



# Mustang News



Vol. 28 No. 4

Quarterly Newsletter of the National Order of Battlefield Commissions

Winter 2007

Fellow Mustangs and Ladies:

As always, I hope you are reading this in good health and spirits. You may be asking yourselves just why Bob Evans is writing yet another Commander's Message, wasn't he supposed to turn over the helm to Roy Bunders at the October convention/reunion in Myrtle Beach? The answer is yes; however, Roy has been exceptionally ill, to the point he is unable to continue active participation as an officer in NOBC. We all wish Roy a speedy recovery and many more years. We are indeed fortunate that Steve Shivers, who was our deputy commander in 2004-2005, is back in good health, and is our deputy commander once again by acclimation.

Now comes the hard part. We had a wonderful venue for our 2007 convention/reunion, thanks to Joan and Ron Dungey. The rooms were very comfortable; the view from each room of the ocean and the Myrtle Beach was stunning. Our hospitality room (The Foxhole) was expertly run by Cathy Chain and her mother-in-law Sharon Chain, with wonderful snacks, and just the right libations. Our meals were probably the very

## Commander's Message

by Robert Evans



best in the history of NOBC conventions/reunions. We had a top-notch Marine Corps League honor guard. And for all of this we had a mere 16 NOBC active members in attendance. Our NOBC Constitution is clear, should we fall below 15 active NOBC members at any annual business meeting, we "fold the flag." With the numbers dwindling each year, having only one active member above critical mass this year was truly a red flag for the Board of Directors.

During the Board of Directors meeting the subject of attendance was a central theme. In a nut shell, the Board of Directors decided, and the membership in attendance ratified the following: The 2008 convention/reunion is to

be held in the Washington, DC metro area. The theme will be the formal cessation of NOBC as an active organization. Formal end of life ceremonies will be conducted at the Fort Myer Chapel, with formal flag folding at the NOBC memorial on the grounds of Arlington Cemetery. These plans come with a caveat: Should the attendance of active NOBC members at the 2008 convention/reunion be sufficiently large (exact numbers to be determined), and should the members in attendance vote to continue NOBC as an active organization, "flag folding" will be postponed.

We each must recognize that the inevitable cessation of NOBC as an active organization is at hand. There are sufficient numbers of active members on our rolls to attend future conventions/reunions and essentially keep NOBC afloat for a few more years; however, there is no one in our pipe line. To the best of our knowledge, the last commission that would qualify the recipient to be a member of NOBC was awarded nearly 35 years ago.

I wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season.

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Walter Duke, Jr. (3)  
 John J. Witmeyer (3)  
 Virgil L. "Butch" Goewey (2)  
 James L. Thompson (2)  
 Thomas Andrews (1)  
 David C. Sebright (1)

## Our Leaders Are Asking for Patience

The area of the World Trade Center represents our nation's financial strength. Obviously some of that strength has been greatly reduced since 11 September. It has helped us to "turn away from our obsession with personal peace and affluence" as theologian Francis Schaeffer recommended. National leaders are quoting the Bible and calling for prayer. People are praying for each other and asking for prayers. And at last even the media are treating faith with respect. Our leaders are also asking us to use patience in dealing with this. It may take months, even years, before we are satisfied. We must realize that the only true security lies in God's mercy. All this will require much patience. Perfect patience is an attribute of God. People have patience, some more than others, but never perfect. God expects us to be patient—it is one of the 9 fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). It is interesting that the King James version calls it "long suffering!" That's especially true for us now that we are dropping bombs and committing troops to the ground.

All of us must deal with having our patience tried but remember to wait on the Lord's timing—God is seldom early, but never late. Trust in the Lord's sovereignty over all things. "He who waits on the Lord loses no time" (Vance Havner). But wait-



Warren Schilling

ing gets tough—we had hoped for victory without war. Often we have learned to persevere, but that is not patience. In the Bible, Job showed both. "You know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance" (James 1:3).

Before 11 September it was easy to see moral compromise had brought things into movies,

TV, schools and other areas of our culture that would have been unthinkable 10 years ago. "The wicked strut about when what is vile is honored among men" (Psalm 12:8). Now leaders and many people looking at these faults are taking action to improve morality in these areas. Someone said "People need to be reminded more than instructed." But both of these are available from books by well known preachers and theologians—and hopefully from our own pastor. "May the Bible be preached with clarity and force, not cleverness and farce." Then when things aren't going well we will have a background to help us learn from our faults and failures. "Humble yourselves under God's almighty hand that He may lift you up in due time. Cast all your cares on Him because he cares for you" (Peter 5:6-7). And support your church by using your talents and abilities. Give God financial support before you spend much on trivial things. Give what is right—not what is left.

Fall, 2001

## From the Hawaii Editor's Desk

by Bill "Scotty" Wynn



## Mustang News

Mustang News is the official newsletter of the National Order of Battlefield Commissions. It is edited in Kapolei, HI & printed and mailed in Anadarko, OK. Four issues per year: Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter.

### Spring Issue Copy due February 1

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## TAPS

for Mustangs answering  
their final muster:

- 1003-Dale S. Albee-TX
- 264L-Evert E. Hoffman-NY
- 374L-Heber M. Hughes-NC
- 612L-David L. Keller-WA
- 1048-Gaspere J. Mannone-MA
- 706L-Russell McKelvey-SD
- 046L-Edward S. Murray-NY
- 070L-Stephen Parisi-MA
- 549-Sam Passero-NY
- 841L-Anthony A. Pellegrino-NY
- 947-James M. Sikorski-AZ
- 285L-Adolph F. Warnecke-NC

**Note:** In the Summer 2007 issue, the name of 018 Ford N. Kyes was misspelled Keyes. Our apology to Mrs. Sybil Kyes. We regret the error.

