 celebration of 70 years of USO service throughout North Carolina continues and is moving into high gear. See the flyer within this newsletter. Please check out the www.uso-nc.org website and click on EVENTS and scroll down to Wilmington. You'll see our section. I really really need you to consider participating in the Marriage Vow Renewal ceremony on the Battleship if this is appropriate for you. Then...everyone...come on down to the Hannah Block Historic USO Building and Community Arts Center for a marvelous Gala Reception and Dance. It's expensive to put on these events but we need to support the USO-NC and raise awareness about the services this extensive organization provides for our service members and their families.

Mr. Wiperman will talk about the two new State Veterans Nursing Homes that will be opening sometime this spring. He'll also relay information about the new and upgraded VA health care facilities around the state. In January, the Veterans Affairs Commission will meet with the VA regional network Director and staff in Durham. A good opportunity for us.

We look forward to a busy and productive year. No question that the Department of Defense budget will be a huge focus of attention as we struggle as a nation to deal with our enormous budget deficit. And we welcome home thousands of troops from deployment in Iraq. We remain steadfast in support of our troops wherever they are assigned. Bless their families as well. Our nation has stood behind our military service members throughout this long haul and we won't stop "until they all come home"...Ring a bell my friends? Have a wonderful holiday season. Happy New Year to you and yours!
HOOAH

Col. (Ret) Jeri I. Graham, USA...

Chapter (Permanent) Nametags..

If you desire a chapter nametag, contact Secretary Bob Jones at rjjones@ec.rr.com or 508-3331...pay \$10 upon receipt.

Chapter Dues for 2012..

Dues are due in January 2012...use the dues form included in this letter and please add a contribution for the Scholarship Fund.

Roster Changes..

Add: Rod Shaffer, LCDR, USN, (Ret.) Debbie
1142 Avenshire Circle, Wilmington, NC 28412

Change Address:

Maj Lance Bevins,
USMC, Ret. (Ava)
PO Box 16490, Wilmington, NC 28408

Scholarship Donations..

Bob Foley	Bruce Bowden	Don Sayce	Chuck Chance
Joe Kinzer	Rick Neumeister	Ron Tilmon	Ed Jones
Joe Martin	Gordon Robinson	Bill Coombes**	Vic Evans
Jim Andrews	Dave Spetrino	Al Schroetel	J B Noll**
Joe Foley**	Barbara Foley**	Christine Pfohl	Joe Corbin
Ed Sniffin	Kitty Johnston	Elizabeth LeGwin	George Earnhart
Pete Erbe	Jim Dineen	Dick Husemann	Ron Lafond
Chuck North	Norm Torgerson	Jackie Wilson**	Haywood Davis
Paul Semmler	Jean Duncan	Martin Beach	Dick Freund
Dennis Myers	Charley Sunder	Don Petersen**	Al Stallings
Chueck Akstin**			Dana Peckworth*****

** Century Club (\$100 or more)

Bon Voyage..

Longtime chapter member BG Wilbert (Stu) Stewart has relocated to Daytona Beach Shores, Florida and is now affiliated with the Halifax Area Chapter...his email address is Stupat!@aol.com and his cell phone number is 386-341-5228.

U.S. Marines To Be Stationed in Australia..

The first 250 U.S. Marines will arrive in northern Australia under a new rotational training program in the first quarter of next year, a top Pentagon spokesman said recently.

Navy Capt. John Kirby also told reporters that the troops, who will begin spending six-month tours in Australia, will come from all over the Marine Corps, not just units based in the Pacific or on the west coast of the U.S.

According to the arrangement announced last week by President Obama and Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard, the eventual goal is for a full 2,500 person marine Air Ground Task Force to begin regular rotations into the port city of Darwin for ongoing training with Australian forces.

Obama and Gillard also announced that the U.S. Air Force would increase the training visits to Royal Australian Air Force bases across the northern part of the continent, also officially for the extended training for the RAAF.

The moves are widely seen as a signal to China that the U.S. is committed to preserving 'stability' in the Western Pacific – though U.S. officials say the military presence is not directed to any specific country.

Study Shows Transition to Civilian Life Harder for Married Troops..

Nearly half of the veterans who served since 9/11 have struggled with the transition back to civilian life – and being married is likely to make it harder, according to a survey recently released. The Pew Research Center, an opinion research group in Washington, looked at factors that predict whether a servicemember would have an easier or more difficult time stepping out of uniform, and the survey revealed that marriage negatively affects how well a veteran will do.

Those who were married during their service had a significantly tougher time after returning than did their single counterparts. Chances of an easy exit from the military dropped from 63 percent for single troops to 48 percent for married troops, according to the report.

The author, Rich Morin, said that the impact on family life during the multiple deployments of the last ten years of war is likely why married vets struggled. About half of married veterans said deploying had a negative impact on their spouse, and a majority of that group had family problems after being discharged. Overall, more than 60 percent of veterans who had marital problems while deployed had a hard time returning to civilian life.

Obama Mulls Military Benefit Penalties..

The Pentagon has sent the White House its proposed plan for cutting \$450 billion from the defense budget over the next ten years.

Ominously, Pentagon budget leaders say the plan focuses on personnel accounts more than weapon systems to achieve the bulk of the savings. It reportedly includes significant cuts in force levels, pay, and retirement and healthcare benefits, particularly in the form of higher healthcare fees.

MOAA objects strongly to this wrong-headed effort to impose major new financial penalties on the military community that already has sacrificed more for our country than any other group of Americans. Most retirees already have lost thousands in retired pay as a result of past budget cuts that depressed military pay (and subsequent retired pay) by as much as 13% or more. Hundreds of thousands of disabled retirees continue to fund their own disability compensation by forfeiting part or all of their earned retired pay. Tens of thousands of military widows continue to forfeit part or all of their earned military SBP annuities to fund modest VA survivor payments. More than a half-million current retirees served on active duty during the past decade of war that has imposed such unprecedented sacrifices of deployment, family separation and physical and psychological wounds.

