

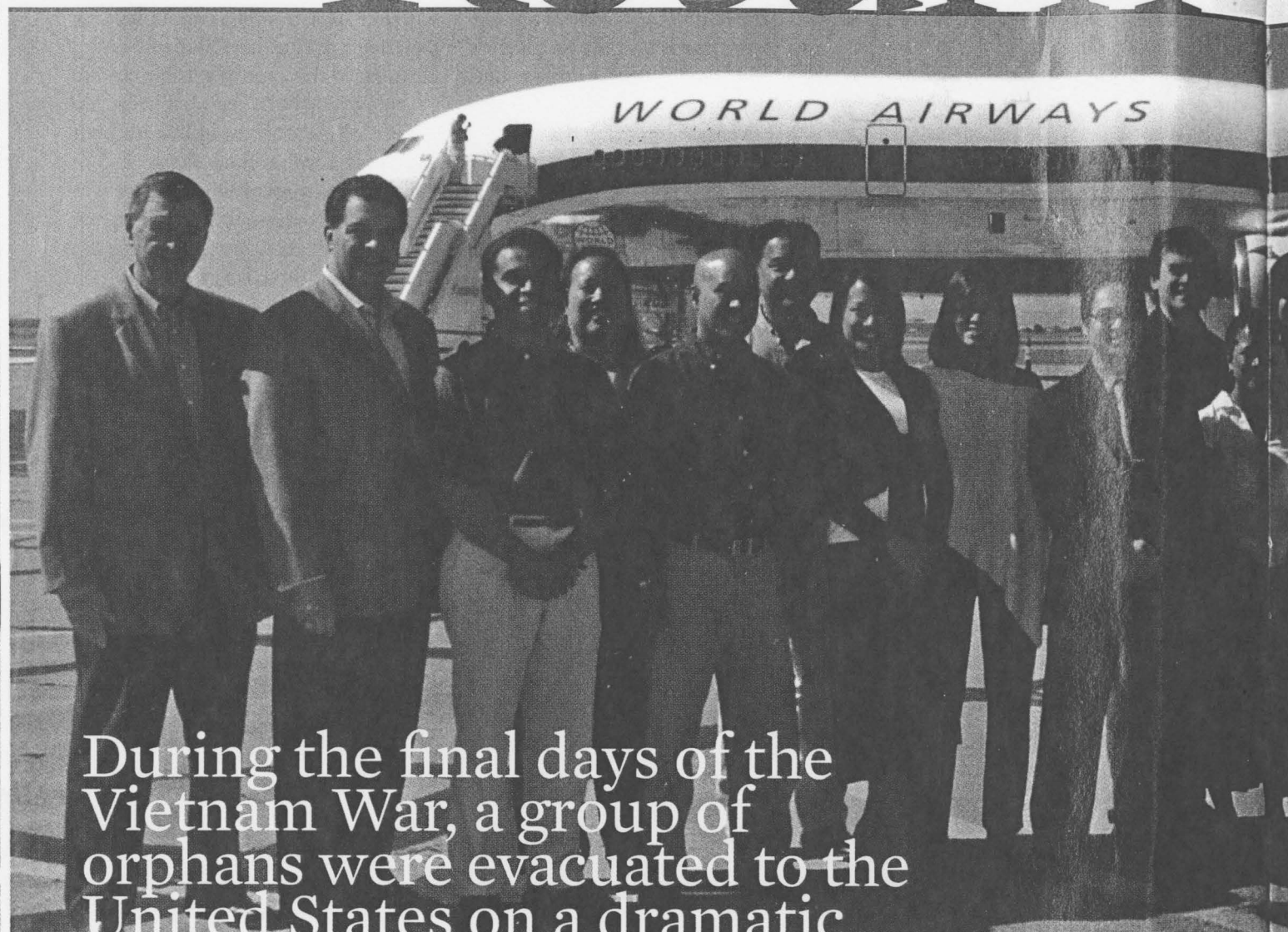
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USMC

# Return



During the final days of the Vietnam War, a group of orphans were evacuated to the United States on a dramatic flight that would launch Operation Babylift. Now, 30 years later, they are returning to their place of birth.

By Babbie De Derian



# MILITARY OFFICER

DECEMBER 2005 \$4

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## True Grit

**USMC Commandant Gen.  
Michael W. Hagee upholds  
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**Inflation jump means  
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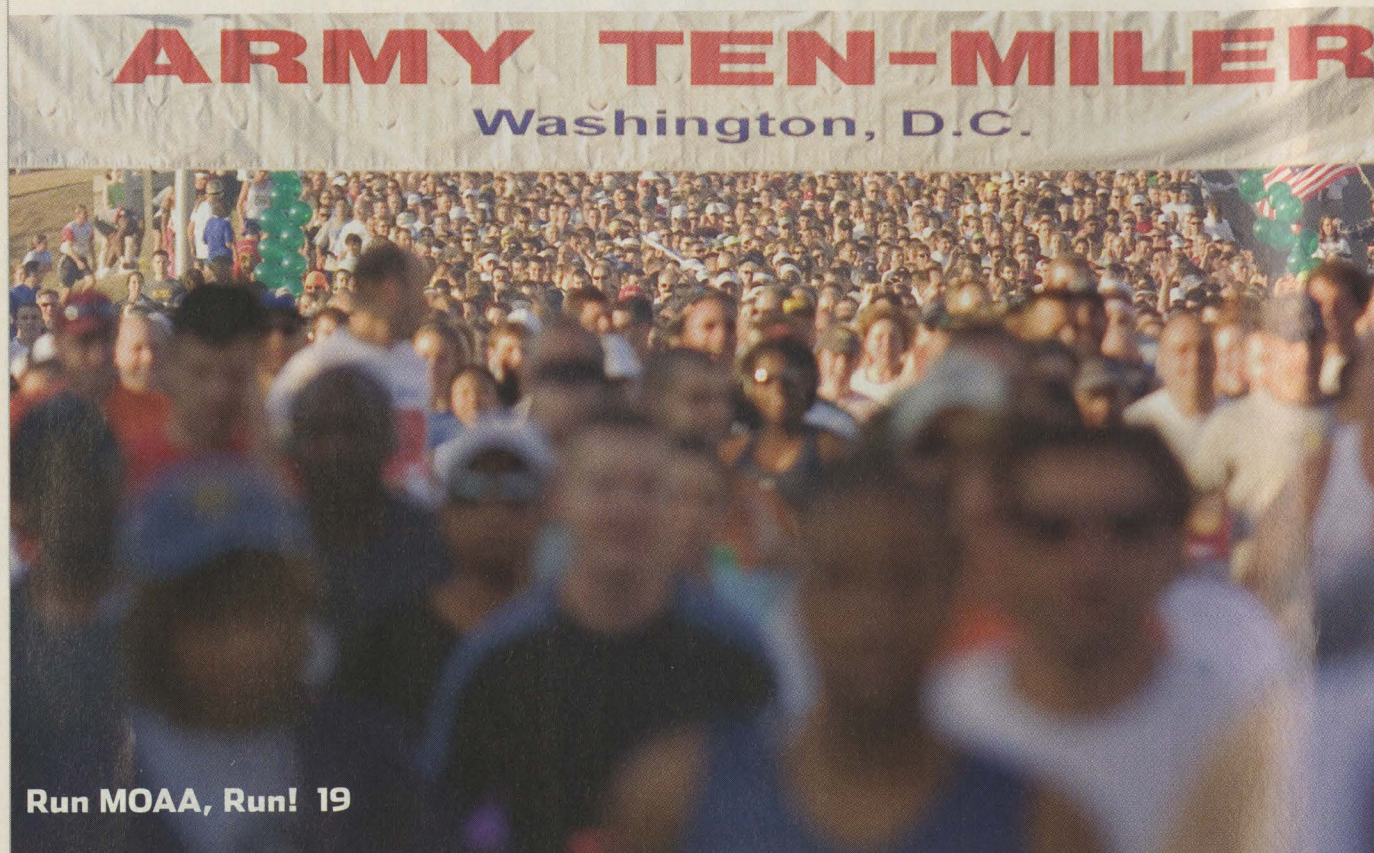
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**On the cover:** "The individual Marine is our most important weapon system," says Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Michael W. Hagee in this month's feature interview.

PHOTOS: COVER AND ABOVE, STEVE BARRETT

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I was feeling a great deal of pressure and embarrassment and my wife was beginning to think it was something she did or didn't do - it wasn't.

I wasn't comfortable discussing my situation with anyone - not even my doctor - so in a desperate attempt to find some help, I privately did some research on the web.

First, I found that many HEALTHY men experience a decrease in stamina and performance with age. I wasn't alone! Good blood circulation is key to maintaining a strong erection and apparently there are a number of factors that can weaken it.

Armed with this new information, I began to search through the many "male enhancement" and potency

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# 'Tis the Season

It's time again to celebrate with family and friends and give thanks for our blessings. It's also time to reflect on one of our greatest blessings, freedom, which comes with a heavy price.

**T**his holiday season, as in many other years, thousands of servicemembers around the world are protecting freedom and fighting the war on terrorism. Additionally, our nation and the world are recovering from a calamitous year of natural disasters. As we go to press, Florida is reeling from Wilma's blows, New Orleans has barely begun recovering from Katrina, and the Gulf Coast is in shambles from a series of storms. National Guard, Reserve, and active component forces all are conducting relief efforts at home. Overseas, more than 1,000 U.S. servicemembers are assisting earthquake relief efforts in Pakistan.

The challenge for *Military Officer* is to cover the many roles and faces of our military community. Currently, one of our writers is gathering stories from servicemembers who have assisted in hurricane relief. You'll see these first-person accounts in a future issue. In this month's edition, however, we'd like to offer some insights to our nation's military from several unique perspectives.

We begin by speaking with the nation's top Marine officer, Gen. Michael W. Hagee, Marine Corps commandant. In an interview with Contributing Editor Tom Philpott, Hagee discusses the challenges of Iraq and their effects on the Corps.

"The most important thing [the Iraq experience] has done is we have the best, battle-hardened, well-trained, experienced Marine Corps we have had in some

time," says Hagee. "Just about every unit, regular and reserve, has rotated into Iraq or Afghanistan — some more than once."

Last April, Hagee updated his "vision and intent" for the Corps. He notes that Marines must remain the nation's "force in readiness" and that individual Marines are the most critical weapon system. For the rest of the story, see page 46.

Our second article in the line of professional reading tackles a timely legal and ethical issue: "Must the United States comply with the Geneva Conventions in fighting the global war on terrorism?" We asked two legal authorities to give us their takes on this issue. You may read their responses beginning on page 66.

Would you like to share your thoughts on this question? If so, go to [www.moaa.org/discussion](http://www.moaa.org/discussion) and join MOAA's discussion forum. We'll publish selected comments in a future issue.

This holiday season, we should reflect on those who fight for perhaps the greatest gift of all — our freedom. Best wishes for a safe and happy holiday!



*Warren S. Lacy*

— Col. Warren S. Lacy, USA-Ret.

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# It's Unforgivable

Our elected national leadership is out of alignment with respect to military priorities, exacerbating the stress on our armed forces and threatening readiness and morale.

**P**roper alignment makes your automobile tires work more efficiently; misalignment increases stress and wear on the tires and steering mechanism. As I write this column at October's end, the Senate — its priorities out of alignment — still has not passed its version of the FY 2006 Defense Authorization Bill.

The Senate's inaction is incomprehensible — especially during a war. At a time when the Army, the Army National Guard, and the Army Reserve missed their annual recruiting quotas by thousands, the bill contains important items such as a 20,000 increase in Army end strength; a doubling of the maximum enlistment bonus; major new accession, affiliation, and reenlistment bonus authorities; and health coverage for Selected Reserve members and families.

Compounding this misalignment of priorities, the Pentagon and House of Representatives don't want to do anything to improve reserve health care for those who are bearing a significant load in the current war. They don't support fixing the Survivor Benefit Plan/Dependency and Indemnity Compensation offset, either. Our dedicated guardmembers, reservists, and surviving spouses seem to be a low priority with our federally elected leadership.

Some in Congress propose cutting the defense budget by 2 percent to help pay Katrina costs. Hurricane victims deserve all the help they can get, but not at the expense of the very military people who saved the day during that disaster.

On top of all this, the Office of Management and Budget wants to have a moratorium on pay and benefits fixes for those fighting the war — and that's while the war is going on! What kind of signal does that send to our dedicated servicemembers?

Today's \$400 billion defense budget is only about 3.5 percent of the national economy, as measured by the GDP. Between 1940 and 2000, peacetime defense spending averaged 6 percent of the GDP. Now in wartime, we won't match past peacetime defense budget standards, even while diverting billions to pour on the pork and build bridges to nowhere. Even after Senate action, the House and Senate face weeks of negotiation for an FY 2006 that is already well under way.

Less than 1 percent of America's people are sacrificing for the other 99 percent while Senate leadership drags its feet. Until this bill is passed and signed by the president, let your elected officials know they are out of alignment. Contact them through MOAA's Web site (<http://capwiz.com/moaa/home>) or MOAA's toll-free telephone line to Congress, (866) 272-6622.