**Note:** We depend on family members, friends and members to inform us of the deaths of our members. Please provide Stan Schmucker, Admin. & Fin. Officer, with pertinent information and

## Taps

There will be a great encampment  
In the land of clouds today.  
A mingling and a merging  
Of our boys who've gone away.  
Though on earth they are disbanding,  
They are very close and near,  
For those brave and honored heroes  
Show no sorrow, shed no tear.  
They have lived a life of glory,  
History pins their medals high,  
Listen to the thunder rolling,  
They are marching in the sky!

--Artus Nottingham Chappus

### Letters from NOBC Next of Kin

*NOBC widows or next of kin receive a plaque and citation honoring their late husbands from Gib Bolton*

**From Susan Zaremski:** (Daughter of Bud Warnecke)  
Thank you for the beautiful plaque. We will treasure it and what it stands for.

### New Life Member

1151L David C. Sebright

### New Member & Life Member

1155L John R. Stevens  
2200 Sacramento St. #805  
San Francisco, CA 94115  
Hqs 1st Defense Battalion  
Fleet Marine Force  
USMC (South Pacific)

### Private to 2d Lieutenant

In the Summer issue, Lloyd "Buck" Newsom #1097, asked how many Mustangs received their commission while still a Private. The following was received in response to his inquiry.

**1086 Abraham Levy**  
Co F, 255th Inf Regt  
63d Inf Div (ETO)  
(Pfc to 2d Lt.)

**1031 Joseph E. Marlett**  
Co B, 27th Inf Regt  
25th Inf Div (Korea)  
(Pvt E-2 to 2d Lt)



### Want to have your medals reissued?

This information was provided by Walter Duke, Jr.  
Go to the web site:

<http://www.vetreces.archives.gov>.

Follow the on-screen instructions. Info needed will be birth date, social security number, serial number, when you left the service and which service you were in and other personal info.

After entering the info it will display a form to be downloaded and signed. It can be either mailed or faxed. A fax is recommended to start the process right away.

Walter said it took 6 months to get a reply, then about 6 weeks to receive his medals. There was no charge.

The Cowboy Philosopher  
From the book **Will Rogers** by E. Paul Alworth

## Congress and Congressmen

Congressmen should vote on what they thought was good for the Majority of the people of the U.S. That should be a cinch. But what makes it hard for them is every time a bill comes up they have a million things to decide that have nothing to do with the merits of the bill. They first must consider is, or was, it introduced by a member of the opposite political party. If it is, why then something is wrong with it from the start, for everything the opposite side does has a catch in it. Then the principal thing is



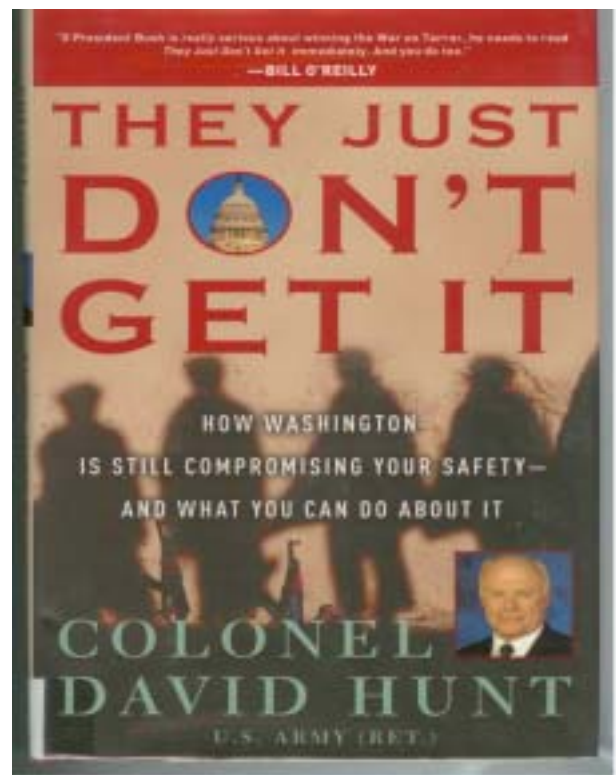
of course, “what will this do for me personally back home?” If it is something that he thinks the folks back home may never read, or hear of, why then he can vote any way he wants to, but politics and self-preservation must come first, never mind the majority of the people of the U.S. If the lawmakers were elected for life I believe they would do better. A man’s thoughts are naturally on his next term, more than on his country. Outside the Congress Hall, they are as fine a bunch of men as any one ever met in his life. They are full of humor and regular fellows. That is, as I say, when you catch them when they haven’t got politics on their minds. But the minute they get in that immense hall they begin to get serious, and it’s then that they do such amusing things. If we could just send the same bunch of men to Washington for the Good of the Nation, and not for political reasons, we could have the most perfect government in the world.

If parties are supposed to have to vote together on everything, let each party only send one man from the entire United States. Why pay these others just to be a lot of sheep. Party politics is the most narrow-minded occupation in the world.

All you would have to do to make some men atheists is just tell them the Lord belongs to the opposition political party. After that they could never see any good in him.