The President and First Lady have gone out of their way to acknowledge troops' and families' sacrifices. Yet they now have in their hands a Pentagon plan to make military families the first targets of punishment for the government leaders' own financial sins.

Where is the sense of outrage at the inconsistency between Defense and Administration leaders' words and deeds?

If you believe, as MOAA does, that military beneficiaries should be last (not first) in line to suffer financial penalties for government leaders' decades of mismanagement, please send the President, Vice President, and Defense Secretary a strong message urging them to reject making military people-programs absorb a large share of defense budget cuts.

Brits to Sell Harriers to U.S...

It's been reported by normally reliable sources that Great Britain has agreed to sell all of its 74 decommissioned Harrier jump jets, along with engines and spare parts, to the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps – a move expected to help the Marines operate Harriers into the mid-2020s and provide extra planes to replace aging two-seat F-18D Hornet strike fighters.

Rear Admiral Mark Heinrich, chief of the U.S. Navy's Supply Corps confirmed the two-part deal recently during a conference in New York sponsored by Bank of America Merrill Lynch. He reportedly negotiated the \$50 million purchase of all Harrier spare parts, while Rear Admiral Donald Gaddis, the U.S. Navy's program executive officer for tactical aircraft, is overseeing the discussions to buy the Harrier aircraft and their Rolls-Royce engines.

Report Says 174 Soldiers' Ashes in Landfill..

Military records show that ashes of body parts from at least 274 members of the U.S. military were dumped in a landfill, the Washington Post reported recently.

The Air Force had previously said it was impossible to determine the extent of the dumping. The practice at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware was ended three years ago but only became public last month through a Post report. The families had authorized the disposal of body parts recovered in Iraq and Afghanistan – not complete bodies – but were not told the ashes would be given to a contractor. They are now disposed of through sea burial.

Military officials said they did not plan to let families know what had happened to their relatives. U.S. Rep. Rush Holt, D-NJ, said he was trying to get information on behalf of a constituent who had lost her husband in Iraq. He said he had received a letter from the Pentagon talking of the 'massive effort' it would require to search the records.

Holt was angry in a phone interview with the Post. "What the hell? We spent millions, tens of millions to find any trace of soldiers killed, and they're concerned about a 'massive' effort to go back and pull out the files and find out how many soldiers were disrespected this way? They just don't want to ask questions or look very hard."

Napolitano Says Long-Wolf Terror Threat Growing..

U.S. Homeland Security Director Janet Napolitano said recently that the risk of 'lone-wolf' attackers, with no ties to known extremist networks or grand conspiracies, is on the rise as the global terrorist threat has shifted. Such risks, Napolitano said in an interview in Paris, heighten the need to keep dangerous travelers from reaching the United States, and she urged European partners to finalize a deal on sharing passenger data that has met resistance over privacy concerns.

Napolitano acknowledged shifts in the terror threat this year, but said the changes had little to do with the uprisings that have overturned the old order in countries around the Arab world and opened up new opportunities for extremist groups.

Asked about the greatest current threats to the United States, she said one from al-Qaida has morphed. "From a U.S. perspective over the last several years, we have had more attacks emanating from AGAP (al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula) than from core al-Qaida," she told the Associated Press.

Britain Orders Iran's Diplomats to Leave UK..

Britain ordered Iran recently to remove all its diplomats from the U.K. within 48 hours following attacks on its embassy and a residential compound in Tehran – one of the most significant diplomatic retaliations against Iran since the 1979 U.S. embassy crisis.

Foreign Secretary William Hague told the House of Commons that Britain had also withdrawn its entire diplomatic staff from Iran after angry mobs hauled down Union Jack flags, torched a vehicle and tossed looted documents through windows.

The rare move to kick out a country’s entire diplomatic corps marks a significant souring of ties between Iran and the East, amid deepening suspicions over Tehran’s pursuit of nuclear weapons. Tensions were heightened in October when U.S. officials accused agents linked to Iran’s Quds Force – and elite wing of the powerful Revolutionary Guard – of a role in an alleged plot to kill the Saudi ambassador to the U.S.

Toilet Troubles Aboard American Aircraft Carrier..

It may seem like a trivial inconvenience in the broad scheme of things, but it’s become routine enough that some sailors aboard the Norfolk-based aircraft carrier George H.W. Bush say it’s affecting their morale in a rather big way as well as their health and their job performance. Since the ship left for its maiden combat deployment in May, its toilet system has suffered outages so frequently that crew members sometimes can’t find a single working commode.

Over the weekend, the mother of one Bush sailor became so upset by her son’s repeated reports of widespread toilet outages that she blasted a news release about it to reporters across the country.

“The sailors aboard the U.S.S. George H.W. Bush have already endured nearly six months with an unhealthy “inconvenience that most civilians would not tolerate for six hours,” Mary Brotherton wrote. “The taxpayers are outraged over the living conditions of the men and women onboard the ship.

PAYMENT OF ANNUAL CHAPTER DUES

Annual dues are \$15 for regular members and \$10 for surviving spouses. Please send your dues for 2012 to our chapter mailing address at:

**SENCLAND Chapter (MOAA)
PO Box 3971
Wilmington, NC 28406**

Name: _____ **Email Address:** _____

I am enclosing an additional \$ _____ for the ROTC Scholarship Fund. Names of donors will be published in the newsletter and donors will receive a letter of acknowledgment for tax purposes.