*Norb Ryan Jr.*

— Vice Adm. Norb Ryan Jr., USN-Ret.

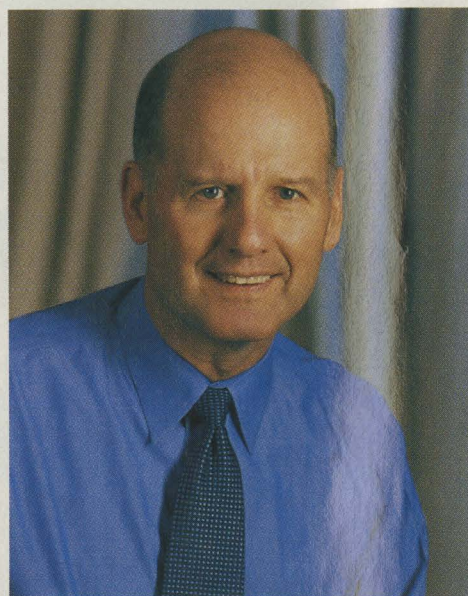


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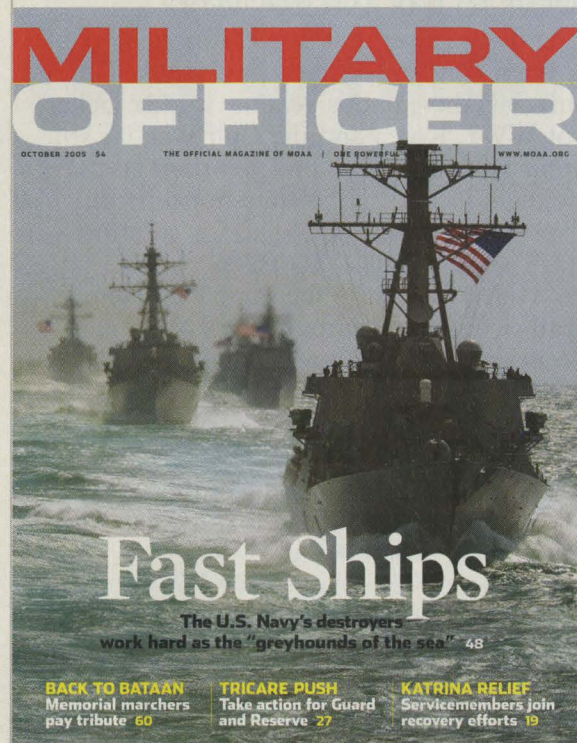
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## Tin Can Rally

Thank you for the excellent article in the October 2005 issue on our Navy's destroyers ("Greyhounds of the Sea"). As I gazed at the lead photo covering pages 48 and 49 of water crashing over the bow of the destroyer, I remarked to my wife, "That sure brings back memories!" Imagine my surprise (and delight) when I then saw printed in the lower right corner "USS Stormes (DD-780)" — my first ship!

... I spent the next several minutes recalling events and shipmates, in particular my "greatest generation" CO, Cmdr. W.J. Millar. During one of our many challenging assignments, the Cuban missile blockade, I can tell you that it was a great comfort to the entire crew to know we were at sea with a skipper who had "been there and done that" during both World War II and [the Korean War].

**Capt. Ed Fava, USN-Ret.**  
**Charleston, S.C.**

**"There's one sound a submarine doesn't want to hear ... — the prop wash of a destroyer."**

— Lt. Edwin C. Oyer,  
USN-Ret.

As a former tin can sailor on board the *USS Shea* (DM-30) (commissioned on DD-750), I found a bond aboard that's unique to smaller ships (subs, too), especially ships of

the line. The DDs of any era were often tasked to do a variety of assignments from guns, torpedos, minesweeping, and mine-laying on the offensive side. There's one sound a submarine doesn't want to hear on its sonar — the prop wash of a destroyer such as ours. ... Those pictures on pages 48, 49, 52, and 53 say it all.

**Lt. Edwin C. Oyer, USN-Ret.**  
**Williamsburg, Va.**

I am 80 years of age [and] joined the Navy on my 17th birthday in 1942. My first ship was an old World War II destroyer — [it] had been the *USS Turner*, which had been pulled out of the mothball fleet. ... From there I was sent to a new, Fletcher-class *USS Rooks* (DP-804). We survived Iwo and 83 days at Okinawa. Two of our divisions were sunk by kamikaze.

... Throughout my 30-year career I was aboard several different destroyer types. The ... *USS Noa* (DD-841)

[pictured on page 53] was my first duty as a commissioned officer. ...

I had the good luck to be part of the commissioning crew of the world's first nuclear frigate, *USS Bainbridge* (DLGN-25). [I had a] tour in Vietnam as operations officer, *USS Standley* (DLG-34). I was XO of *USS Soley* (DD-707) and finished my career as CO of *USS Dainard* (DD-706).

**Lt. Cmdr. E.G. Trayer, USN-Ret.**  
**Lexington, S.C.**

The picture of the *USS Remey* (DD-688) refueling in heavy seas [page 52] brought back a lot of memories. I was the main propulsion assistant of the *Remey* at the time, and my sea refueling station was at the After Gun Director.

I vividly remember [the pictured] refueling. We, as a unit of DesRon 12 out of Newport, R.I., had been on antisubmarine exercises off the Virginia Capes (VaCapes) in the spring of 1958 when we got orders to proceed at best speed toward Venezuela, where Vice President Nixon had come under violent attack from a mob during a welcome parade in Caracas.

Normal speed for refueling at sea was 12 knots. Given the circumstances, we were refueling at 20 knots, a dramatic increase in speed. The picture shows [*Remey*] alongside the *USS Lake Champlain*, out of Quonset Point, R.I. As we pitched, fully two-thirds of our hull was out of the water.

Although we got our fuel, the operation was not a total success. Toward the end of the operation the hose in the forward fuel trunk, just under the bridge, pulled out and spewed black oil down the entire port side of the ship from bridge to fantail. It was a "holy mess" to clean up, and our CO was not the happiest

of commanders that day. No personal injuries, though, and for that we were all thankful.

**Cmdr. Paul S. Frommer, USN-Ret.**  
**Alexandria, Va.**

Although not the military officer of our family, I very much enjoyed October's feature article, "Greyhounds of the Sea." In 1943 my dad



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# MILITARY OFFICER

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## Tin Can R

Thank you for in the October Navy's destroy of the Sea"). A photo covering water crashin destroyer, I re "That sure bri Imagine my s when I then s lower right co (DD-780)" —

... I spent th recalling even particular my CO, Cmdr. W.J our many chal the Cuban mis you that it was entire crew to with a skipper and done that War II and [th

**"There's one sound a submarine doesn't want to hear ... — the prop wash of a**

[pictured on page 53] was my first duty as a commissioned officer. ...

I had the good luck to be part of the commissioning crew of the world's first nuclear frigate, *USS Bainbridge* (DLGN-25). [I had a] tour in Vietnam as operations officer, *USS Standley* (DLG-34). I was XO of *USS Soley* (DD-707) and finished my ca-

of commanders that day. No personal injuries, though, and for that we were all thankful.

**Cmdr. Paul S. Frommer, USN-Ret.**  
**Alexandria, Va.**

Although not the military officer of our family, I very much enjoyed October's feature article, "Greyhounds of the Sea." In 1943 my dad, Paul "Pablo" High, commissioned one of them, the Fletcher-class destroyer *USS Bryant*. The Navy Cross he was awarded from Surigao Strait is evidence of the distinguished service of all aboard that brave ship.

Dad died in 1986, at which time I intercepted his invitation to a *Bryant* reunion. This has put me in touch with men who, from 1980 till the present, have yearly celebrated a brotherhood forged in the fires of a kamikaze attack off Okinawa.

The ship's bell appeared, more than 40 years after the war, in the lobby of our older son's naval reserve center [in Mobile, Ala.]. My mentioning this small miracle led crew member Dan DeRoch to fight for possession of this special symbol. He and his shipmates now annually reunite in the presence of the bell from their own *USS Bryant* (DD-665).

**Judith High Boyer**  
**Valparaiso, Fla.**

## If It's Such a Good Deal ...

With respect to ["No Accounting for GAO View," "Washington Scene," October 2005]: Do you have any figures on the number of GAO employees who have left the GAO and joined the military so as to take advantage of all the benefits [servicemembers] enjoy or, more to the point, have encouraged their sons and daughters to sign on and profit

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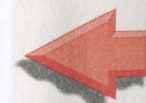
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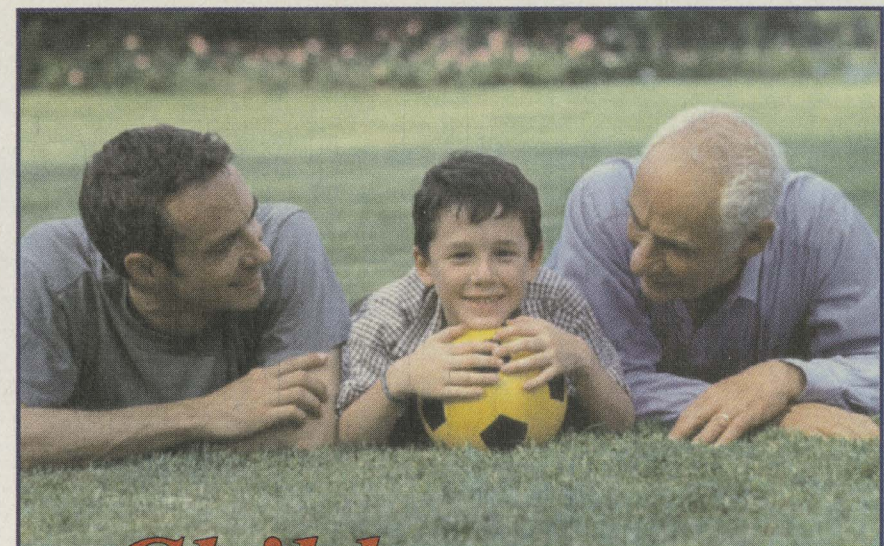
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**Col. David D. Brown, USA-Ret.**

Stone Mountain, Ga.

### Back to Bataan

[I] was very impressed with ... "Marching to Remember" [October 2005]. As I read it, my mind (and thinking) went back to those hectic days when I as a private served there as a rifleman with Company G, 2nd Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, Manila, Philippines, from Aug. 15, 1941, until the surrender of Bataan April 9, 1942. ... Incidentally, after I was released from being a Japanese POW for three years, three months, and six days (on Sept. 9, 1945), I decided to reenlist in the Army and served for 30 years!

**CWO4 Michael J. Campbell, USA-Ret.**

North Las Vegas, Nev.

### Much Appreciated

Bravo to Rear Adm. Joyce Johnson on her [October 2005] "Ask the Doctor" [column] on albinism. My father is a retired Air Force officer and called me immediately when he read the article. My brother and I both have the Hermansky-Pudlak Syndrome type of albinism. We grew up in the military health care system. It was a very accurate, easy-to-read summary of albinism. We were especially excited to see a mention of Hermansky-Pudlak Syndrome, which is very rare and unknown by many, many doctors. We really appreciate the mention as it is so commonly overlooked in discussions of albinism, even though its implications can be so very serious.

**Heather Kirkwood,**

Director of Outreach,

Hermansky-Pudlak Syndrome Network

For submission information, see page 16.



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Rear Adm. Joyce Johnson, D.O., M.A., USPHS-Ret., answers your general medical questions. Consult your physician for specific medical advice.

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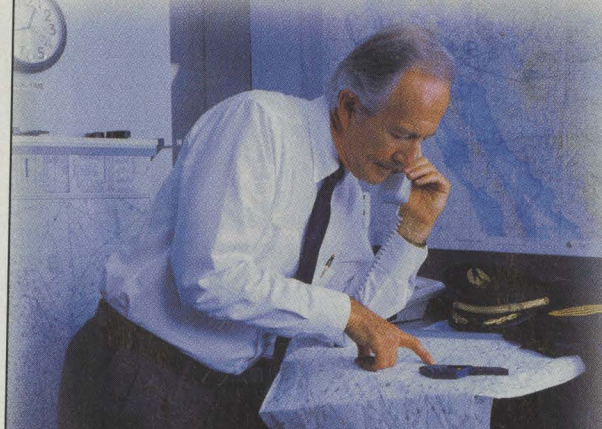
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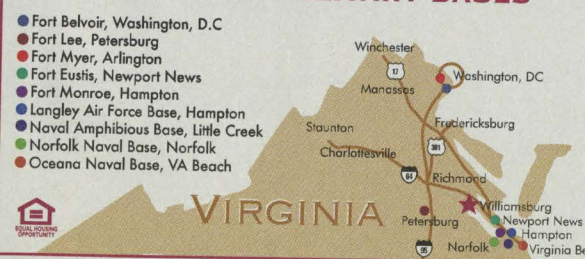
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## USO for the Holidays

**S**ervicemembers far from home always have been able to rely on the United Service Organizations (USO) for entertainment and a morale boost, and this holiday season proves no different. The World USO's Celebrity Entertainment Program includes a Sergeant Major of the Army Hope and Freedom Tour 2005 in the Persian Gulf and the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders holiday tour in Korea. Since 1941, the USO has brought entertainment to millions of U.S. military personnel at installations around the world and ships at sea. Recent tour participants include Wayne Newton, Bruce Willis, Kid Rock, Drew Carey, Ben Affleck, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Gary Sinise, and Joan Jett.

