



Mustang News



Vol. 29 No.4

Quarterly Newsletter of the National Order of Battlefield Commissions

Winter, 2008

To our special Band of Brothers and their Ladies:

I hope and pray you are reading our Mustang News in good health and spirits. My thoughts have been about you and yours hoping you had a Happy Thanksgiving, a Merry Christmas and a wonderful New Years with your favorite team coming out on top.

I would be totally remiss not to start by commenting on our past Commander, Dr. Robert (BOB) Evans. For the past four years he has represented us in an accomplished manner with his dedication and devotion. He has kept NOBC operational in the most challenging of times. Our numbers continue to drop with no new crop of Battlefield Commission personnel to recruit. Commander Evans has kept the faith and a positive attitude in his effort to continue on as our numbers decline. He has blessed us with his verbal wit and his gifted written skills in his Commander's Messages and The Military Coalition Report. He has assured me that he will be of assistance in the future. His footprint is a large one to fill. I know you join me in wishing Bob and Patty continued success in all future endeavors. We owe a special thanks to past Dr. Robert (Bob) Evans.

It is with a deep sense of pride I assume the position as the Commander. I joined the organization in 1982 at the Convention in Akron, Ohio. The

Commander's Message

by Stephen Shivers



Commander at the time was #003 Mark Smith. I have had the privilege of knowing each Commander since.

These men brought something new and unique to the position of National Commander. They have in fact helped build our heritage and tradition as an organization. I can only hope that in some small manner I also can contribute to this tradition and continue to serve in the distinguished manner those who have served before. I realize that almost daily NOBC is in fact changing. Time, the enemy of us all, is catching up with our special band of brothers.

I have always been proud to be a member of NOBC. I would be lacking if I did not relate to you there is an uneasy and sad feeling about accepting the position of Commander. In looking back over my 35 year Marine Corps career, I realized I was and had been a closer and a go-fix-it man for the Marine Corps. I

was the last enlisted marine to be awarded a Battlefield Commission. I was in one of the last Marine Units to leave Viet Nam. I was the last Marine officer assigned to the armed forces police in Hawaii. I was the last Marine O.I.C., assigned as the 7th Fleet Shore Patrol Officer in the Philippines. I was the last Marine Operation Officer at the Provost Marshal Office at Subic Bay Philippines. I was the last LDO Lt. Col. Military police officer to retire from the Corp.

I do not desire to be the last Commander. What I see is "The Challenge". The challenge is to continue to have an Annual Convention / Reunion with those numbers present that will not require us to fold the flag and place our records at the U.S. Army Military History Institute, at Carlisle Barracks, Pa. I realize that there are more grains of sand in the bottom of hourglass than the top. There is no way to stop the downward flow. I will need your thoughts, input and assistance as to time, location and in what manner we will continue to gather on an annual basis. I will do my best to accomplish this mission. I will shortly mail out a survey card asking for members input on where, when and what manner we meet in the future. With God's blessing and your help and assistance of all Past Commanders and board members, I hope we can continue on into the near future.

On behalf of my biggest supporter. Dee and I remain Semper Fidelis

Officers and Directors

National Commander

Stephen L. Shivers
(864) 292-1423
e-mail: slshivers@aol.com

Deputy Commander

Thomas L. Andrews
(336) 599-4450
andrewssjk@embarqmail.com

Admin & Fin Officer

Stanley W. Schmucker
(321) 255-5919
e-mail: stanobc@webtv.net

National Adjutant

Council J. "Pete" Armstrong
(828) 654-9920
e-mail: PeteBeret@aol.com

TMC Representative

Robert C. Evans
(202) 414-3020 (O)
(703) 838-5548 (H)
e-mail: rcevans@mmm.com

Chaplain

Warren P. Schilling
(239) 461-5739

Historian

James W. Plate
(815) 399-6953
e-mail: jwplate@aol.com

Judge Advocate

James M. Davis
(402) 341-9900 (Off.)
e-mail: polo@uswest.net

PX Officer

Gilbert H. "Gib" Bolton
(760) 433-7746

Editor, Mustang News

William "Bill" Wynn
(808) 672-9930
e-mail:
wynnwynn@hawaiiintel.net

Publisher, Mustang News

Barbara Nutter
(405) 247-5864

Past Commanders

Robert C. Evans
Gilbert H. "Gib" Bolton
Russel M. Brami
Neal G. Grimland
Council "Pete" Armstrong