## Another Good Read!!



From the book jacket:

Fox News military analyst Colonel David Hunt has dedicated his career to fighting terrorism. A twenty-nine year U.S. Army veteran, he has helped take out an active terrorist camp, trained the FBI and Special Forces in counterterrorism tactics, and served as security adviser to six different Olympic Games.

And Colonel Hunt is angry. Why? Because even after the terrorist attacks on our country and on Americans around the world, the people charged with protecting us - the politicians and bureaucrats in military and intelligence - still aren't getting the job done.

## NOBC Loses Two Stalwart and Distinguished Members



Adolph F. "Bud" Warnecke

Adolph F. "Bud" Warnecke, 285L, passed away on 23 September 2007. He was born in Breese, IL on 19 October 1921 but resided in North Carolina State Veterans Home in Fayetteville, NC at the time of his death. Bud joined the Army 10 October 1941 and received his battlefield commission



Stephen "Steve" Parisi

Stephen "Steve" Parisi, 070L, passed away 3 October 2007. He was born 16 December 1916 in Providence, RI but resided in Rehoboth, MA at the time of his death. Steve joined the Army on 17 March 1941 and received his battlefield commission on 24 December 1943 with Co L, 172d Inf Regt, 43 Inf Div in the South Pacific. He was National Commander of NOBC 1983-84. At age 80 he became a certified

scuba diver. He was also an accomplished airplane pilot, cook and world traveler. He completed 5 years, 6 months of active service attaining the rank of captain.

31 August 1944 after parachuting into Normandy on D-Day with Co B, 508th PIR, 82d Abn Div. He was National Commander of NOBC 1986-88. He is credited as being instrumental in the adoption of the Revised Constitution and By-Laws in September 1990. He also established the status of Associate Member for direct descendants of NOBC members. This was later converted into their own organization now known as The Mustang Ponies. He completed 21 years, 6 months, 21 days of active service and retired with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.



## John C. Angier III Memorial Scholarship Award

**Taylor York, Mustang Pony #147, has been selected for the John C. Angier III Memorial Scholarship for 2007.**

Taylor is a freshman at Southern Oregon University, Ashland, Oregon. She is the granddaughter of



Virgil L. "Butch" G o e w e y , Mustang # 829L.

Taylor is pursuing a Baccalaureate in two major areas, Criminology and Psychology. Her

current goal is to serve the F.B.I. in forensic analysis.

Taylor's high academic achievement has allowed her to take six advanced (college level) classes during her last year of high school. She was chosen by her teachers to be on the MayFete Court. This is an honor, recognizing achievements in academics, community service, athletics and service to the school. In 2006, she provided over 125 hours of community service. She was the KEY Club Vice President for her school's Kiwanis Club. Taylor also swims with the school swim team and plays water polo and Powder Puff football. She has been recognized as Epperson's County First Citizen.

Taylor York has demonstrated and exceeded the standards we expect of our scholars



**Myrtle Beach, South Carolina - October 22-25**

As in the past, Stan Schmucker had all the name tags, printed activity schedules and folders ready and in the Foxhole at the crack of dawn Monday October 22. Speaking of the Foxhole, Cathy Chain and her mother-in-law had taken the helm and decided to liven things up this convention/reunion by placing raffle tickets in each attendee's folder (which contained those items developed by Stan). The raffle tickets were tied to interesting prizes Cathy and Sharon had individually wrapped. So each attendee had several chances to win a prize and did not have to be present (in the Foxhole) to win.

Pete Armstrong, Gib Bolton, Stan Schmucker, Walter Duke, Dave Sebright, and Bob Evans, with supervision provided by June Bolton decorated the Foxhole with the "standard" trappings of unit insignia, NOBC memorabilia, and large combat ribbon facsimiles. All the while Sharon and Cathy were setting up the "important" parts of the Foxhole, the bar and its trappings.

## Monday, October 22

By noon (the appointed hour for opening of the Foxhole) on Monday, the Foxhole was standing tall and a significant fraction of attendees had found their way there, picked up their folders, dipped



Sharon Chain

into the several bowls of treats and found a libation to their liking. By mid afternoon, the Foxhole was awash with attendees and conversation. To the person, everyone was

excited about the location, the excellent view of Myrtle Beach (note the beach was no more than 150 yards from the Foxhole), the rooms and the promise of an enjoyable convention/reunion.



L: Butch Goewey, R: Stan Schmucker

I must say in retrospect, no one was disappointed.

## Tuesday, October 23

Tuesday broke a bit cloudy, but beautifully with a light breeze from the North. This, the first day of a full schedule saw a number of attendees hitting the beach for an early morning walk and then into the hotel café for perhaps their first taste of how exceptional the food would be in the Ocean Dunes Resort and Villas.

The Board of Directors met at 1000 on Tuesday. While there was a formal agenda for the meeting, the topic of discussion centered about the necessity for the group to come to grips with the very small turn out, to the point that NOBC as a functional organization hinged on there being a minimum of 15 members present for the general business meeting and there were a mere 16 attendees present. In addition, the Deputy Commander, Roy Bunders would not be able to assume the post of Commander because of health issues, leaving two important officer positions open, Commander and Deputy Commander going forward.

After lengthy discussion, it was decided that NOBC had run its course as an active organization.

A few “new” members from the Vietnam conflict have been tapped to serve and the remaining are not interested in stepping up to serve. Many of the core of NOBC, members from WWII and Korea, are getting to the point in their lives that being able to travel is no longer feasible because of health issues, essentially guaranteeing ever decreasing turn outs for future conventions/reunions. The NOBC Constitution and By Laws are emphatic, there must be a minimum of 15 active members present for the annual business meeting, should there not be 15, and NOBC automatically ceases to exist as an active organization.