The USO also offers a number of programs for Americans to help. Operation Phone Home provides prepaid international calling cards to deployed servicemembers, Operation USO Care Package delivers care packages to servicemembers overseas, and Operation Mail Call allows servicemembers to send greeting cards to their families, free of charge.

**U.S. servicemembers rely on the USO for entertainment and a morale boost.**



The USO also has given aid and comfort to the victims of the recent hurricanes. New USO satellite locations have opened in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi. Through these centers as well as USO locations in Florida, military families from bases destroyed or damaged by Katrina could find temporary housing, food, and clothing.

Today, the USO delivers its programs at 124 locations around the world, including Kuwait, Qatar, and Afghanistan. The USO will celebrate 65 years of service in 2006.



## Run MOAA, Run!

**Members of MOAA** and its headquarters' staff laced up in Washington, D.C., Oct. 2 to run in the 21st Annual Army Ten-Miler, the nation's largest 10-mile race. A total of 70 runners represented the association, including MOAA President Norb

Ryan Jr., USN-Ret. (left), and everyone finished, even though they were re-routed longer than 11 miles after a suspicious package was found along the route. When the racers reached the finish line, they celebrated at the postrace party in the MOAA tent.

Plans are under way for the second annual MOAA Army Ten-Miler Team. Challenge yourself to get in shape and have fun!

### ON THE WEB

■ **For more details** and race-day photos, visit [www.moaa.org/running](http://www.moaa.org/running).



## Katrina Relief Bill Opens Window

**T**he Katrina Tax Relief Act provides an extraordinary gifting window for those who want to donate to public charities. Normally, cash gifts to public charities are limited to 50 percent of adjusted gross income (AGI). However, the relief act makes the following changes for cash gifts made to public charities between Aug. 28, 2005, and Dec. 31, 2005.

- Outright gifts by cash or check up to 100 percent

of AGI are deductible. ■ Gifts are exempt from the regular 3 percent reduction of itemized deductions for individual taxpayers with AGI in excess of \$145,950. ■ Taxpayers over age 59½ may withdraw money from IRAs and retirement plans without penalty to fund a charitable contribution. However, consult your tax advisor before taking an IRA or qualified plan distribution.



### ON THE WEB

■ To get a jump-start on tax planning, use MOAA's tax calculators found on its Financial Center at [www.moaa.org/services](http://www.moaa.org/services).



**MOAA President** Vice Adm. Norb Ryan Jr., USN-Ret., climbed the Crows Nest at Dover International Speedway — The Monster Mile — in Delaware Sept. 25 to wave the green flag signaling the start of the MBNA NASCAR RacePoints 400.

## In Review

**Washington's General: Nathaniel Greene and the Triumph of the American Revolution** By Terry Golway. Henry Holt and Co., 2005. \$26. ISBN 0-8050-7066-4.

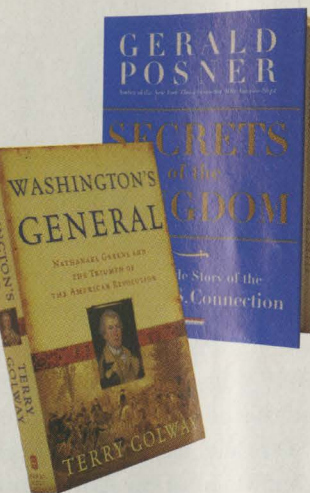
During the Revolutionary War, Gen. Nathaniel Greene was defeated tactically in every battle he fought, but he still won the war's most strategic victory.

This is the long-overdue biography of perhaps the most underappreciated general officer in America's war for independence. Greene was an amateur at war, self-taught in military skills; he also was a man who knew how to get things done. He performed admirably as the Continental Army's quartermaster general, one of the few officers who understood the importance of supply, logistics, hygiene, and morale.

Terry Golway describes Greene as a resilient fighter and details his bold and crafty campaign to defeat the British and save the Southern colonies.

**Secrets of the Kingdom: The Inside Story of the Saudi-U.S. Connection** By Gerald Posner. Random House, 2005. \$24.95. ISBN 1-4000-6291-8.

Gerald Posner specializes in sensational nonfiction, and this could be his most pro-



vocative book yet. *Secrets of the Kingdom* is Posner's scathing indictment of Saudi Arabia as a sanctuary for al-Qaida, the funding source for international terrorism, and an influence peddler in American politics and business.

There is nothing subtle about Posner's accusations that the Saudi royal family is corrupt, repressive, intolerant, and duplicitous, promoting terrorism and radical Islam while claiming to be a U.S. ally.

Posner clearly intends to discredit the House of Saud, although his allegations of royal family excesses and manipulation often read like a gossip Middle East soap opera. Still, his analysis of modern Saudi history and current behavior is excellent and a bit scary. Posner, however, offers no solutions to a dangerously unstable and unbalanced political and economic partnership.

— William D. Bushnell

## The Winners Are ...

**T**his year MOAA has been busy presenting awards to the next generation of military leaders. MOAA visits schools and organizations and presents awards recognizing both faculty and students who have contributed significantly to the study, implementation, and spirit of joint-service warfare.

With the top-notch, advanced education our officers receive, our nation's military will continue to excel. MOAA recognizes the accomplishments of these outstanding individuals who are strengthening the foundation future generations will build upon. The 2005 winners to date are:

- **MOAA Leadership Award:** Lt. Col. Michael Kucej, USAF, *Air War College*
- **MOAA Faculty Service Award:** Lt. Col. Tom Ruby, USAF, and Dr. Robert Muller, *Air Command and Staff College*
- **Commandant's Distinguished Graduate Award:** Cmdr. Steve Vahsen, USN, *Industrial College of the Armed Forces*
- **MOAA Excellence in Writing Award:** Col. Robert Lanham, USMC, *National War College*
- **JAWS/Joint Campaign Planner Award:** Maj. William A. Ryan III, USA, *Joint Forces Staff College*
- **JCWS/Master Joint Planner Award:** Lt. Col. Michael Wormley, USAF, and Lt. Col. Ward Quinn, USMC, *Joint Forces Staff College*; Maj. Sergio Cardea, Italy
- **Peer Instructor Award:** Bill Mead, *Defense Acquisition University Program Manager Course*
- **MOAA Excellence Award:** Rear Adm. David White, USN, *Military Chaplains Association*
- **MOAA Distinguished Graduates Award:** 2nd Lt. Lisa Flores, USAF; 2nd Lt. Quinette Hall, USAF; 1st Lt. Mark Sabroski, USAF; 2nd Lt. Janelle Just, USAF; 1st Lt. Alexei Kambovov, USAF; and 1st Lt. Becky Quenn-ville, USAF; *USAF Health Services Administrators*
- **Excellence in Joint Service Warfare:** Col. Steven A. Greene, USA, and Lt. Cmdr. Vincent A. Augelli, USN, *Naval War College*; Maj. Charles A. Western, USMC, *Army Command and General Staff College*
- **Capt. Joy Bright Hancock and Capt. Dorothy Stratton Leadership Awards:** Cmdr. Janet Mahn, USN; Lt. Jill Dougherty, USN; CWO4 Mary Kohut, USN; HTCS(SW) Tanya Delpriore, USN; FSCM Karen Naulty, USCG; and CWO3 Lori Palmer, USCG; *Sea Services Women's Leadership Symposium*
- **Best "Other Service" Paper Award:** Cmdr. Stephen P. Ferris, USNR, and Col. Philip G. Wasielewski, USMCR
- **Best International Student Paper:** Maj. Gen. Marc Lessard, Canadian Forces, *Army War College Distance Learning School*
- **Order of the Eagle Rising:** CWO4 Donald E. Hess, USA-Ret., and CWO4 William Ruf, USA-Ret., *Warrent Officers Career Center*



## NutritionNotes

### 'Tis the Berry

**Cranberries are on nearly every** Christmas menu, whether it's fresh cranberry sauce, breads, or salad garnishes. About 40,000 acres of commercial cranberries are grown in the United States.

Some medical historians believe that in colonial times American Indians used cranberries as traditional medicine for urinary health. Recent studies have found that cranberries have anti-adhesion properties, which could keep bacteria, such as E. coli, from attaching to the bladder walls and thus decrease the likelihood of urinary tract infection. The anti-adhesion effects also could decrease gum disease or ulcers related to bacteria.

Cranberries also contain antioxidants, which are being studied for their effects on aging and cancer, and are a



### ON THE WEB

■ For recipes using cranberries, visit MOAA's Web Base at [www.moaa.org/wellness](http://www.moaa.org/wellness).

source of flavinoids, which could decrease inflammation and have an impact on atherosclerosis. However, many of the studies involve large quantities of cranberry juice, often a quart a day. Regardless, cranberries are a flavorful and festive fruit and make a healthful contribution to any table.

— Rear Adm. Joyce Johnson, USPHS-Ret.

## Honoring Our Own

**A**n MOAA Memorial Plaque was installed at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (the Punchbowl) in Honolulu Sept. 24. Col. Ron Buchert, USAF-Ret., national board of directors chair for Councils and Chapters,

spoke to members of the Hawaii and Aloha (Hawaii) chapters as well as the Southern Nevada and El Paso (Texas) chapters at the dedication of the granite and bronze marker, which pays tribute to the veterans interred at the Punchbowl.



## Retiree Spotlight

**C**ol. Joe Sapere, USAF-Ret., of Chesapeake, Va., lost a foot after a skydiving accident five years ago. He started biking as a form of rehabilitation. In 2001 he founded Amputees Across America (AAA), a non-profit group that sponsors cross-country bike trips to motivate other amputees.

**How did AAA get started?** Initially I wanted to show myself that my accident would not limit me. But when I saw what my success meant to others, I decided to organize trips. I wanted to show others that they have a choice about the way they live.



**What are the trips like?** We travel a different route every summer visiting rehabilitation centers, VA hospitals, and Shriners Hospitals for Children. At each center we visit, the patients are assembled outside. When we pull up on our bikes, the message is obvious even before we speak to them. They see what is possible.

**The group must have many inspiring stories.** Tons. Two veterans of the war in Iraq rode three miles with us this summer and were recognized for their service. There's also Army veteran Jim De-Long of Ohio, who lost a leg when he stepped on a land mine in Vietnam in 1971. He rode with us in 2003. Then in 2004, he suffered a devastating motorcycle accident. I told him he was going to ride with us again in 2005. He did.

**What have you learned from watching other amputees participate?** The human spirit is resilient. The more adversity, the stronger the person.

— Pat Olsen

## Attention!

Check out these military-related entertainment offerings.



**Medics at War: Military Medicine from Colonial Times to the 21st Century** (Naval Institute Press, 2005): This book by John T. Greenwood and F. Clifton Berry Jr., filled with nearly 240 illustrations, celebrates frontline medical personnel and the critical role they play in the success of U.S. armed forces.



**Battle of Britain** (Columbia Tristar Home Video, 2005): The DVD of this 1969 classic features an all-star cast, including Michael Caine and Laurence Olivier, and shows how the Royal Air Force defied insurmountable odds in engaging the German Luftwaffe.



**One Christmas in Washington: Roosevelt and Churchill Forge the Grand Alliance** (Overlook, 2005): David Bercuson and Holger Herwig tell the story of how in 1941 Churchill and Roosevelt regrouped from the rout at Dunkirk and the devastation of Pearl Harbor and set the Allies on the path to ultimate victory.

## Preserving Your Family Memories

**B**y converting your family memorabilia to a digital format, you can make sure the information is secured and can be accessed by the improved technology of the future. Your 8 mm or 16 mm home movies, videotapes, and some objects (photos, clippings, even military medals) all can be digitized.

Film digitization requires special software and equipment for direct transfer. VHS tapes can be digitized with software that corrects some problems. You can do it yourself with a VHS player, a capture card, and a DVD burner on your computer. Objects can be converted to digital format on home scanners, though it is time-consuming. Make sure your computer has the required capacity before buying new software or accessories. Or search the Internet to find businesses like [www.digitalpickle.com](http://www.digitalpickle.com).

— Marilyn Pribus

IMAGES: LEFT, STEVE BARRETT; ABOVE, LEWIS AGRELL

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disturbing others. And when you're not listening to music, you can slip into a tranquil haven — where you can relax and enjoy peace and solitude. Clearly, these are no ordinary headphones. It's no exaggeration to say they're one of those things you have to experience to believe.