Board of Directors (yrs)

Robert Clark (3)
Wimpy D. Pybus (3)
Walter Duke, Jr. (2)
John J. Witmeyer (2)
Virgil L. "Butch" Goewey (1)
James L. Thompson (1)

Our Minds Are Like Bank Accounts

Everyday as we watch the news on TV or read the headlines in the newspaper we are reminded that we live in a hurry. But God is never in a hurry. He never loses patience. Nothing ever surprises Him. He knows where we are and where we have been—and what we have said and done. This can be embarrassing and frightening at times!

Our minds are like bank accounts. We make deposits of thoughts often. Let us be sure they are valuable, positive, uplifting, and controlled daily by the Holy Spirit. Then when we withdraw such thoughts for a specific use we will find they are still the same level and can be used for important transactions with family, friends, and our professional duties that can bring about meaningful results in the place where God has assigned us. These same words withdrawn from the bank of our mind where we deposited them are now the interest we earned on them and are a real "joy" when the results are indeed meaningful.

Most people don't know there is only one way to God. When God cre-



Warren Schilling

ated the world He established the course of this world and His plan for humanity. In Psalm 139:16 God says "All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be." Each of us has a purpose in this world. It

is never too late for God to use you and never too soon to say "yes" to God. If you agree with what the Bible says, then say "yes", Jesus is the Son of God, my Savior. He indeed will use you. The way to live is to "do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:18).

The Bible is clear in teaching that there is a Heaven and Hell, and that by following God's guidance in the Bible we can determine where we will spend eternity. Let's be sure we have done that. God constantly offers His loving help. The joy of living in Heaven forever with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and fellow Christians is beyond our present capability to understand. But let us not let that keep us from embracing that wonderful truth now.

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

Mail submissions to:
Bill Wynn, Mustang News
92-1244 Hunekai St.
Kapolei, HI 96707-1541
Phone: 808-672-9930
e-mail: wynnwynn@hawaiiintel.net



TAPS

for Mustangs answering
their final muster:

1119-Ed W. Freeman-ID
457-Walter M. Howard-PA
188L-Luther F. Weaver-GA
1025-William R. Weiss-MA

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 details as soon as possible. Thank you.

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



2008 John C. Angier III Memorial Scholarship

Awarded to Jill K. Cohen, Pony #148.
Granddaughter of Ben Cohen #488LH
Daughter of Marc Cohen, Pony #93

Junior at Rockhurst University, Kansas City, MO.
Majoring in Elementary Education.
Specializing in Special Education.
Working with a Downs Syndrome child.
Studied abroad in Paris and Montpellier, France in
2007.

Letters from NOBC Next of Kin

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

Gladys Lucile Cottriel:

Thank you so much for the lovely plaque sent to me & my family in honor of my husband Fred Cottriel. He was proud to be a member of the National Order of Battlefield Commissions.

This plaque is hanging with other awards from his time in the service of his country.

Thanks again and God bless.

Madalyn Thiaville:

My family and I would like to thank the NOBC for the beautiful plaque we received.

Al was so proud of his military service and would be so pleased with the remembrance.

Many thanks.



Jill K. Cohen

Dear Committe Members,

I just wanted to take the time to thank you for considering me for the John C. Angier III scholarship. I really appreciate it and it will really help with my school expenses.

Thank you again

This year's convention/reunion write up will be hauntingly similar to last year's. We chose Ocean Dunes Resort in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina again this year because we were treated exceptionally well there last year and Washington, DC proved much too expensive, especially in the month of October.

As you might imagine, Stan Schmucker had, at the ready, all the name tags, printed activity schedules and folders arrayed on a large round table in the Fox Hole at the crack of dawn on Monday, October 20. He and his wife Libby spent the next several hours building folders for each of the participants who had registered for this the 27th Annual Convention/Reunion.