The Board members did not want to have NOBC “forced” into ceasing as an active organization, but rather felt that this one-of-a-kind organization should have a formal program whereby the NOBC colors could be retired in a location meaningful to those who served as members of the uniformed services. To this end, it was moved and seconded that the 2008 convention/reunion be held in the DC Metro area, with a formal service at the Fort Myer Chapel, followed by NOBC flag retirement at the NOBC memorial on the grounds of Arlington Cemetery. This plan comes with a proviso. Should the turn out at the 2008 convention/reunion be significantly large and should those in attendance vote not to retire the flag, the Deputy Commander will assume the post of National Commander and NOBC will continue as an active organization. This was brought before the attendees at the general meeting on Wednesday.

On the subject of officers, we found ourselves blessed with a healthy Steve Shivers who was Deputy Commander for two years until he became ill in late 2006. The motion came from the floor, and was seconded, to elect Steve as the Deputy Commander. Steve was elected by acclamation. This vote came on the heels of the Board Members voting to keep the present National Commander to the 2008 convention/reunion.

Other important business conducted during the Board of Governors meeting yielded the following changes to the Board of Directors:

Walter Duke, Jr...Three years

John J. “J.J.” Witmeyer...Three years

James L. “Jim” Thompson...Two years (filling term vacated by Stephen “Steve” Parisi’s passing)

Virgil L. “Butch” Goewey...Two years

David C. Sebright...One year

Thomas Andrews...One year

The Mustang ponies Scholarship Committee selected the granddaughter of Virgil L. “Butch” Goewey, mustang # 829-L, Taylor York, Mustang Pony #147 as the 2007 recipient of the John C. Angier, III Memorial Scholarship.

The new Board of Directors, along with the Deputy and National Commander were installed, bringing the meeting to a close.

## Wednesday, October 23

After cocktails in the Brass Anchor Bar, the attendees mustered for the casual buffet at 1900. Ron Dungey provided a thought provoking invocation and tables one through five moved out in succession through the buffet line. The meal was superb, topped only by the warm bourbon bread pudding served as one of the two tasty desserts.

After dinner, and introductions, awards were presented. A Helmet Award was presented to Ron and Joan Dungey for their work in selecting and securing the



Dan Hunt and Ron Dungey

Ocean Dunes Resorts and Villas for our convention/reunion. Next, Helmet Awards were presented to Cathy Chain and Sharon Chain for their work in setting up, maintaining, and running an exciting hospitality room (The Foxhole). Finally, a Helmet Award was presented to William T. Tibbitt for completing service on the Board of Directors. Next, the financial high point of the evening came with Stan Schmucker and the drawing of the 50/50 winners. The four winning tickets drawn at random yielded the following:

\$500.00...William Reed

\$300.00...Pete Armstrong

\$200.00...J.E. Armstrong

\$100.00...Elra W. Huntley

At the conclusion of the 50/50 drawing, everyone was invited to the Foxhole to top off the evening.

The Wednesday morning Memorial Service began with the presentation of the Colors by a contingent of the North Myrtle Beach Marine Corps League. This was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, posting of the Colors and the singing of the National Anthem. Ron Dungey provided an inspiring invocation. Following Ron's invocation, our Deputy Commander, Steve Shivers delivered a very moving memorial message centering, on two distinguished recently departed members, Adolph F. "Bud" Warnecke, and Stephen "Steve" Parisi. Stan Schmucker read the names of the twenty departed members, followed by a prayer and the sounding of taps. The memorial service concluded on the last note of taps and the extinguishing of the memorial candle.

The Business Meeting followed shortly on the heels of the Memorial Service. The Business Meeting followed a standard format with the acceptance of the minutes of the 2006 Convention/Reunion, Officers' Reports, Standing Committee Reports, New and Old Business.

1003 Dale S. Albee-TX  
826 Alex E. Berg-WI  
461 James Bobbett-UY  
821 James R. Burke-SC  
264L Everet E. Hoffman-NY  
374L Heber M. Hughes-NC  
612L David L. Keller-WA  
018 Ford N. Kyes-TN  
1078L Jose Lopez, Jr.-TX  
1048 Gaspare J. Mannone-MA  
706L Russell McKelvey-SD  
046L Edward S. Murray-NY  
070L Stephen Parisi-MA  
549 Sam P. Passero-NY  
841L Anthony A. Pellegrino-NY  
953 Claude R. Rigsby-TX  
947 James M. Sikorski-AZ  
285L Adolph F. Warnecke-NC  
632L Jack L. Williamson-TN  
330 Carl R. Wyatt-TX

The formal banquet began with cocktails at 1800. At 1900 sharp, Bob Evans welcomed everyone and had the Colors posted by a contingent of the North Myrtle Beach Marine Corps League. Bob then lead the attendees in the pledge of Allegiance. Following the Pledge of Allegiance was an invocation provided by Ron Dungey. The formal banquet meal was a true "winner." After the salad course, the chicken cordon blue and beef tenderloin medallions with red wine mushroom sauce on a plate shared with a mixed vegetable medley and oven roasted potatoes was exceptionally well received by all. The banquet fare was topped off with cheese cake drizzled



B: Dan Hunt, Daryl Dungey  
F: Cathy Chain, Sharon Chain,  
Joan Dungey, Ron Dungey

with strawberries.