**Reduce noise with Bose technology.** Our headphones were designed primarily for airplane travelers. But owners soon started telling us how much they enjoy using them in other places to reduce distractions around them. Bose QC™ 2 headphones incorporate patented technology that electroni-



cally identifies and dramatically reduces noise, while faithfully preserving the music, movie dialogue or tranquility you desire. *Technologyreview.com* reports, "It's as if someone behind your back reached out, found the volume control of the world, and turned it way, way, down." Perfect for listening to music, whether you're on the go, at home or in the office.

**Enhanced audio from our best sounding headphones ever.** When QC2 headphones were first introduced, CNET said, "All sorts of music — classical, rock, and jazz — sounded refined and natural." *Travel & Leisure* said, "Forget 'concertlike' comparisons; you'll think you're onstage with the band." With their enhanced audio performance, today's QC2 headphones are even better, delivering audio that's so crisp and clear you may find yourself discovering new subtleties in your music.

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attach the included audio cord and connect them to a home stereo, laptop computer, portable CD/DVD/MP3 player or in-flight audio system. They also offer improved styling and a fold-flat design for easy storage in the slim carrying case.

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## No Defense

Continued Senate leadership obstinacy delays a key Defense bill, hurts troops, and undermines recruiting, retention, and readiness.

**I**t's hard to believe or defend that, several weeks into FY 2006 — in wartime, yet — the Senate was entering its fourth month without an inch of movement on the FY 2006 Defense Authorization Bill (S. 1042).

Frustrated by this intolerable lack of action, the members of the Senate Armed Services Committee signed a unanimous letter to Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) and Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) with this simple message: Find a way to get the defense bill done.

"This bill was unanimously reported out of our committee more than four months ago," reads the letter, authored by Committee Chair John Warner (R-Va.) and Ranking Minority Member Carl Levin (D-Mich.) and signed by all 22 other Armed Services committee members.

"We ask for your continuing support to have our bill called up as a free-standing measure before the end of the First Session of the 109th Congress. We, together with every other senator, owe no less than to perform our duty to the brave men and women of our Armed Forces for whom this bill reflects the support of the United States Congress."

Days before this column went to press, Reid agreed to an unprecedented demand to limit amendments to the defense bill, allowing only 12 amendments for Republicans and 12 for Democrats and agreeing to limit amendments to topics within the purview of the Armed Services Committee in the interests of expediting action. This is a radical departure from past years,

when the Senate managed to deal with hundreds of amendments without any such limitations.

Frist responded with a plan that would also require mutual leadership agreement on the topics of all 24 amendments — in effect asking for a unilateral veto on each other's proposed amendments.

In MOAA's view, this is an abrogation of leadership responsibility to do the nation's business in an expeditious and democratic fashion. And when that business is pro-

viding for the national defense when the country is at war, it's politics at its worst.

The Frist plan, for example, would preclude consideration of Sen. Bill Nelson's (D-Fla.) amendment to end the deduction of VA survivor benefits from Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuities and implement 30-year paid-up SBP coverage as of Oct. 1, 2005. It would also preclude consideration of Reid's amendment to pay full,

### Late-Breaking News:

■ As this magazine went to press, MOAA received word that Senate leaders had agreed to bring the FY 2006 Defense Authorization Bill to the floor for action, perhaps as soon as the first week of November.

**"It's time  
for action,  
not further  
political  
haggling,  
on a bill  
that's this  
important."**

— Vice Adm. Norb  
Ryan Jr., USN-Ret.,  
MOAA president



immediate concurrent receipt to members rated by the VA as "unemployable." Both of these amendments are opposed by the administration and would be denied if the opposing party could bar them from ever coming up.

If this arrangement had been in place in previous years, we'd never have won our major Senate victories on concurrent receipt in 2003 and SBP in 2004, because the amendments that led to the victories would never have been allowed.

Even more important, this continued political haggling stymies new legislative authorities that are badly needed to improve recruiting, retention, and warfighting capabilities of our men and women in uniform. Key provisions of this bill include a 20,000-person increase in Army end strength; a doubling of the maximum enlistment bonus; major new accession, affiliation, and reenlistment bonus authorities; and health coverage for Selected Reserve members and families.

The administration opposes the latter fix, but in MOAA's visits to more than 20 state National Guard adjutants general, these leaders universally cited this health coverage as a key recruiting and retention need.

MOAA President Vice Adm. Norb Ryan Jr., USN-Ret., signed a letter to all members of the Senate on Oct. 24, urging them to press their leaders to put first things first.

"We are already several weeks into the new fiscal year, and weeks more will be required to complete conference negotiations following Senate passage," wrote Ryan in his letter.

"Every day that this vital legislation is delayed is another day the Army, the Army National Guard, and the Army Reserve are denied the tools they need to achieve their manpower goals.

"It's time for action, not further political haggling, on a bill that's this important to national defense."

## Katrina Victim?

House leaders: Cut Defense budget to fund hurricane needs.

**T**alk about misguided priorities. House Budget Chairman Jim Nussle (R-Iowa), prodded by budget hawks within his party, developed a revised budget package that envisions a 2 percent across-the-board spending cut in every department — including the defense and homeland security budgets — to pay the cost of Hurricane Katrina cleanup.

Has Congress forgotten the country is at war?

This wasn't some crackpot proposing this. It's the senior budget planner in the House of Representatives and a key member of the House leadership.

Fortunately, some other House leaders recognize just how bad an idea this would be. Armed Services Committee Chairman Duncan Hunter (R-Calif.) and Homeland Security Committee Chairman Peter King (R-N.Y.) blasted the plan and said they'd fight hard against any defense and homeland security spending cuts when the country is fighting a war on terrorism both abroad and at home.

As this issue went to press, House leaders couldn't get a consensus on imposing an across-the-board budget cut to pay for Hurricane Katrina cleanup. But a spokesman for House Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.) indicated that an across-the-board cut is still part of the leadership plan.

In MOAA's view, a Congress that would cut the Defense budget in wartime has lost its bearings on budget priorities.

Senate leaders are shooting for a more modest budget cut package and are having a hard time building a plan that will satisfy the various factions.

At press time, Senate leaders were close to getting a deal on their savings mea-



Sen. Bill Frist  
(R-Tenn.)



Sen. Harry Reid  
(D-Nev.)

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# Inflation's Bumpy 2005 Ride

■ With big month-to-month inflation swings, COLA projections changed radically during the past year. Check out month-by-month changes and historical CPI/COLA information on MOAA's Web Base at [www.moaa.org/colawatch](http://www.moaa.org/colawatch).

sure, but the differences between the two spending reduction initiatives may make it difficult for the two chambers to come to an agreement on a final bill.

## COLA Iced

The 2006 COLA is the largest in 15 years.

**T**he Bureau of Labor Statistics reported in mid-October that recent jumps in energy prices boosted the Consumer Price Index another 1.5 percent in September.

That resulted in a 4.1 percent COLA based on the increase in average costs from the third quarter of 2004 to the third quarter of 2005. This 4.1 percent increase will be applied (in most cases) to military retired pay, Social Security, Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuities, and veterans' disability compensation as of Dec. 1, 2005. The increases will appear in January 2006 paychecks. This is the largest COLA since the 1991 increase of 5.4 percent.

Newly retiring members receive a somewhat smaller, partial COLA for the year of their retirement, because they already received a January military pay raise (which also raised their retired pay) during their retirement year. Members retiring in 2005 will receive one of the corresponding COLAs below based on their year of entrance and date of retirement.

■ Members who entered service before Sept. 8, 1980, and retired on or after Jan. 1, 2005, will receive a 3.4 percent COLA.

■ Members who entered service on or after Sept. 8, 1980 (whose retired pay is calculated on their highest 36 months' basic pay rather than final basic pay), and retired between Jan. 1, 2005, and Sept. 30, 2005, will receive a partial COLA based on the calendar quarter in which they retired. Those retiring in the first quarter of calendar year 2005 will receive 3.4 percent; in

the second quarter, 2.8 percent; and in the third quarter, 1.4 percent. Those who retire after Oct. 1, 2005 (fourth quarter), will see no COLA this year.

Members retired during 2005 will receive full-year COLAs in future years.

While some may like the bigger retired pay increase, the big jump in inflation only means that living expenses already have gone up more rapidly than usual, so retired pay, Social Security, SBP, and other annuities have to chase those expenses after the fact. Given a choice, we'd prefer lower inflation and the resultant lower COLAs.

## Commission Wants More Time

Longer-term disability research may slow concurrent receipt expansion.

**A** Veterans Disability Benefits Commission meeting of Oct. 14 focused on preparation of two contracts for research work by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) and the Center of Naval Analysis (CNA) that are expected to take 15 to 18 months to complete.

The IOM study will address medical aspects of the disability evaluation process, examining the details and utility of the VA's disability rating schedule and possible changes to the criteria and methodology for making "presumptive" service-connected disability determinations.

The CNA will provide a comprehensive analysis of disability and survivor benefits, including surveys of disabled veterans and survivors and analysis of the personal and financial impacts of service-connected disabilities.

Based on the studies' timelines, the commission plans to ask Congress for a

## Medicare Covers Erectile Dysfunction Correction

**Nothing impacts the sexual health and well-being of a couple and their intimate relationship more than Erectile Dysfunction (ED).**

Therefore, any treatment used must address the needs of both people involved.

The male erection involves a very complicated interaction of many of the body's systems. The natural erection process can be interrupted by many underlying disease states and/or conditions.

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This uniquely simple technology uses the body's blood to create erection much in the way the natural process works and maintains erection for sexual intercourse. The big difference is with Vacuum Therapy you control erection-with drug treatments the drug controls erection-not you.

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one-year extension to its August 2006 final report deadline. An extension is nearly unavoidable given the daunting scope of their review.

If Congress accepts the commission's revised timetable as expected, it will further extend an already protracted debate on further action to fully eliminate the deduction of VA disability compensation from military members' earned retired pay.

MOAA believes the commission is sincere in its efforts to complete a full and fair review of this important area. We're heartened by the commission's votes to reject proposals aimed at considering a veteran's genetic makeup in disability determinations or reducing disability benefits at some "normal" retirement age.

But we're not anxious to see it go on any longer than absolutely necessary, and we don't intend to defer efforts to make further progress in eliminating obvious inequities under the current disability offset law.

#### What's Up With DACMC?

■ Formed by the Defense secretary to recommend changes in military benefits, which he sees as too rich, DACMC will propose raising military beneficiaries' share of health care costs and some retirement changes for new service entrants. The only near-term result may come in next year's budget, which will likely propose hiking beneficiary health fees. MOAA will oppose that.

## DACMC Eyes 'Reforms'

Committee to defer benefit change specifics to 2006 review group.

**T**he Defense Advisory Committee on Military Compensation (DACMC) met in late September to discuss issues for potential inclusion in its interim report to the secretary of Defense. DACMC was appointed by the secretary to make recommendations for adjusting the philosophy and mechanics of military compensation programs. In earlier meetings, DACMC heard inputs from representatives from DoD and the services, government agencies and consultants, and military associations (including MOAA).

The meeting opened with a staff presentation on how to assess "fairness" as

it relates to proposed changes to the current DoD compensation system. DACMC members agreed that fairness should be included as one of its guiding principles.

In subsequent discussion, the committee discussed several possible options, including:

- allowing additional retirement credit for service beyond 30 years,
- exploring government matching of members' contributions to the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP),
- investigating earlier vesting of retirement benefits,
- delaying the point at which retirement annuities are payable,
- encouraging longer careers for those with unique skills,
- increasing health care enrollment fees annually based on increases in retired pay,
- consolidation of some special and incentive pays, and
- modifying mandatory retirement rules for specific specialties.

DACMC Chairman Adm. Donald Pilling, USN-Ret., stated that these issues are under review and not ready for any specific recommendation. He said the concepts ultimately recommended by DACMC will be turned over to the next Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation (QRMC) for consideration when that group convenes next year. Additionally, he reiterated the committee's intent that any major changes would not affect anyone already serving, but would apply only to future entrants.

DACMC's published guidelines are that any changes must:

- be viewed as fair to the current force;
- have aspects that appeal to force managers, force members, and Congress;
- provide the incentive structure to meet all-volunteer force readiness goals; and
- be at least resource neutral.

Many past compensation studies have foundered because of the extraordinary difficulty of meeting such competing

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objectives. For example, putting more money into vesting or TSP government matching would require substantially larger payments to separating members who currently receive none. Under a revenue-neutral requirement, that would have to be funded by reducing retirement compensation for members who serve a career. But taking money from people who stay to pay people who leave is hardly a formula for meeting long-term retention and readiness needs.

At the time this column was prepared to go to press, the next DACMC meeting had not been announced but was expected to be in November.

## Rx Help Is Here

New MOAA brochure helps beneficiaries, providers navigate pharmacy benefit.

**E**nclosed with this magazine you'll find your latest MOAA member benefit: our new pharmacy brochure, "Navigating the TRICARE Pharmacy Program: A Guide for Beneficiaries and Providers."

Although the military pharmacy benefit provides terrific value, it can be complicated, with multiple copayment tiers, different policies for different classes of drugs, different rules for people with other health insurance, and special authorization requirements for some medications.