Monday, October 20

Speaking of the Fox Hole, we were exceptionally saddened by the fact Sharon and Cathy Chain were unable to attend this year, leaving the running of the Fox Hole to Stan Schmucker and Bob Evans. Neither Stan nor Bob have that "magic" touch exhibited by Sharon and Cathy and, as a consequence, the Fox Hole was lacking a certain *je ne sais quoi*. Yes, the Fox Hole was open for business at the appointed 1200 hours; it was standing tall with the "standard" trappings of unit insignia, NOBC memorabilia, and large combat ribbon facsimiles. There were bowls of snacks and two coolers filled with ice and libations. Missing was our PX table arrayed with all manner of NOBC merchandise. Gib Bolton, our PX officer was unable to attend because June, his wife, had undergone serious back surgery very recently. Gib did send order forms and they were prominently displayed.

During the course of the afternoon and evening, practically everyone registered found the Fox Hole and renewed their relationships. The Monday friendship renewal must have been a hit since it necessitated a libation and snack run to the resort store early Tuesday morning.

Tuesday, October 21

Tuesday, like Monday, Wednesday and Thursday was absolutely gorgeous. Cool breezy evenings with low humidity and sunny warm days in the high sixties. This, the first day of a full schedule found a significant fraction of attendees taking a beach walk before breakfast. After walking, many took advantage of the excellent breakfast buffet in the Ocean Dunes Resort.

The Board of Directors meeting began at 0900 hours with the Pledge of Allegiance. This followed with the call to order and the acceptance of the minutes of the 2007 Board of Directors Meeting. A formal agenda was distributed; however, like the 2007 meeting, one topic took precedent over all others. That topic was the quorum requirements for the business meeting. In 2007, there were 16 members present, one over the minimum required by our Constitution and By Laws. Had all those who registered shown up, we would have had the minimum 15 required. Since two members did not show up, we were 13 and in a true quandary.

Dave Sebright made a formal motion to reduce the quorum size from 15 to 10. His motion was seconded and passed. This was done with the recognition that we would not have the necessary quorum in the business meeting to ratify. We pressed on with the meeting with the promise to contact our legal officer for his reading on changing the Constitution and By Laws without the prescribed number of active members in attendance at the business meeting.

The next item of business was a call to fill open positions. Those positions included an Adjutant, two Board members, a Deputy Commander, and a Commander. There were no nominations to fill the Adjutant's position; however, Bob Clark and Wimpy Pybus were nominated to fill the two open Board slots, and Tom Andrews nominated for the Deputy Commander's slot. Steve Shivers was unanimously nominated as our 17th national Commander

The Board reviewed and passed the Administration and Finance Officer's financial report. This was followed by the Board voting to continue support of The Military Coalition (TMC) with a \$500 donation.

The Mustang Ponies Scholarship Committee selected Jill K. Cohen, granddaughter of PNC Ben Cohen (488L), for the John C. Angier III Memorial Scholarship. Jill Cohen, Mustang Pony number 148 will continue her studies in Elementary Education at Rockhurst University in Kansas City, Missouri. Jill is the daughter of Marc Cohen, Mustang Pony number 93.

The new board members (Clark and Pybus) along with the Deputy Commander (Andrews) and national Commander (Shivers) were installed, bringing the Board of Directors meeting to a close.

Cocktails in Baltic room B began at 1800. Everyone was in good spirits. The good spirits were punctuated with the knowledge that the wonderful chef who dazzled us in 2007 was still in residence. Before we began moving, by the numbers, through the buffet line, Ron Dungey provided a thought provoking invocation. We were yet again dazzled by a cornucopia of excellently prepared items for our buffet. Back by unanimous demand was the warm bread pudding with warm bourbon sauce. The chef added a container of extra sauce so those who were daring could ladle that wonderful concoction to their hearts' content.