Jim Thompson (Lawton, Oklahoma) was asked at the 2006 convention/reunion in San Antonio, Texas to provide a bit of good 'ol down-home humor to set the stage for the guest speaker. Jim was so well received in 2006, we asked him to consider warming up the crowd again in 2007. Thankfully Jim accepted and had the attendees in the palm of his hand for over fifteen minutes. Thank you Jim.

Our guest speaker for the evening was Lt. Col. Roger Charles (USMC, Retired). Roger is the president of Soldiers for the Truth, the organization started by the now deceased Colonel Hackworth, an NOBC member. Roger's remarks focused on Soldiers for the Truth, their mission, their goals and

their successes to date. Roger's remarks were indeed well received by all in attendance and at the conclusion of his remarks, the National Commander presented Roger with a miniature Commander's Trophy with an inscription thanking him for being our keynote speaker at the 2007 NOBC Convention/Reunion.

The banquet attendees were invited to the hospitality room after the banquet to meet Lieutenant Colonel Roger Charles and guests.

## Thursday , October 24

Thursday morning found a significant fraction of attendees at the get away breakfast reminiscing, wishing each other a safe trip home with the wish of good health in the upcoming year.



### ***The 2007 Gathering of Our "Old Warriors"***

*Back row (L to R): M. L. Hibbets, Walter Duke, Dave Sebright, J. J. Witmeyer, Jim Thompson, Cary Jarvis, Jesse Murga, Butch Goewey, R. E. Cooper.*  
*Front row (L to R): Gib Bolton, Stan Schmucker, Bob Evans, Steve Shivers and Pete Armstrong. Missing attendees: Don Van Roosen and Walt Hedlund.*

## Soldiers For The Truth

*The organization was founded by Col. David Hackworth and is continuing under the capable auspices of Roger Charles, (LTC USMC Ret.), President. Roger has agreed to continue our access to the SFTT website to select articles for the Mustang News. We will continue to head this as Hack's Page in his honor.*

### New Army Chopper Overheats

The Army is spending \$2.6 billion on hundreds of European-designed helicopters for homeland security and disaster relief that turn out to have a crucial flaw: they aren't safe to fly on hot days, according to an internal report obtained by the Associated Press. While the Army scrambles to fix the problem - adding millions to the taxpayer cost - at least one high-ranking lawmaker is calling for the whole deal to be scrapped.

During flight tests in Southern California in mild, 80-degree weather, cockpit temperatures in the UH-72A Lakota soared above 104, the point at which the Army says the communication, navigation and flight control systems can overheat and shut down.

No cockpit equipment failed during the nearly 23 hours of testing, according to the Pentagon report, prepared in July. But the report concluded that the aircraft "is not effective for use in hot environments."

The Army told the AP that to fix the cockpit overheating problem, it will take the highly unusual step of adding air conditioners to many of the 322 helicopters ordered. The retrofitting will cost at least \$10 million and will come out of the Army's budget, according to the Army.

California Rep. Duncan Hunter, ranking Republican on the House Armed Services Committee, told AP the lightweight helicopter will still have too many weaknesses.

"In my view, we would be well advised to terminate the planned buy of 322 Lakota helicopters and purchase instead additional Blackhawk helicopters," Hunter said in a letter to Army Secretary Pete Geren.

But Army spokesman Maj. Tom McCuin at the Pentagon said: "it certainly is a concern to the people out there in the field now because it's hot in those cockpits, but it's being fixed."

The Army has received 12 of the Lakotas so far from the American Eurocopter Corp., a North American division of Germany's European Aeronautic Defense and Space Co., or EADS. Testing on the first six by an independent arm of the Pentagon revealed the problems. The rest of the choppers are scheduled for delivery to the active-duty Army and the National Guard over the next eight years.

The Lakota represents the Army's first major effort to



Roger Charles

adapt commercially available helicopters for military use. Air conditioning is standard in commercial versions of the aircraft, which have not had overheating problems. But the military avoids air conditioning in military aircraft to reduce weight and increase performance.

"We don't need air conditioning in the Blackhawks, so we didn't think it would be an Issue" in the Lakota, McCuin said. "But when we got the helicopter into the desert, we realized it was a problem."

The Army plans to use the Lakota for such things as search-and-rescue missions in disaster areas, evacuation of injured people, reconnaissance, disaster relief and VIP tours for members of Congress and Army brass. All of its missions will be in the U.S. or other non-combat areas.

Blackhawks, Chinooks and other helicopters will still be available for more demanding duties, such as fighting wildfires or mass evacuations.

EADS spokesman Guy Hicks declined to comment directly on the criticism leveled against the aircraft. "We're proud of our partnership with the Army and the UH-72A, but we defer on anything to do with aircraft requirements and performance. It's the Army's program and they should address that," he said.

The commercial purchase was designed partly to cut costs and quickly get aircraft into the field to replace two aging Vietnam-era helicopters, the Kiowa and Huey. The Army said the Lakota will also free up more Blackhawks to send to Iraq for medical evacuation flights.

The Lakota has another problem: Testers said it fails to meet the Army's requirement that it be able to simultaneously evacuate two critically injured patients. The Lakota can hold two patients, but the cabin is too cramped for medics to actually work on more than one of them at a time, the testers said.

Also, the Lakota cannot lift a standard 2,200 pound firefighting water bucket, though it can handle a 1,400 pound one. The Army said it had no intention of using the Lakota to fight wildfires anyway. But Hunter said the military should be buying versatile aircraft useful in any domestic disaster.