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It provides practical, easy-to-read advice on how to make the most cost-effective

use of your drug benefit, how to minimize red tape, and how and where to get help if you experience any problems. You'll want to tuck it away for future reference on any pharmacy questions you may have.

We're pleased to provide you this valuable brochure as a free MOAA member service. It's available to nonmembers for \$7.95.

## Cutback Relief for Medicare, TRICARE?

Congress mulls reversing 4.3 percent payment cut planned for 2006.

**M**OAA and The Military Coalition, working with the American Medical Association (AMA) and others, have been pressing Congress all year to change the law that is now scheduled to cut Medicare physician payment rates by 4.3 percent on Jan. 1, 2006, with further cuts planned in future years. Because TRICARE payment rates are linked to Medicare's, the same cuts would apply to TRICARE providers.

Hill leaders acknowledge that the current payment-setting formula is flawed and want to fix it, but budget restrictions, hurricane relief needs, and other funding issues impose competing priorities.

As this article went to press, Senate Finance Committee Chairman Charles Grassley (R-Iowa) was proposing to eliminate the 2006 rate cut and substitute a 1-percent payment increase. The 2005 Medicare Trustees Report projects physician practice cost inflation for 2006 will be 2.7 percent.

MOAA believes we need a law change to set physician payments at a level that keeps up with their rising costs of medical practice. The current payment formula

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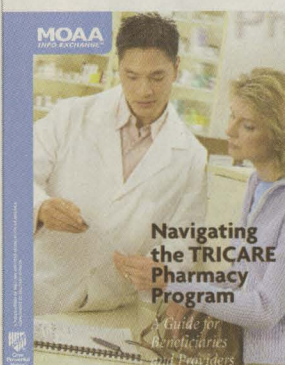
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### New Rx Guide

Keep MOAA's new pharmacy brochure for future reference. It shows you how to cut through the red tape and get the most from your TRICARE pharmacy benefits.



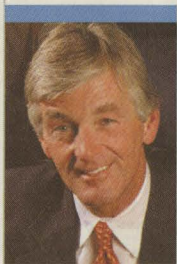
cuts payments to doctors when the economy worsens, regardless of what's happening to physicians' costs.

AMA surveys indicate that, if Medicare payments were to decline, more than a third (38 percent) of physicians would reduce the number of new Medicare patients they accept. A survey earlier this year found that 22 percent of Medicare patients already had trouble getting an appointment with a new primary care physician.

Many military beneficiaries face even greater problems finding providers who will accept TRICARE patients, especially in areas where there is not a large military population.

MOAA thinks Congress will reject the rate cut, as it has done for the last two years. But exactly what will be done is far from certain.

To preserve patient access to providers for the long term, we need legislation such as H.R. 2356 (sponsored by Rep. E. Clay Shaw, R-Fla.), which would change the statutory reimbursement formula to reflect changes in physicians' actual practice costs.



Rep. John McHugh (R-N.Y.)

## Probing TRICARE

Subcommittee grills DoD leaders, contractors on program cost, access issues.

**I**n an October hearing, the House Armed Services Personnel Subcommittee received inputs on military health care from Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs) William Winkenwerder, the three regional TRICARE contractor CEOs, and the service surgeons general.

The subcommittee members wanted updates on beneficiary access to providers, rising government health care costs,

and reimbursement rates TRICARE pays to providers.

Winkenwerder expressed his concern for the sustainability of rising health care costs, especially for retirees, claiming that retiree care would take 75 percent of the defense health budget by 2009. He also noted that TRICARE annual fees have never increased, in contrast with trends in the private sector. He asked Congress not to rule out private sector fixes to military health care issues but said DoD has no specific proposals at present.

Winkenwerder said TRICARE rates are tied to Medicare's and so TRICARE pays "about the same" as Medicare. When one committee member insisted that TRICARE pays less than Medicare in some cases, Winkenwerder said he would recheck if that does happen.

CEOs of the three regional TRICARE contractors testified that the TRICARE Prime provider networks are growing and beneficiary access to providers continues to improve with time.

Subcommittee Chair John McHugh (R-N.Y.) ran into the same problems MOAA has had in getting answers to some of his specific questions. His opening remarks indicated his interest in TRICARE Standard access issues, but DoD officials' and contractors' answers focused mostly on TRICARE Prime, which has far fewer problems.

Asked what they could do to encourage more providers to accept TRICARE patients, the contractor CEOs said increasing reimbursement rates would help but eliminating TRICARE "hassle factors" would be even more important. They said TRICARE requires some outdated practices that are seldom used in the private sector and discourage provider participation.

This is a hot topic for MOAA. We've been working and will continue to work with the Armed Services committees to expand provider participation and improve beneficiary access. [CONTINUES ON PAGE 36]

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## VA's Mixed Message on PTSD

■ MOAA agrees with critics of VA plans to review 72,000 previously approved PTSD ratings to make sure recipients deserve compensation. When the military is trying to destigmatize this debilitating disease and get more returning veterans and families to come forward for help, such skeptical re-grilling of previously approved awardees sends a chilling, contradictory message.

## House Slams PTSD Review

Subcommittee members challenge VA plan to check thousands of PTSD ratings.

**A**t a mid-October House Veterans' Affairs Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee hearing on disability claims, legislators criticized the ongoing VA review of 72,000 PTSD claims, describing it as potentially illegal and calling for an immediate halt.

Chairman Jeff Miller's (R-Fla.) subcommittee heard testimony from the VA Inspector General and the Government Accountability Office. New Mexico Secretary of Veterans' Services John Garcia followed, with a final panel of three other VA leaders.

Garcia described how the review contributed to the suicide of a New Mexico Vietnam veteran and Purple Heart recipient. He said VA's PTSD review is seen as a personal assault on combat veterans' honorable service.

Rep. Shelley Berkley (D-Nev.) strongly criticized the review, saying, "Mental health professionals [and] veterans' advocates tell us that this review, which forces some veterans to revisit their traumatic experiences and increase their psychiatric symptoms, is 'madness.'" Rep. Tom Udall (D-N.M.) echoed Berkley's concerns and asked the VA leaders to stop the PTSD review now, before more harm is done.

MOAA couldn't agree more. This insensitive review plan sends the wrong message when thousands of returning combat veterans and their families are suffering PTSD's traumatic effects. The Pentagon and Congress are trying to destigmatize this debilitating disease so more victims will seek treatment. But that cause is undermined if VA-recognized PTSD vic-

tims are subjected to repeated grilling on whether they deserve compensation.

## DACOWITS vs. USFSPA?

Former-spouse reform advocate pushes women's group for action.

**E**ncouraged by MOAA and others, Uniformed Services Former Spouse Protection Act (USFSPA) victim Lt. Col. Patricia Larabee, USA, took her case to the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS), asserting USFSPA's adverse effect on women servicemembers.

Larabee had only a few minutes to state her case in DACOWITS' scheduled public forum. Several DACOWITS members stayed on to discuss the issue with her.

Larabee received public attention at a June 2005 Pentagon town meeting, when she asked Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to comment on her USFSPA concerns. A divorce judge ordered Larabee to start making payments to her former spouse upon attaining 20 years of service — forcing her to retire prematurely. When Rumsfeld expressed ignorance of the issue, then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Richard Myers acknowledged problems with the law.

MOAA hopes Larabee's experience will provide added impetus for legislative action. Since Rep. Cass Ballenger (R-N.C.) left Congress last year, efforts to find a new legislative sponsor have not yet borne fruit. MO

— **Contributors are** Col. Steve Strobebridge, USAF-Ret., director; Col. Mike Hayden, USAF-Ret.; Col. Lee Lange, USMC-Ret.; Col. Bob Norton, USA-Ret.; Col. Jim Young, USAF-Ret.; Cmdr. René Campos, USN-Ret.; Cmdr. John Class, USN-Ret.; Cynthia Dougherty; and Cass Vreeland, MOAA's Government Relations Department.



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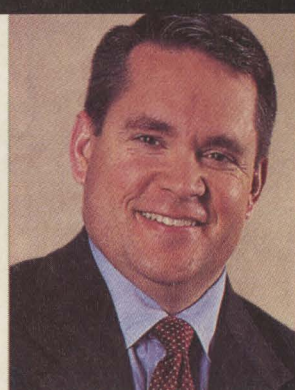
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## Donors Beware

It is important to recognize exactly where your charitable dollars are going. Safeguarding your donation from deceitful solicitors can be half the battle. **By Phil Dyer, CFP**

**I**n the wake of every natural and manmade disaster, scam artists set up phony charities in attempts to dupe well-meaning donors with fraudulent Web sites, phone solicitations, and direct mail. Unfortunately, it is often difficult to distinguish between phony charities and real ones because of the official look of some deceitful Web sites and mailings.

Even if a charity is legitimate, some only use 15 percent to 20 percent of each dollar raised for their stated charitable purpose. This means fund-raising, salaries, and other overhead expenses eat up 80 percent to 85 percent of donated money. Many planned giving experts recommend supporting charities with overhead costs of 25 percent or less, so that at least 75 percent of your gift is used for the charitable cause.

Cindy Amos, MOAA's scholarship and charitable development officer, suggests asking two questions when approached with a fund-raising pitch (particularly a telephone solicitation):

- How much of each dollar donated is going to support the cause?
- Will the charity send me a written copy of its audited financial statement?

Some charities employ high-pressure phone solicitors for the bulk of their fund-raising efforts. These pitches can be intimidating, particularly for older donors. If a solicitor refuses to provide information or if less than 75 cents of each dollar actually goes to charitable work, politely — but firmly — decline to

donate, and ask to be put on the organization's "do not call" list.

The best way to ensure your charitable dollars are used wisely is to do some homework. Be sure to choose charities you feel comfortable supporting based on their mission, efficiency, and financial strength. The following Web sites are excellent places to start your search:

- [www.give.org](http://www.give.org), The Better Business Bureau "Wise Giving" Alliance;
- [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org), a database of 1.5 million IRS-registered charities; and
- [www.charitynavigator.org](http://www.charitynavigator.org), an independent charity evaluator that tracks the financial strength and efficiency of more than 4,000 charities.

If a charity is not listed by one of these resources but you still want to donate, ask some questions first. Request the name of the solicitor, ask for copies of the state or federal charitable registration, and learn about the specific project(s) the money is being solicited for. Again, solicitors unable or unwilling to provide the requested information should be regarded as highly suspicious and avoided.

As a donor you should always take precautions to ensure the money you donate is supporting a legitimate cause. Do your homework, ask tough questions, and don't be afraid to say no! **MO**

— **Former Army Capt. Phil Dyer, CFP**, is deputy director for financial education, Benefits Information. For financial advice, members can contact Garrett Planning Network at (866) MOAA-GPN (662-2476) or [www.garrettplanning.com](http://www.garrettplanning.com).

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## Breathe Easier

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is the fourth leading cause of death and could be almost entirely prevented if people didn't smoke. **By Rear Adm. Joyce Johnson, D.O.**

### For Your Own Good, Don't Smoke

Whether or not you have COPD, it is important to your health to quit smoking. Kicking the habit reduces the progression of COPD and many other diseases, including lung cancer.

**D**eep in the lungs are tiny air sacs, called alveoli, that bring oxygen from the air into our blood in exchange for carbon dioxide, which we exhale. The alveoli have several characteristics that facilitate gas exchange. First, sheer quantity — if you laid them flat, they would cover a football field. This extensive surface area enables more gas to be exchanged. Second, the alveoli are very elastic, so as you breathe they can expand to take in air and shrink to push it out. Third, these air sacs have many tiny capillaries, each filled with a single row of red blood cells where the actual gases are exchanged.

There are two types of COPD — emphysema and chronic bronchitis. With emphysema the walls between the air sacs are destroyed and the alveoli lose their elasticity, reducing the surface area and leaving large, inefficient air sacs. Someone with emphysema can't get enough oxygen and (eventually) is always gasping for air. Chronic bronchitis causes an increase in mucus production that reduces the exchange of gases, leaving you short of breath. This mucus results in a chronic productive cough with sputum.

Most people are at least 40 before they begin to notice COPD. Initial symptoms include increased shortness of breath during exercise, while climbing steps, etcetera. Over time these symptoms worsen. In the late stages of COPD, a patient is on oxygen constantly and out of breath without any exertion. Just moving enough to feed oneself becomes difficult.

Doctors diagnose COPD by measuring how much air the lungs breathe in and out and how fast that air moves; COPD is characterized by a decrease in both the amount and the speed of air moved. A chest X-ray and measuring the amount of oxygen in your blood, as well as other tests, are used to diagnose COPD before the symptoms affect daily activities.

Cigarette smoking is by far the biggest risk factor for COPD; over time, most smokers develop some degree of COPD. Some people have an alpha 1 antitrypsin deficiency that leaves the body less able to destroy harmful proteins in the blood and thus more vulnerable to COPD. Other risk factors include secondhand smoke, severe air pollution, and exposure to chemical gases and dusts (from jobs or hobbies).