After dinner and introductions, awards were presented. First timers Wimpy and Doris Pybus were recognized and given a round of cheerful applause. Helmet awards were presented to our two departing Board members, Tom Andrews and Dave Sebright. The high point of the post-meal festivities was the 50/50 drawing honchoed by Stan Schmucker. The four winning tickets, drawn at random, yielded the following:

\$500. Casrl Pohlad

\$300. Dominic Vella-Vedova

\$200. Hazel Adams (Widow)

\$100. Don Schersten

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

Wednesday, October 22

The Wednesday morning Memorial Service began with the presentation of the Colors by a contingent of the North Myrtle Beach Marine Corps League. The presentation of the Colors was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, the posting of the Colors, and the singing of the National Anthem. Ron Dungey provided an inspiring invocation. Following Ron's invocation, our new National Commander (number 17) Steve Shivers delivered a very moving memorial message. Steve employed passages from the Bible and his own insights and reflections to develop a message of hope and inspiration.

Next, Stan Schmucker read the names of our nineteen departed NOBC comrades:

The reading of the names was followed by prayer and the sounding of taps. The Memorial Service concluded on the last note of taps and the extinguishing of the Memorial Candle.

1141 Daniel C. Clark	484L Edward Kellner
1104 Fred Cottriel	990 Floyd W. McLean
976 Stanley E. Davis	012L Lloyd Milavitz
244 Louis A. DeFillipo	197L Rudolph S. Mozgo
1064 Edwin A. Duhme	1108 Karl W. Schettenhelm
1034 George H. Fodor	079L Alphonse Thiaville
1119 Ed W. Freeman	188L Luther F. Weaver
042L Elmer S. Geik	1025 William R. Weiss
457 Walter M. Howard	258 Edward G. Winterroth
1060 Allison O. Hunt	

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 led the guests in the Pledge of Allegiance. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, was our invocation provided by Ron Dungey. Like last year, the formal banquet was a true winner. After the salad course, the chicken cordon bleu and beef tenderloin medallions with red wine mushroom sauce on a plate shared with a mixed vegetable medley and oven roasted potatoes was very well received by all. The banquet desserts and coffee topped off an excellent repast.

Our guest speaker for the evening was our very own Dr. Max Oppenheimer, Jr. (1103L). It would be a profound understatement to write that Max has an exceptional history that continues unabated to this day. Max provided a very interesting, thought provoking and, at times, awe inspiring overview of the first half of his life. There was very little in Max' keynote that did not resonate with some faction of the diverse

audience. At the conclusion of Max' presentation, Bob Evans presented Max with a miniature Commander's Trophy with an inscription citing him as our keynote speaker at the 2008 NOBC Convention/Reunion.

After a brief break, the audience was reconvened for a short, yet moving, acceptance speech from our new National Commander, Steve Shivers. At the conclusion of Steve's speech, the banquet attendees were invited to the Foxhole to continue the evening. Practically everyone from the banquet did repair to the Foxhole and conversation continued for several hours.

Thursday, October 23

Thursday morning broke with a significant number of attendees at the get away continental breakfast reminiscing, wishing each other a safe trip home, good health in the coming year, and a sincere wish for yet another convention/reunion in 2009.

Railroad Tracks - The Truth

The US standard railroad gauge (distance between rails) is 4 feet 8.5 inches. That's a bit of an odd number to say the least. Why was this gauge used? Well, that is the way they built them in jolly old England, and English expatriates built much of the new nation's railroad.

The question then arises what possessed the English to build to these dimensions? Well, the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre-railroad tramways, and that is the gauge/spacing they used. As we continue this mysterious journey, these folks who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools that they used for building wagons. Da! Why were wagons built to this odd wheel spacing? If the builders used any other space between the wheels the wagon wheels and axels would break on some of the old long distance roads in England because

that was the spacing of the wheel ruts.

Now to the real issue, who built those old rutted roads? Imperial Rome built the first long distance roads in mainland Europe and England for their conquering legions. The ruts in the roads were formed by Roman war chariots, which everyone else had to match for fear of destroying their wheels and axels. Since the chariots made for Imperial Rome were standardized as to wheel spacing, the US rail gauge stems from the original Imperial Rome war chariots. Or to say bureaucracies will live forever. These army chariots were made just wide enough to accommodate the rear ends of two war horses. Now when you look at a rail road track you can imagine the track is two horse butt's wide. Who said Roman influence has not lasted for generations, even their horses got into the act.