The report by Charles McQueary, the Defense Department's director of operational testing, said that overall, the Lakota performs better than the Kiowa or Huey and pilots found it easier to fly.

## WWII Paddle Wheel Aircraft Carriers

From "War in the Pacific" by BG Jerry Hagen, USMC (Ret)

If someone was to tell you that the U.S. Navy had two aircraft carriers fueled by coal and driven by paddle wheels during WWII, you would likely respond, "no way!" But, they did. Starting in 1942 and continuing into 1945, two coal-fired, paddle-wheeled aircraft carriers qualified 17,820 pilots, including future U.S. president George H. W. Bush.

The two carriers, the *USS Wolverine* and *USS Sable* played a major role in the defeat of the Japanese, without leaving U.S. territorial waters.

On December 7, 1941, the U.S. Navy had seven operational carriers. Three were in the Pacific, *USS Enterprise*, *USS Lexington* and *USS Saratoga*. In the Atlantic fleet were *USS Hornet*, *USS Wasp*, *USS Yorktown* and *USS Ranger*. The *Ranger's* design had been limited by the terms of the Washington Treaty, and she was not considered capable of service in the Pacific theater. The other Atlantic fleet carriers were all transferred to the Pacific.

By October, 1942, ten months into WWII, *Lexington*, *Yorktown*, *Hornet* and *Wasp* had been sunk. *Saratoga* was severely damaged in January 1942, and *Enterprise* was damaged and returned to Pearl Harbor in August. These were difficult times for the U.S. Navy. The navy could not maintain its carrier strength in the Pacific, much less take away operational carriers for training and qualification of future carrier pilots.

Commander Richard Whitehead, aviation aide to the commandant of the Ninth Naval District, suggested that carrier landing practice and qualification be conducted on Lake Michigan, a large body of water totally within the U.S.A. A carrier operating on Lake Michigan, Whitehead suggested, would not need armor, guns, or escorting waships, and could be serviced out of Chicago and nearby Naval Air Station Glenview, ILL. The navy agreed with Whitehead's suggestion and the next step was to obtain an aircraft carrier. There were none

available. There seemed to be two choices: build a new carrier, a long and expensive project, or convert an existing ship to an aircraft carrier.

Commander Whitehead recommended two existing ships for conversion, the *SS City of Midland*, a car ferry on the Great Lakes, and *SS Seeandbee*, a Great Lakes excursion cruiser. The car ferry was shorter, slower, and already contributing to the war effort, so *SS Seeandbee* was selected.

*SS Seeandbee* was built in 1913 to cruise Lakes Erie, Huron and Michigan. Her name was the result of a contest sponsored by the owners. At 500 feet, *Seeandbee* was long enough for a useable flight deck and at 22 knots, she was fast enough for aircraft takeoffs and landings. The ship's main disadvantage was that it was coal-fired rather than oil, and was a side wheeler rather than propeller-driven.

*Seeandbee* was a magnificent touring ship. She boasted 24 parlor cabins with private baths and toilets, 62 staterooms with private toilet facilities, and 408 regular staterooms. A 400-foot-long main saloon on the promenade deck featured booths, a bookstore, observation room and writing rooms. The dining rooms and banquet rooms were on the main deck.

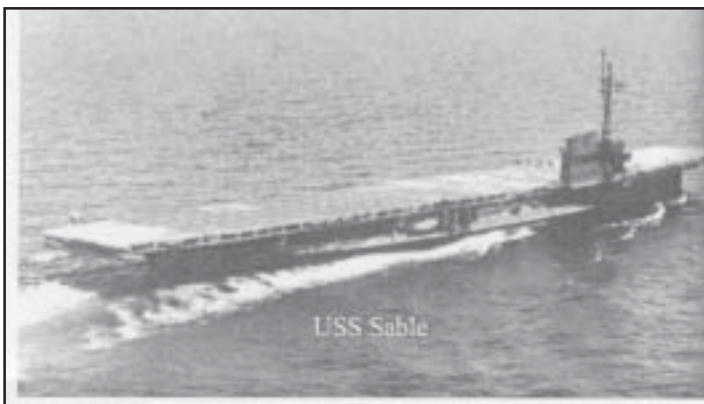


Continued on page 12

The U.S. Navy was able to purchase *SS Seeandbee* in 1942 for \$770,000. The conversion to aircraft carrier, renamed *USS Wolverine*, took 59 days. The flight deck was only 26 feet above the water, but was 98 feet wide in order to cover the paddle wheels. *Wolverine* was the widest carrier in the U.S. Navy. The ship had no elevators, hangar decks, or catapults. Aircraft were flown to the carrier from land bases in Illinois in the morning and returned to their bases in the evening. *USS Wolverine* was commissioned on August 12, 1942. Her name was chosen to recognize the state and the great lake of Michigan.

While *Seeandbee* was being converted to an aircraft carrier, a decision was made to have two training carriers on Lake Michigan.

The *SS Greater Buffalo* was the largest side-wheeled passenger ship in the world, and like *Seeandbee* was coal-fired. *SS Greater Buffalo* was launched in August 1923. She cost \$3.5 million to build and another \$500,000 for furnishings. She was 535 feet long and could make 23 knots. The *Greater*



*Buffalo* was even more impressive as a fresh water cruise ship than *Seeandbee*. She boasted 625 passenger rooms, and a crew complement of 300 officers and men. Her hull was made of steel with 11 watertight compartments and a double bottom with 16 watertight compartments. *SS Greater Buffalo* completed conversion and was designated the *USS Sable* on May 8, 1943. The main difference in the two carriers was that *Sable* had steel flight decks as compared to the oak flight decks on *Wolverine*. Both ships consumed 150 tons of bunker

coal in 24 hours of operation at top speed.