A major goal of COPD treatment is to increase gas exchange. Inhalers with bronchodilators help the lungs work better, while inhaled steroids reduce lung inflammation. Supplemental oxygen, carried in a tank, also can be useful. Other respiratory diseases are especially dangerous for patients with COPD, who should get vaccinated for flu and pneumonia.

COPD is a dangerous, chronic disease. If you don't smoke, your risk is very low. There are many programs to help you quit smoking; for information, visit [www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov) or see your doctor. **MO**

— **Rear Adm. Joyce Johnson, USPHS-Ret., D.O., M.A.**, is vice president, Health Sciences, Battelle Memorial Institute, Arlington, Va. For submission information, see page 16.

PHOTO: STEVE BARRETT

## EVERYDAY PEOPLE - AMERICA'S HEROES



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# Year at a Glance

**L**ooking back, 2005 has been a productive year. MOAA held its annual Storming the Hill effort, when council and chapter presidents meet one-on-one with key legislators from their states to support our legislative agenda.

Your state leaders did their usual great job. Bills our members need and deserve are pending in both houses. Although other issues have captured Congress' attention (the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and deadly hurricanes), our leaders did what we asked them to do — focus congressional attention on vital issues.

In September, chapter leaders convened in Wilmington, Del., for MOAA's eighth annual Chapter



chapters to recruit at least 10 new members between September and the end of this year. So far, the results have been very promising.

This year-end review would be incomplete without mentioning hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma. These storms touched some 5,000 MOAA members in a dozen chapter areas, including one former council president who lost his home. Many of our chapters and their members have been doing all they can to help in the recovery, from running clothing drives to holding charity auctions to even taking evacuees into their homes.

As we close the year, let me extend to each and every one of you, chapter and nonchapter member alike, our department's best wishes for a great holiday season and a calm and peaceful New Year.

— Col. Chris Giaimo, USAF-Ret.  
Director, Council and Chapter Affairs

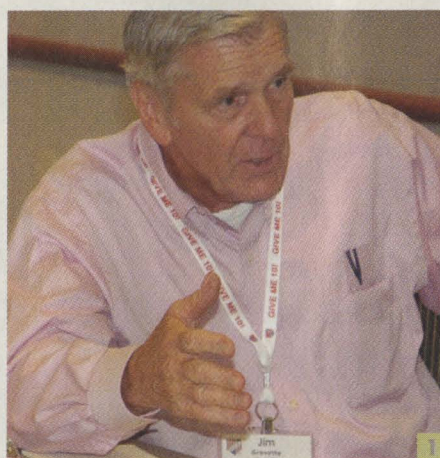
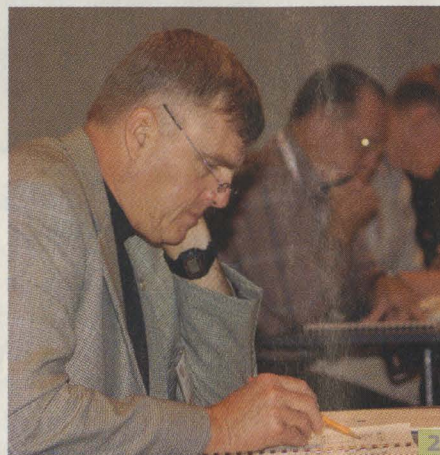
## Field Reports

### Leaders Get Busy, Develop Solutions

Presidents' Symposium. These leaders discussed how to better recruit and retain members from all possible audiences: Guard, Reserve, active duty, and retired servicemembers and their spouses. Read more about this in the Field Reports.

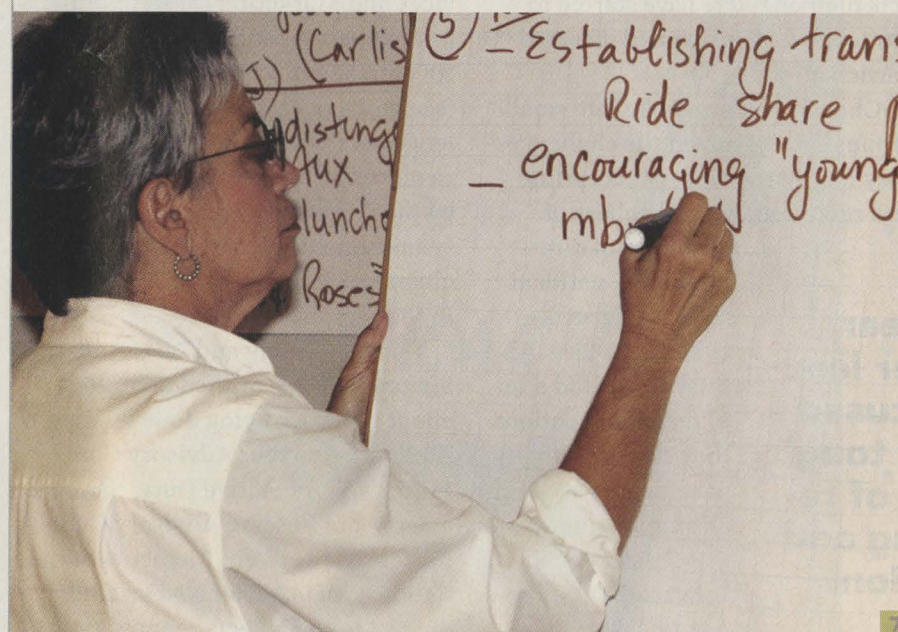
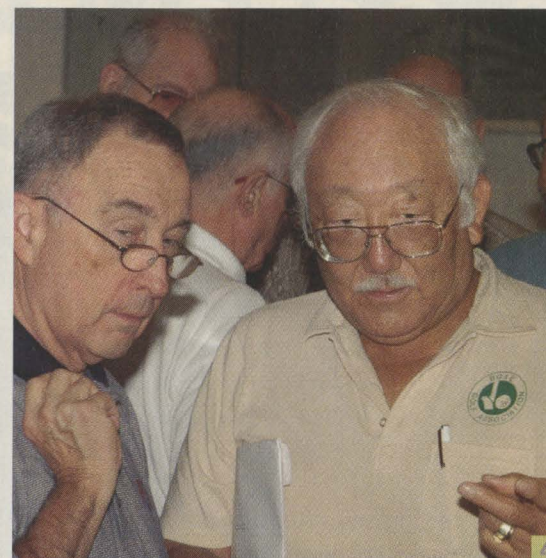
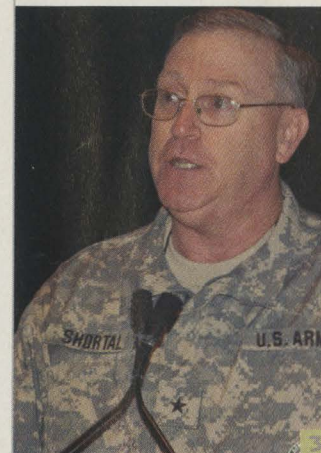
MOAA also started Give Me 10!, an incentive-based recruiting program challenging each of our

**M**ore than 175 chapter presidents and personal affairs officers and their spouses attended the eighth annual Chapter Presidents' Symposium, held Sept. 8-10 in Wilmington, Del. The symposium, which is held in a different region of the United States every year, brought together chapter leaders and personal affairs officers from Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts,



1. Col. James Gravette, USAF-Ret., Northern Virginia Chapter president, speaks during a recruiting workshop. 2. Col. Charles Anderson, USAF-Ret., president of the General Greene (Pa.) Chapter, takes notes during a presentation. 3. Brig. Gen. John Shortal, USA, addressed the general session. 4. Col. Jim Pauls, USAF-Ret., left, MOAA's deputy director of Council and Chapter Affairs, confers with Col. Frank Akiyama, USA-Ret., Maryland MOAA Council president.

PHOTOS: LEFT, RHODA BAER; ABOVE, KRIS ANN HEGLE



PHOTOS: KRIS ANN HEGLE



5. Maj. Gen. Francis Vavala, USANG, left, pauses with Maj. Thomas Kelly, USMC-Ret., Delaware MOAA president. 6. Capt. Bob Silah, USN-Ret., Tampa (Fla.) Chapter president, reports. 7. Col. Jeri Graham, USA-Ret., Southeastern North Carolina Chapter incoming president, records comments. 8. Lt. Col. Joe Simonelli, USA, El Paso (Texas) Chapter 3rd vice president, speaks. 9. Carolyn Epling, left, and Violet Smith detail the Auxiliary Member Advisory Committee's work.

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Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Virginia.

The symposium gave chapter leaders a chance to meet face-to-face and discuss common problems within chapters and develop solutions. Chapter leaders also shared their thoughts and ideas with members of the board of directors and the national staff, including MOAA President Vice Adm. Norb Ryan Jr., USN-Ret.

This year, chapter leaders focused on the tough issues of recruiting and retention. An Army recruiter asked delegates to help the Army meet its recruiting goals, and a representative from the National Committee for Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) outlined what chapter members could do to help the ESGR. Delegates also learned more about the challenges currently facing Guard and Reserve members as they listened to speeches by Maj. Gen. Francis D. Vavala, ANG, adjutant general for Delaware; Brig. Gen. John Shortal, USA, deputy commanding general, U.S. Army Recruiting Command (East); and Maj. Gen. Thomas Maguire Jr., USAF, adjutant general of New York.

Several participants shared stories about how they have improved

## Last Chance to Give Me 10!

Be sure to join MOAA's Give Me 10! recruiting campaign before it comes to a close Dec. 31. The names of the chapters that have recruited the most new members will be tabulated in January, and the results will be announced in February. MOAA also will hold a sweepstakes drawing and award prizes to a topnotch recruiter and one lucky new member.

To get more information about the campaign, visit MOAA's Web Base, [www.moaa.org/givemeten](http://www.moaa.org/givemeten). Remember, this is your last chance to drop and Give Me 10!



their recruiting and retention efforts, while others described projects their chapters have started to attract new members and increase participation.

Chapter leaders broke into small groups and discussed the challenges they face in the areas of recruiting and retention, with members of

the board of directors or the national staff acting as facilitators. Delegates then developed a set of recommendations they shared with participants at the closing session.

MOAA's Benefits Information Department held seminars for personal affairs officers and members' spouses. Personal affairs officers also discussed ways they could help members at the local level.

In addition, personal affairs officers and chapter leaders discussed what they could do to help hurricane victims. These findings, along with ideas about how to improve chapter-run personal affairs programs, were shared with delegates at the closing session.

Col. Mike Jordan, USAF-Ret., director of MOAA's Contract Services and Marketing Department, briefed participants on the Give Me 10! membership recruiting campaign (see box above). The campaign challenges each of MOAA's 420 chapters to recruit at least 10 new members by the end of the year. During the symposium, leaders from 22 more chapters signed up to participate in the campaign.

Carolyn Epling and Lt. Col. Joe Simonelli, USA, briefed delegates about the work being done by the Auxiliary Member Advisory Committee and the Active Duty, National Guard, and Reserve Advisory Committee, respectively. Members of the national MOAA staff also briefed delegates on subjects ranging from pending legislative issues to the good work being done by The Scholarship Fund of MOAA.

Next year's symposium will bring together chapter leaders from throughout the southeastern United States. It will be held Sept. 28-30 in Savannah, Ga. MO

— **Contributors are** Col. Chris Giaimo, USAF-Ret., director; Col. Jim Pauls, USAF-Ret., deputy director, Council and Chapter Affairs; and Kris Ann Hegle. For submission information, see page 16.

**This year, chapter leaders focused on the tough issues of recruiting and retention.**

### ON THE WEB

You can review the 2005 Chapter Presidents' Symposium findings online. Just go to [www.moaa.org/chapters/symposium](http://www.moaa.org/chapters/symposium) to read staff and attendee presentations.