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.

Robert C. Evans, PhD, Vice-President, Soldiers For The Truth Foundation

Dr. Evans is presently a National market manager for the 3M Company in Washington, D.C., working with legislators and government agencies in the areas of homeland security, disaster relief, incident response, and energy conservation. He spent 25 years in the civilian nuclear power industry in Arkansas, Georgia and at the Nuclear Energy Institute in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Evans enlisted in the US Army in 1966, serving first at Fort Polk, Louisiana, on to primary flight school at Fort Walter, Texas, and advanced flight training at Fort Rucker, Alabama. He served with the 229th Aviation Battalion (First Cavalry Division) in the Republic of Vietnam as a helicopter pilot. He received a battlefield commission, earning a Silver Star and extending his tour in Vietnam as the battalion aviation safety officer. He later served as division artillery aviation officer, artillery battery executive officer and troop commander at Fort Hood, Texas before separating from the service in 1971



Decisiveness in a Commander-in-Chief

In two previous articles, I discussed some factors I use to judge the leadership qualifications of candidates running for President and Commander-in-Chief of our armed forces. Now, with a new President-elect, I want to finish this short series by discussing another important leadership factor that every new Commander-in-Chief must demonstrate to the military to show that he has the moral legitimacy to go along with the Constitutional authority of the office – decisiveness. As a retired career Marine officer, I was first introduced to decisiveness in my earliest days



Roger Charles

associated with the Marine Corps, as one of the fourteen leadership traits (In the easy to remember phrase, “J DID TIE BUCKLE”: Judgment, Justice, Decisiveness, Integrity, Dependability, Tact, Initiative, Endurance, Bearing, Unselfishness, Courage, Knowledge, Loyalty, Enthusiasm). From a simple internet search, I found a definition of decisiveness as a Marine Corps leadership trait that I believe is (nearly) identical to what I first learned many years ago: “DECISIVENESS Definition: Decisiveness means that you are able to make good decisions without delay. Get all the facts and weight them against each other. By acting calmly and quickly, you should arrive at a sound decision. You announce your decisions in a clear, firm, professional manner. Suggestions for Improvement: Practice being positive in your actions instead of acting half-heartedly or changing your mind on an issue.” I believe one of, if not the most important piece of decisiveness, was implied by the above definition: the ability to effectively enforce or supervise the execution of decisions. From my perspective, deciding whether a leader’s decision was good or bad is ultimately dependent on the results of that decision. A decision weakly enforced or poorly executed reflects that the decision-maker either failed in his or her personal dedication to the decision, or failed in his or her ability to properly assess the abilities of those charged with transforming the decision into reality. Reflecting on my practice of and exposure to Marine Corps leadership in action for over two-and-a-half decades, the sixth (final) troop-leading step, supervise, (the troop-leading steps are defined by the acronym “BAMCIS” – Begin planning, Arrange for reconnaissance, Make reconnaissance, Complete planning, Issue the order, Supervise) is almost always the difference between good and bad decisions, and therefore definitely essential for decisiveness in any Commander-in-Chief. Some may argue that comparing military leadership to civilian leadership (which includes business and government) is like comparing apples to rocket engines. I believe all can agree that the overall common denominator between them is that military and civilian organizations are made up of people, and their leaders are there to serve and look after the well-being of others while accomplishing