Initially, NAS Glenview, ILL was the land base used to maintain the planes and provide a home for the pilots. It soon became obvious that Glenview was much too busy an airfield to provide the necessary land-based training for carrier landings. Training required a separate field where short take offs and arrested landings could be conducted without closing the field to other aircraft operations. Allendale Field, located nine miles northwest of Glendale was used until December 1942, when a new site near Elgin, ILL, was acquired and improved. By the end of December 1942, *Wolverine* had carrier qualified 287 pilots and trained numerous landing signal officers. *Sable* joined the Great Lakes fleet in May 1943, which allowed for continuous training even when one ship was ashore for replenishment or repair. Normal operations began at 3 AM when the carriers left the Chicago dock area to avoid enveloping Chicago in coal smoke during peak traffic hours. Carrier landings began at 8 AM with the arrival of planes from the Allendale or Elgin airfields and continued until it was time for the carriers to return to port before dark. The routine continued seven days per week including the coldest months of the year.

Lake Michigan runs north and south, so the carriers would start the day at the southeast corner of the lake and steam into the wind. *Sable* was slightly faster than *Wolverine*, and had a longer flight deck with two more arresting wires. Consequently, *Sable* was used to qualify pilots in the heavier operational aircraft while *Wolverine* received more of the training aircraft, the the SNJ (T-6 Texan). Initially, coal smoke from the funnels reduced visibility for the pilots and made landings difficult or even impossible. Later, a better grade of coal was used, and as the sailors became proficient in pitching coal further forward into the boilers, smoke became less of a problem.

Commander Whitehead projected the qualification of 30 pilots per day, but by 1944, the carriers were qualifying twice that number.

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Initially, pilots were required to make eight successful landings and takeoffs. This number was raised to 14 before the end of the program. Pilots were qualified in fighter, torpedo-bomber, and dive bombers aboard the carriers. Final statistics for the carriers were 136,428 landings qualifying 17,280 pilots.

Twenty-one pilots were killed during the period, and the Chicago Tribune on December 11, 1969, estimated that more than 100 Navy aircraft were on the bottom of Lake Michigan. The Chicago Sun-times raised that estimate to 300 in October 1990.

An 18-year-old pilot named George H. W. Bush qualified on August 24, 1943. He went on to fly combat missions in the Pacific, was shot down,

rescued, and became president of the United States.

The crew of the *USS Wolverine*, and the entire Navy, had a major surprise when the ship became the flagship of the Chief of Naval Operations (and therefore the U.S. Navy) when Admiral Ernest J. King visited the ship.

Both ships were decommissioned on November 7, 1945. Two years later, *Wolverine* was sold for \$46,787 to the A.F. Wagner Iron Works, who towed the ship to Milwaukee to be scrapped. *Sable* was sold to the Steel Company of Canada for \$126,176 and towed to Hamilton, Ontario, where it was scrapped. Richard Whitehead, who saw his suggestion become a reality, retired from the Navy as a Vice Admiral and died in 1993 at the age of 99.

### ***From the files of Mustang Jim Plate***

When in England at a fairly large conference, Colin Powell was asked by the Archbishop of Canterbury if our plans for Iraq were just an example of 'empire building' by George Bush.

He answered by saying, "Over the years, the United States has sent many of its fine young men and women into great peril to fight for freedom beyond our borders. The only amount of land we have ever asked for in return is enough to bury those that did not return."



Then there was a conference in France where a number of international engineers were taking part, including French and American. During a break one of the French engineers came back into the room saying "Have you heard the latest dumb stunt Bush has done? He has sent an aircraft carrier to Indonesia to help the tsunami victims. What does he intend to do, bomb them?"

A Boeing engineer stood up and replied quietly: "Our carriers have three hospitals on board that can treat several hundred people; they are nuclear powered and can supply emergency electrical power to shore facilities; they have three cafeterias with

the capacity to feed 3,000 people three meals a day; they can produce several thousand gallons of fresh water from sea water each day, and they carry half a dozen helicopters for use in transporting victims and injured to and from their flight deck. We have eleven such ships; how many does France have?"



A U.S. Navy admiral was attending a naval conference that included admirals from the U.S., English, Canadian, Australian and French navies. At a cocktail reception, he found himself standing with a large group of officers that included personnel from most of those countries. Everyone was chatting away in English as they sipped their drinks, but a French admiral suddenly complained that, whereas Europeans learn many languages, Americans learn only English. He then asked, "Why is it that we always have to speak English in these conferences rather than speaking French?"

Without hesitating, the American admiral replied, "Maybe it's because the Brits, Canadians, Aussies and Americans arranged it so you wouldn't have to speak German."



Bob Evans

As the Armed Services Committee puts its final touches on the FY 2008 National Defense Authorization Bill, The Military Coalition (TMC) has sent the following to The Honorable Carl Levin, Chairman of the Committee on Armed Services. The letter essentially outlines the goals articulated by the several TMC subcommittees including Guard &

Reserve, Health Care, Morale, Welfare and Recreation and Military Construction, Retirement, Survivors Programs and Veterans. The letter was sent in Mid-October of this year.

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Military Coalition (TMC), a consortium of uniformed services and veterans associations representing more than 5.5 million current and former service members and their families and survivors, is grateful to you and the Armed Services Committee for your efforts to protect the interests of service members in the FY2008 National Defense Authorization Bill.