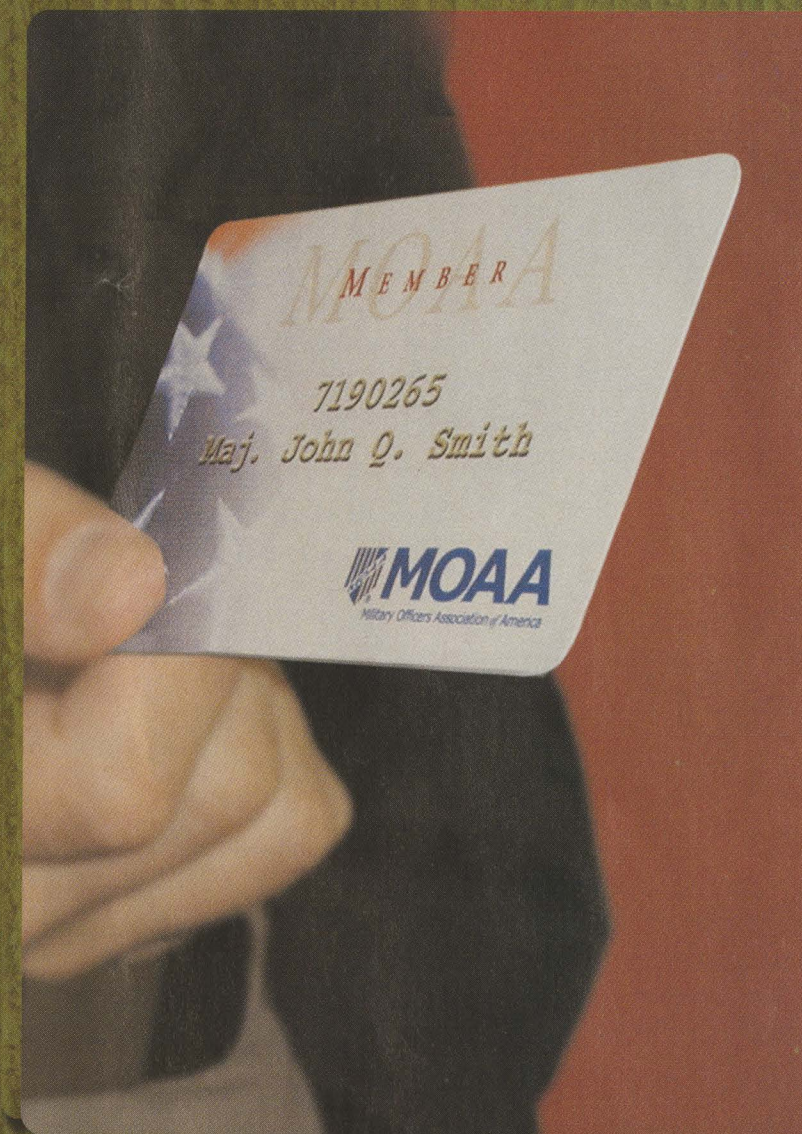
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**One Powerful Voice.**



# True Grit

Interview by  
Tom Philpott

**GEN. MICHAEL W. HAGEE, 60, BECAME THE MARINE CORPS' 33RD COMMANDANT** in January 2003 as tens of thousands of Marines moved to Persian Gulf staging areas to prepare to invade Iraq. Almost three years later, 23,000 Marines are still there, part of a U.S. force of 140,000 fighting a difficult insurgency while training Iraqi security forces to defend a fledgling democratic government. Marines have suffered a third of U.S. casualties in Iraq, with almost 600 killed and 5,000 wounded. ■ Because Hagee commanded the 1st Marine Expedition-



ary Force (MEF) before becoming commandant, he helped plan the invasion and advance on Baghdad. In light of the Corps' experiences in the global war on terrorism, Hagee last April updated his "vision and intent" for the Corps. Marines, he said, must remain the nation's "force-in-readiness"; individual Marines are the most critical weapon, and they must be better trained, educated, and equipped for irregular or asymmetric warfare. ■ Hagee has served at every operational level during a 37-year career, from infantry platoon commander in Vietnam to commanding general 1st Marine Division and the 1st MEF. Staff assignments included director of character development at the U.S. Naval Academy and executive assistant to John M. Deutch, director of Central Intelligence (1995-1996). ■ Hagee discussed the challenges of Iraq and their effects on the Corps with Contributing Editor Tom Philpott. The interview has been edited for length.

**Wars can change individuals and perhaps entire services. How has the Iraq experience changed the Marine Corps?**

The most important thing it's done is we have the best, battle-hardened, well-trained, experienced Marine Corps we have had in some time. Just about every unit, regular and reserve, has rotated into Iraq or Afghanistan, some more than once.

**Did the experience influence your vision statement for the Marine Corps and how it must evolve?**

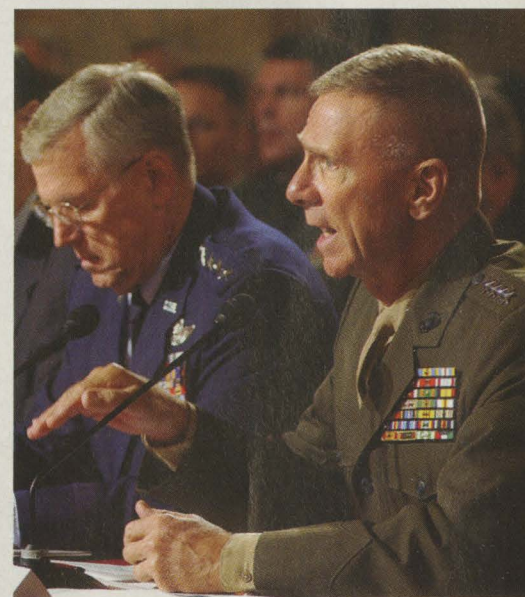
Yes. We looked at not only Iraq and Afghanistan but also to the future. History demonstrates we are very poor at determining where we're going to fight next. But [Iraq] brought home that the basic nature of warfare hasn't changed. There's a lot of chaos and friction and uncertainty. It's very dan-

gerous on the battlefield, and you're going against a thinking enemy.

So what sort of Marine Corps do we need to succeed in that environment? That's what we tried to put into our guidance. The individual Marine is our most important weapon system. If we do education, training, and equipping right, then we will be successful [on any battlefield], from the high-end, march-to-Baghdad type of warfare down to counterinsurgency.

**Looking at those factors — education, training, and equipment — how has Iraq affected each? Take education first. Do you want more emphasis on language skills?**

That's just a small portion of the more important topic of cultural understanding of different peoples of the world. We're not going to fight in San Diego or New York where we understand the culture. We're going to be in



areas with different languages, different cultures, especially if you're talking what some people call irregular warfare. To be successful, you have to understand the people and their culture and how they see the situation. So we are putting a segment on cultural intelligence in all of our schools.

We can't cover the entire world at one time. Right now we're focused on the Muslim world, of which the Arab world is only a part. The four or five largest Muslim nations are not in the Gulf. They are Indonesia, India, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and elsewhere in the Asian Pacific.



**Humvees** have a projected life cycle of 13 years — but in Iraq, they only last about two years.

Once an individual has committed to a career — that is, the first time [Marines reenlist] — we're going to assign [them] to an area of the world, encourage them to study it, give them an opportunity to learn the language, maybe even be stationed there. It will be the same with officers. We'll build a cadre of individuals who have expertise in that part of the world.

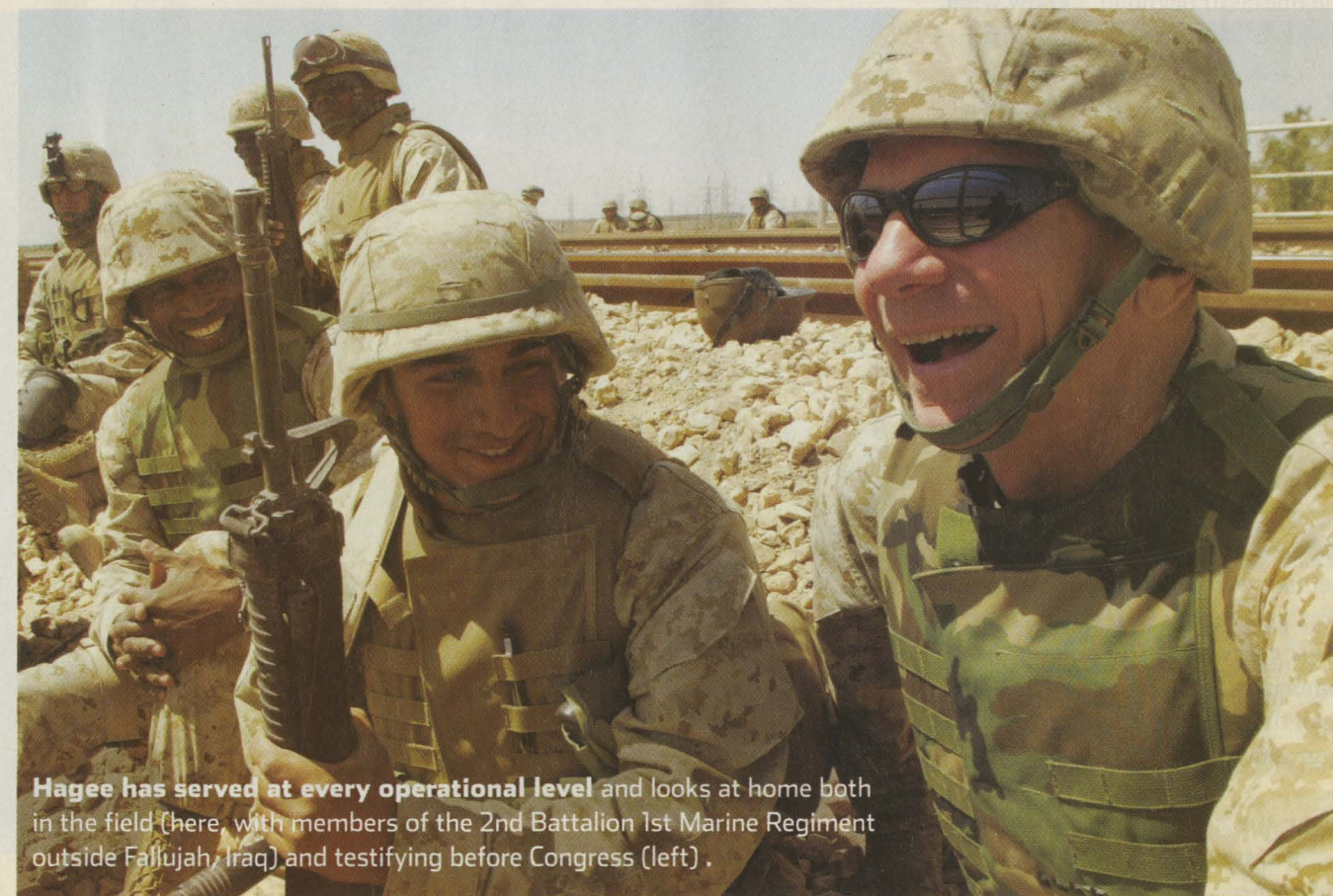
**"Morale is very high, because they know they are making a difference."**

**Have Afghanistan and Iraq also affected training?**

[Yes, they affect] not only what we train for, but ... procedures so that lessons observed there are brought back to our schools. ... A battalion going through stability and security operations training today is getting a better understanding of the challenges than did the battalion of seven months ago. The battalion that goes through four or five months from now will have a better understanding than the battalion going through today.

**And the Marine entering Iraq today is equipped differently than in March 2003 when the war began?**

Absolutely. When Marines came out, in June 2003, we didn't think we



**Hagee has served at every operational level** and looks at home both in the field (here, with members of the 2nd Battalion 1st Marine Regiment outside Fallujah, Iraq) and testifying before Congress (left).



were going back. Then in October 2003 we got word we were going to relieve the 82nd Airborne in the Al Anbar Province. The 82nd said we'd face IEDs [improvised explosive devices]. I'm proud of what Marines did here, inside the United States, to get ready.

We had no 1114s [factory-produced armored Humvees]. None of our vehicles [was] armored. By the time our forces were on the ground, in February 2004, every vehicle that went into harm's way had some armor. It was first generation and not the armor we have today. We have continued to spiral develop. We have fielded today the so-called MAK (Marine armor kit) vehicle. We have the MAS (Marine armored system) for our seven-ton trucks. A year ago we didn't have either.

I was commanding general of the 1st MEF and so did most of the planning for Operation Iraqi Freedom, the march to Baghdad. I know what we had then. By the time we finished taking Baghdad we had added the M16-A4 rifle. More individuals had the advanced combat optical gun sight, which slides on the M16. We had almost no personal radios. Now almost everyone has a personal radio. Everyone had the SAPI plates (small arms protective inserts) but we are going to enhanced SAPI plates. Individual Marine equipment has changed significantly in the past couple of years.

The focus now is how to reduce the weight. A Marine wearing only his outer tactical vest, SAPI plates, helmet, web gear, weapon, ammunition, and water carries 65 pounds. Most carry 80 to 100 pounds. American engineering can do better than that. We are working that issue aggressively.

**Given the heat and carrying such weight, how do Marines operate over there?**

First, morale is very high because they know they are making a difference, doing something important. They are well-trained [and] well-educated, and they've got the best equipment we can offer them today.

Second, they are in condition. Quite often individuals make fun of [Marines], all the physical training and running. It's like a doctor studying. It's part of being a Marine.

To be successful, in cold or heat, you've got to be in condition. These young men and women are in great condition. They are not going to run four or five miles in 130 [or] 140 degrees with 80 pounds on their backs. But they can operate.