their respective organizational missions and objectives. Perhaps the most noticeable difference between military and civilian organizations is that military folks regularly use the terms, "leadership experience" or "command experience," while many business and government folks use the term, "executive experience," to describe what can be described in layman's terms as exercising decision-making authority. Perhaps the most noticeable similarity between military and civilian organizations is that the decision-makers are supported by staffs of different sizes and responsibilities depending on the decision-makers' personalities and the requirements of their respective organizations. From my perspective, at the federal government level, our President/Commander-in-Chief is primarily supported by his or her cabinet and the myriad of agencies that constitute the Executive Branch. I was fortunate in my Marine career to serve as both a commander and as a staff officer in support of other commanders. From my experiences, I easily recognize the difference in being the decision-maker, and in being the supporter of the decision-maker. Both jobs are essential, and both are critical to the overall success of any size organization. When everyone understood these mutually supporting jobs and everyone performed as expected and required, the organizations usually ran pretty smoothly. When either the decision-maker or the staffs confused their roles or failed to execute their duties, the organizations usually had trouble. I cannot remember a time when a larger military organization to which I belonged was led by someone with little or no command (or leadership) experience. I am not saying that I only had good leaders (I did have some bad ones), just that I only had leaders with previous command or leadership experience. In the Marine Corps, and I believe all the Services are the same, a pre-requisite for more senior leadership positions was successful leadership performances at junior positions. While it is certainly possible that senior leadership positions can be successfully filled by people with no, little, or even bad leadership performances at junior positions, the stakes are potentially so high and the consequences so severe for bad senior leadership performance in the military that entrusting the lives of men and women to unproven military leaders is not only a very risky business practice, but one can even argue it is borderline criminal. I learned firsthand that there is a huge difference between being a commander or ultimate decision-maker for a given

military organization, and being a staff officer, who exercised leadership in a very limited environment within the overall environment of that ultimate decision-maker. The 'burden of command' is knowing that you, and you alone, are responsible for the decisions you make, and you, and you alone, are ultimately accountable to others for the consequences of those decisions. Countless books have been written about command and leadership of organizations, so suffice it to say that when all eyes are looking at you and how you do what you do to lead your organization and execute the decisions you make, you look at and see things quite differently than your supporting staff. One very good example of decisive military leadership in action is from current (and possibly future) Defense Secretary Robert Gates. Gates' decisive actions (his firing of officials responsible for the Walter Reed Army Medical Center failures in taking care of wounded warriors, and of those Air Force officials responsible for mishandling nuclear weapons; his role in helping bring about our recent successes in Iraq; and the little-known fact that he has personally signed and made hand-written notes on over 1,000 letters of condolences to the families of casualties from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan), have earned him my respect and given him the same kind of moral legitimacy that I believe we need and want in our Commander-in-Chief. When I look at my Commander-in-Chief, I want to see someone who makes timely decisions that prove to be good. I want someone who has proven that he or she gets all the objective facts possible in the time allotted to assess them before making those timely decisions. I want someone who can clearly articulate those decisions. I want a Commander-in-Chief whom I can trust to stick to his or her decisions. I want to see everyone who has to execute the Commander-in-Chief's decisions say with confidence and sincerity, "Aye, aye, Sir/Ma'am," then go about the business of turning those decisions into reality knowing that they are responsible for executing those decisions, and that they will be held accountable for how well those decisions are executed. Especially in times of war, with troops deployed to combat zones in harm's way, should we demand our Commander-in-Chief be a decisive leader? You betcha!

Matthew Dodd is a Senior Editor of DefenseWatch.



Bob Evans

I would imagine there are NOBC members happy and not so happy with the outcome of the elections. Regardless of who is happy or unhappy within the ranks of The Military Coalition (TMC), the goal remains the same, the support of active duty, retired and dependents of armed service personnel. The core committees

of TMC have been working diligently for several months to develop their legislative goals for 2009. The core committees include Guard & Reserve, Health Care, Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) and Military Construction (MILCON), Personnel/Compensation/Commissaries, Retired Affairs, Survivor Programs, Taxes and Social Security, and Veterans. It would take the entire Mustang News and more to provide you all the legislative goals for 2009. I have chosen to share the Retiree Committee goals with you since over 90% of our readers fall within the retiree category.

RETIRED AFFAIRS Committee Legislative Goals For 2009

Concurrent Receipt - Continue to seek timely and comprehensive implementation of legislation that authorizes the concurrent receipt of uniformed services retired pay and VA disability compensation, by:

- Expanding Concurrent Retirement and Disability Payments (CRDP) to disabled retirees not eligible under the current statute, to include vesting of earned retirement credit for chapter 61 retirees with less than 20 years of service;
- Seeking legislation to resolve disparities associated with the implementation of CRDP and Combat Related Special Compensation (CRSC) legislation;
- Assisting the DoD and Services with outreach application efforts to disabled retirees who are not aware they are eligible for CRSC; and,
- Seeking legislation to ensure a disabled retiree's CRSC disability compensation cannot be reduced when one's VA disability rating increases until the retiree is afforded the opportunity to elect between CRSC or CRDP.