*We are particularly grateful for both chambers' support of larger Army and Marine Corps end strengths, a 3.5% military pay raise, extending Combat-Related Special Compensation to certain disability retirees with less than 20 years of service, recognizing inequities imposed on SBP-DIC widows, prohibiting most TRICARE fee increases for FY2008, and particularly for your efforts to improve conditions and benefits for wounded warriors and their families.*

The attached matrix highlights Coalition recommendations concerning selected differences between the House- and Senate-passed bills. Several priorities merit special mention:

### **Wounded Warriors**

Both bills contain numerous laudable provisions. The Coalition particularly urges retention of:

- Among many needed Traumatic Brain Injuries/Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (TBI/PTSD) initiatives, the Coalition particularly supports House section 711 requiring cognitive testing, rather than limited pilot projects;

- Senate section 1621 authorizing three years of *active duty level* care for disability retirees and their families to correct gaps between active, retired, and VA care (as authorized for survivors of members killed on active duty; wounded warriors deserve no less);

- Senate sections 1652-1654 to reform the disability retirement system and review all post-9/11 disability separations under previous inequitable rules;

- House sections 1412 and 1415-1417 to ensure fair representation of members' interests in the disability process; the Coalition does not support ending the military disability retirement system, as some would interpret the Dole/Shalala recommendations.

- Senate section 1641 (joint office to implement the DoD/VA electronic health record); and

- Senate sections 1626, 1627, 1681 and House section 1412 for improved support for family members and caregivers.

### **End Strength**

The Coalition continues to believe that active duty and Guard/Reserve ground forces are too small to meet the mission requirements expected for the foreseeable future. TMC supports the increases proposed by both Committees for the Army and Marine Corps. However, we continue to be very concerned that reductions in active duty and Reserve components for the Navy and Air Force are driven by budget considerations rather than requirements and have the potential to cause significant operations tempo problems in facing future military needs.

### **Concurrent Receipt**

The Coalition strongly endorses the Senate provisions extending Combat-Related Special Compensation to all disability retirees with less than 20 years' service – recognizing that early termination of their careers was involuntarily imposed upon them by combat wounds. The Coalition fully endorses the Senate proposal to provide full, immediate concurrent retired disability pay for otherwise qualifying retirees deemed “unemployable”. It is wrong that the only group certified by the VA as being unable to work has to wait until 2009 for full payment. The Veterans

Disability Benefits Commission endorsed both initiatives as priority needs.

## **TRICARE Fees**

The Coalition strongly supports the Committees' actions in barring any increase in TRICARE Prime fees for 2008. We urge the conferees to adopt the Senate "sense of Congress" provision on this topic. While non-binding, the Coalition believes it is essential to recognize the essential role of military health benefits in offsetting the unique conditions of service and to recognize that military people pay far larger premiums in service and sacrifice for their career health benefits than the relatively small portion of those premiums that happens to be paid in cash.

## **Military Pay Raise**

**The Coalition urges the conferees most strongly to adopt the House-approved provision that would set military pay raises one-half percentage point above the Employment Cost Index each year for the next five years. Restoration of pay comparability is a fundamental underpinning of the all-volunteer force, and this expression of Congress' unwavering commitment to that goal will send a much-needed message to service members who continue to strain under a grossly disproportional burden of the national wartime sacrifice.**

## **Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) Fixes**

The Coalition very strongly favors the Senate-passed provisions that would end deduction of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) from SBP annuities when the member's death is service-connected and require immediate implementation of 30-year paid-up SBP coverage. Recent SGLI and death gratuity increases and the authority to transfer SBP to children help only a small minority of survivors, while the vast majority of widows affected by the SBP/DIC offset received no benefit from those initiatives. The Veterans Disability Benefits Commission has joined the Coalition in urging an end to this unfair offset. As for paid-up SBP, thousands of World War II and Korea retirees already have met statutory eligibility criteria and in fact have paid 28% more SBP premiums than post-1978 retirees will ever pay. These "Greatest Generation"

retirees have earned and deserve immediate paid-up SBP status.

## **Guard and Reserve Retirement**

The Military Coalition strongly endorses the Senate initiatives to reduce the Reserve retirement age proportional to active duty service since Oct. 7, 2001 and authorize up to 130 retirement-creditable points per year. The government has changed the rules to require these members to spend up to 25% of their working lives in uniform — which means less opportunity to build the kind of civilian retirement plan they envisioned when they joined the Selected Reserve. These changes will help address that inequity and encourage continued service.

## **Montgomery GI Bill**

The Military Coalition urges the Committees to retain the House provision to consolidate all GI Bill authorities under title 38 and the Senate provision to authorize a 10-year portability period for Selected Reserve members. It is unconscionable that all participating active duty members enjoy such portability, but Guard/Reserve members — many with multiple Iraq tours — do not.

## **Support for Military Families**

The Military Coalition appreciates the numerous provisions to improve family support. There is a need to consolidate these in a comprehensive package addressing family readiness, access to counseling and mental health services, and support through all cycles from pre-deployment to reintegration. It is essential to evaluate how families, especially the youngest members, deal with deployment to tailor the services they need. Changes to the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) are urgently needed to help families take advantage of existing programs to enhance their resilience during deployment. The Coalition urges particular vigilance to ensure all facilities and family support services are fully in place to meet BRAC and rebasing timelines.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the Coalition's views on these important issues.

**National Order of  
Battlefield Commissions**  
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