Health Care - Defend current retiree health care programs from disproportional cost increases (enrollment fees, co-pays, deductibles, etc.).

Disability Retirement Reform - Reform the DoD disability retirement system to require inclusion of all unfitting conditions and DoD acceptance of the VA ratings for those conditions. Ensure the principles of DoD disability retirement and VA disability compensation are not compromised. Ensure any restructure of the DoD and VA disability and compensation systems does not inadvertently reduce compensation levels for disabled service members. Oppose distinguishing between disabilities incurred in combat vice non-combat when determining benefits eligibility for retirement.

Uniformed Services Retirement System - Oppose initiatives to "civilianize" the military retirement system in ways that reduce the value of the current retirement system and undermine long-term retention by,

- Guarding against implementation of the contentious recommendations of the 10th Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation; and
- Developing legislation that would eliminate the Career Status Bonus for service members as it significantly devalues their retirement over time.

Disability Severance - The FY08 NDAA ended the offset for people injured in the combat zone only. The Coalition will seek legislation that will:

- Further expand eligibility to include all combat-related injuries, using same definition as CRSC; and,
- Expand eligibility to include all service-connected disabilities, consistent with TMC view that there should not be a distinction between the treatment of members disabled in combat vice members with non-combat, service-caused disabilities.

Retiree Entitlements and Benefits - Protect retiree entitlements and closely monitor any attempts to degrade benefits. Monitor access to military commissaries, exchange facilities, family support services, and Morale, Welfare and Recreation activities, and be especially vigilant with regard to

impacts from BRAC and other re-basing/redeployment initiatives.

Reduced Retirement Age For Guard and Reserve Personnel - Strongly urge further progress in revamping the reserve retirement system in recognition of increased service and sacrifice of Reserve Component members, including at a minimum, extending the new authority for a 90 day - three month reduction to all Guard and Reserve members who have served since October 7, 2001 (joint initiative with TMC's Guard and Reserve Committee).

Recoupment Relief for Separated Service Members – During the past two decades, the services engaged in drawdown efforts with voluntary tools such as Voluntary Separation Incentive (VSI), Special Separation Benefit (SSB), and/or Voluntary Separation Program (VSP) as well as involuntary tools such as a Reduction in Force (RIF).

These programs provided little incentive for service members to continue to serve in the Guard or Reserve because individuals who separate and then subsequently qualify for a uniformed service retirement are required to pay back their separation pay when they receive a qualifying retirement annuity.

However, since the attack of 9/11 and the transition of the Guard and Reserve from a strategic reserve to an operational reserve, many of these service members volunteered to again serve their country and either returned to active duty or affiliated with a Guard or Reserve unit.

The Coalition believes the purpose of involuntary separation pay is to help ease the service member's transition from active duty into civilian life. Therefore, in order to recognize their continued service and to provide an incentive for future volunteers who are either forced from active duty under involuntary programs such as a RIF or under voluntary programs such as VSI, SSB, or VSP-like programs to affiliate with the Reserve Component, the Coalition will seek legislation that exempts involuntary separation pay, or the value of a member's involuntary separation pay for those who volunteered to leave via VSI, SSB, or VSP-like programs, once they become eligible for a uniformed service retirement.

Reduce Age for Paid-up SBP to Age 67 - Under current law, retirees may stop paying SBP premiums when they have paid for 30 years and reach age 70. This eliminates a group who may have entered the service at age 17 and will be required to pay for 33 years until attaining paid-up SBP status. Therefore, we support changing the minimum age for paid-up SBP from age 70 to age 67 so those who joined the military at age 17, 18 or 19 and serves 20 years will only have to pay SBP premiums for 30 years (joint initiative with TMC's Survivor Committee).

Uniformed Services Former Spouses' Protection Act (USFSPA) - Pursue legislation that eliminates inequities in the USFSPA. Specifically, build consensus to enact legislation that would include all of the following:

- Base the award amount to the former spouse on the grade and years of service of the member at time of divorce (and not retirement);
- Prohibit the award of imputed income or "forced retirement" of active duty members;
- Extend 20/20/20 benefits to 20/20/15 former spouses;
- Permit the designation of multiple Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) beneficiaries with the presumption that SBP benefits must be proportionate to the allocation of retired pay (joint initiative with TMC's Survivor Committee);
- Eliminate the "10-year Rule" for the direct payment of retired pay allocations by the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS);
- Permit SBP premiums to be withheld from the former spouse's share of retired pay if directed by court order (joint initiative with TMC's Survivor Committee);
- Permit a former spouse to waive SBP coverage (joint initiative with TMC's Survivor Committee);
- Repeal the one-year deemed election requirement (joint initiative with TMC's Survivor Committee); and,
- Assist the DoD and Services with greater outreach and expanded awareness to members and former spouses of their rights, responsibilities, and benefits upon divorce.

Permanent ID Card Reform - Promote legislative changes that will lower eligibility for permanent ID cards for all spouses and survivors of uniformed service members to age 65 (joint initiative with TMC's Survivor Committee).

Final Retired Pay for Survivors - Support legislation that provides retired pay to the survivor for the full month of the service member's death (joint initiative with TMC's Survivor Committee).

Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLAs) - Seek to guard against any discriminatory treatment of retired members of the uniformed services compared to other Federal retirement, or Federal COLA-eligibles, by maintaining and enhancing the equity of annual COLAs through:

- Working to ensure continued fulfillment of congressional COLA intent, as expressed in House National Security (HNSC) Committee Print of Title 37, USC: "to provide every military retired member the same purchasing power of the retired pay to which he was entitled at the time of retirement [and ensure it is] not, at any time in the future...eroded by subsequent increases in consumer prices;"
- Ensuring equal treatment of NOAA/USPHS/USCG personnel in conjunction with any retirement/COLA legislation;
- Monitoring any proposed Bureau of Labor and Statistics (BLS) adjustments to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) calculation process; and,
- Monitoring action on Budget Resolution, Omnibus Budget Reconciliation, Social Security reform initiatives, and other proposals to guard against discriminatory treatment of uniformed services retired members.

Full Veteran Status for Guard/Reserve Retirees - Seek full veteran status for members of the Guard and Reserve components with 20 years or more of service, but who do not otherwise qualify under current law as veterans, by:

- Developing the case for expanding veteran status to members of the Guard and Reserve components who completed 20 years or more of service and who are thereby considered to be

military retirees, but because of the current criteria are not considered to be veterans; and,

- Seeking administration changes or legislation to remedy the situation and award veteran status to the individuals not currently classified as veterans (joint initiative with TMC's Guard/Reserve and Veterans Committees).

Space-Available Travel - Seek balance in space-available travel priorities between:

- Retired members versus unaccompanied active duty dependents (i.e., establish some limits on unaccompanied dependent travel to more appropriately recognize their need for such travel without closing out retiree travel options); and,
- "Gray area" Reserve retirees and other uniformed services retirees, including their surviving spouses ("gray area" retirees now cannot use space-available travel to overseas locations as other retirees can) (joint initiative with TMC's Survivor Committee).



The Buck Stops Here - Harry Truman

"It doesn't matter how big a ranch you own, or how many cows ya' brand, the size of your funeral is still gonna depend on the weather."

When offered corporate positions at large salaries, he declined, stating, "You don't want me. You want the office of the president, and that doesn't belong to me. It belongs to the American people and it's not for sale."

Good old Harry Truman could have been correct when he observed, "My choice early in life was either to be a piano player in a warehouse or a politician. And to tell the truth, there's hardly any difference. I, for one, believe the piano player job to be much more honorable than current politicians."

Today, many in Congress also have found a new level of success in cashing in on the presidency, resulting in untold wealth.

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Melbourne, FL 32940

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