**You said Marines didn't expect to go back to Iraq after June 2003. The last several years it has been deployment after deployment. Can you sustain this pace of**

**seven months deployed for every seven months home?**

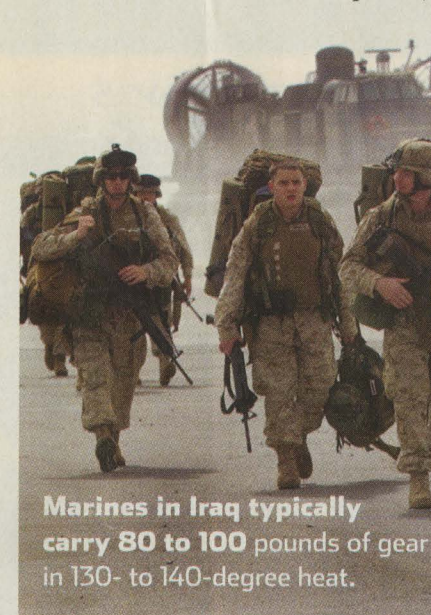
That's something we're watching very closely. Right now we're okay. It's important to understand it's the flag moving back and forth [not the same units]. Also, we're a young force of 178,000. We recruit 38,000 a

**"We are working aggressively to bring the tempo back down to at least two to one."**



**Training never stops:** Marines beach their tank during a September 2005 amphibious-assault exercise in Egypt.

year. The Army is about 500,000 and recruits 80,000, or twice the number for a much larger force. The reason for this is we only keep about 25 percent of individuals we recruited four years before. We need a lot of privates first class and lance corporals,



**Marines in Iraq typically carry 80 to 100 pounds of gear in 130- to 140-degree heat.**

but they turn over. Individuals, for sure, will make two deployments but maybe not the third.

We are working aggressively to bring the tempo back down to at least two to one [months home versus time deployed]. We would like three to one.

**Will that require reducing the number of Marines in Iraq and Afghanistan?**

It requires a couple of things. We're going to stand up an additional infantry battalion this year — 1st Battalion, 9th Marines. Over a year from now we're going to stand up another — 2nd Battalion, 9th Marines. We're standing up additional light armor reconnaissance companies and additional reconnaissance platoons. That will help.

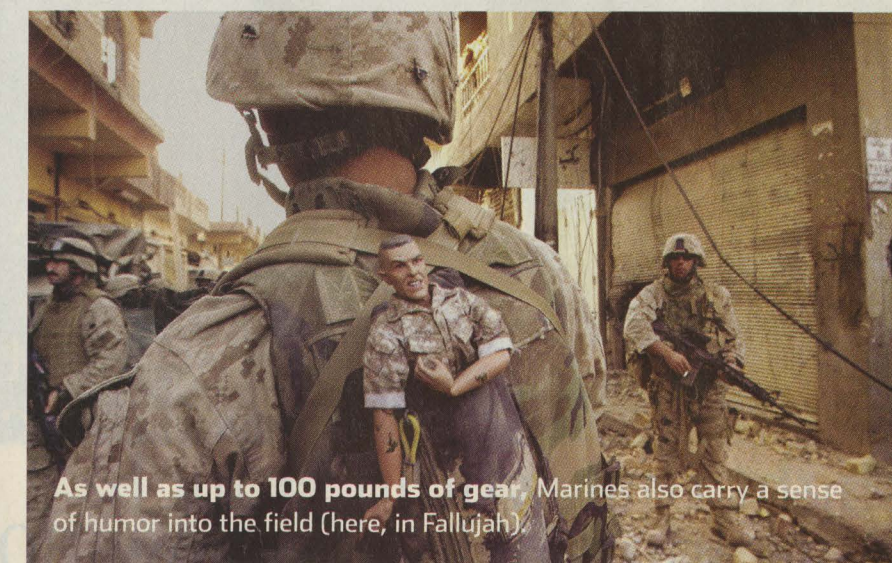
At the same time, [the Marine Corps] and the Army are training

But they bring something we don't have. An individual talks, and they know which tribe he belongs to and whether he's Iraqi or Syrian. Even with language training, we cannot pick that up. They have skills we really need in this type of warfare.

**With 23,000 Marines still in Iraq, does that number have to be halved to move to a two-to-one deployment rotation?**

The Marine Corps has 24 infantry battalions. If we want to get to a three-to-one ratio, only eight can be deployed at any time. We have had as many as 12 deployed.

**In July, you told Congress overall readiness, from battalion to squadron-size units, had dropped 14 percent. Why?**



**As well as up to 100 pounds of gear,** Marines also carry a sense of humor into the field (here, in Fallujah).

Iraqi security forces. They are able to operate at platoon and company level in some areas. Last year [at] this time we had 35,000 Marines in the Al Anbar province. This year we have 23,000. That slack has been taken up by Iraqis.

It's going to be some time before they operate at the battalion level.

It's a combination of things. First, we brought a great deal of equipment into Iraq. We are using more communications equipment than a normal division, regiment, or battalion normally has. The reason is, we are spread over a very large area in Iraq. That extra communication capability comes from units in the United States. [CONTINUES ON PAGE 70]



# Return

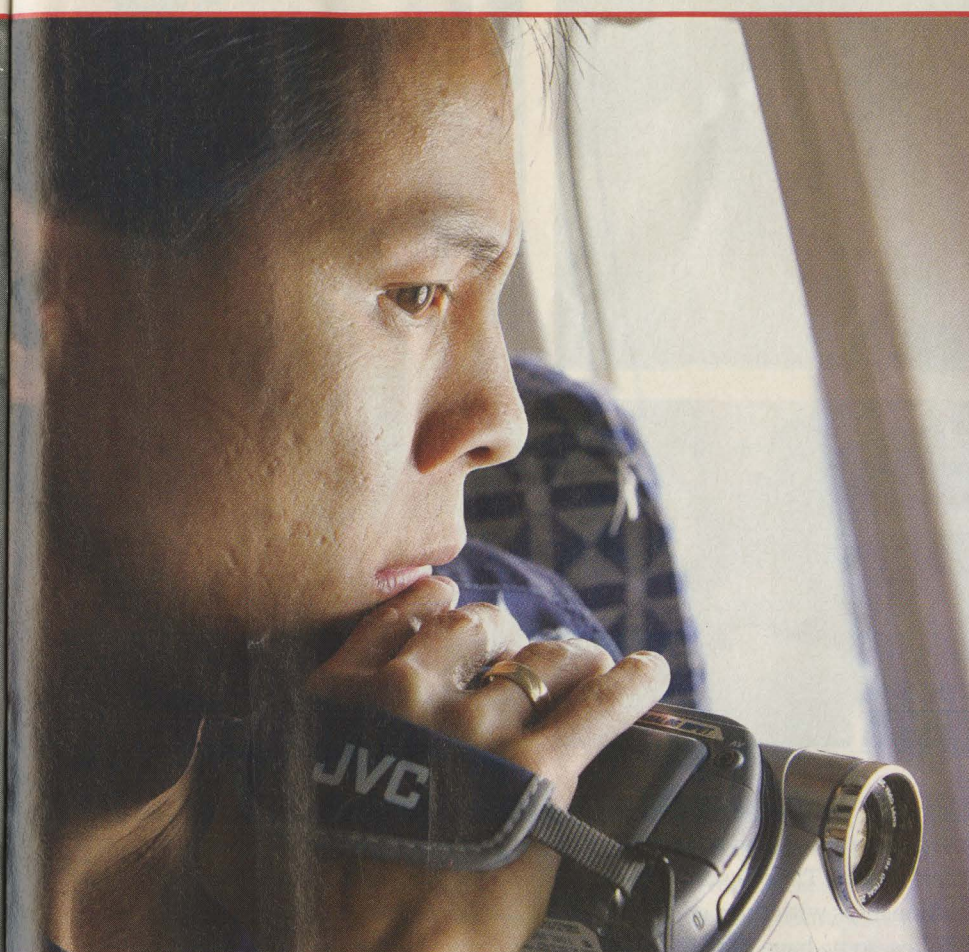


During the final days of the Vietnam War, a group of orphans were evacuated to the United States on a dramatic flight that would launch Operation Babylift. Now, 30 years later, they are returning to their place of birth.

By Babbie De Derian

# Flight»»»





**Orphans aboard the first** Operation Babylift flight at the end of the Vietnam War crowd the windows of the World Airways DC-8 jet as it flies them to the United States April 2, 1975 (far left). Richard Silver, one of 21 orphans who returned to Vietnam for the 30th anniversary of the airlift, looks out the window as the aircraft approaches Ho Chi Minh City June 15, 2005.

**ON APRIL 2, 1975,** a World Airways cargo plane sits on a darkened runway in Vietnam. The orphanage that was supposed to hand over 260 Vietnamese orphans for evacuation has backed out after the Vietnamese government rescinded its authorization. World Airways CEO Ed Daly, knowing Saigon is about to fall, finds another orphanage willing to take the risk. Defying restrictions, he orders 57 orphans to be boarded and gives pilots Ken Healy and Bill Keating the signal to take off without lights. >>>

The next day, President Gerald Ford forms Operation Babylift, allocating \$2 million to pay for the National Humanitarian Emergency Evacuation Initiative. In three weeks, with the aid of seven adoption agencies, 26 military and commercial flights evacuate 2,548 children from Saigon and Da Nang to America. About 1,300 children are evacuated to Australia, Canada, and Europe.

Thirty years later, on June 13, 2005, 21 of the orphans from that first flight prepare to board a World Airways plane in Oakland, Calif., to return to their homeland, where they will spend two days touring the former South Vietnamese capital. The air-

line, once based in Oakland and now in Peachtree City, Ga., agreed to host the flight after Shirley Barnes, author of *War Cradle* (Vintage Pressworks, 2000), brought her book to the attention of CEO Randy Martinez. "If you can round up the adoptees, World Airways will take them home," Martinez said. And Operation Babylift: Homeward Bound was launched.

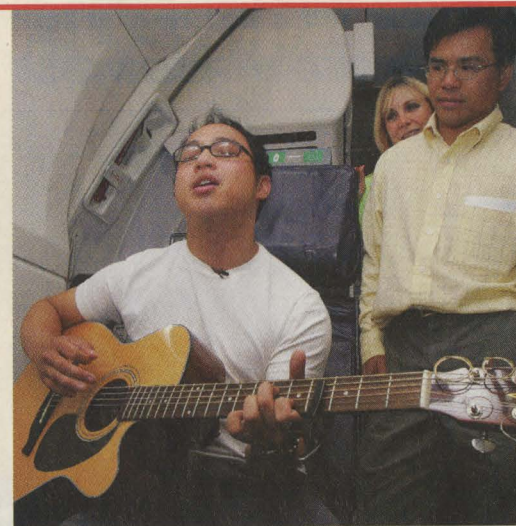
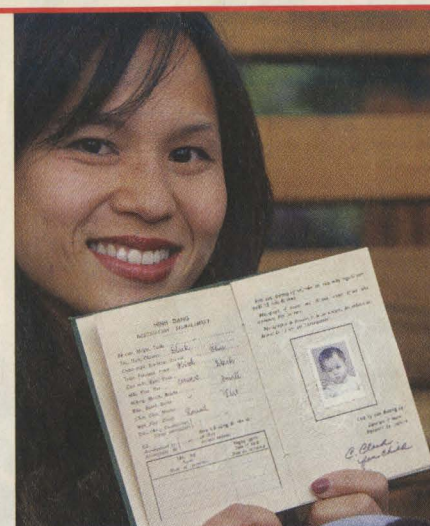
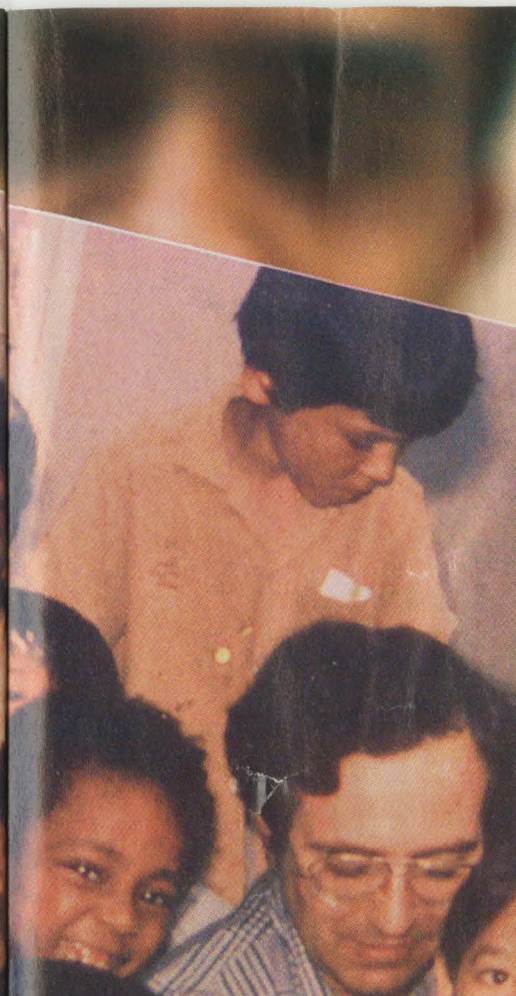
A group of evacuees, family members, former airline employees, and retired servicemembers, totaling 120, gathers in the airport hangar to embark on the flight. An MD-11 plane, painted with World Airways' white and red logo, sits proudly poised on the runway. Before boarding, Marti-

nez, a retired Air Force officer, thanks the invited group of special guests: "We are here to honor our heritage, reunite 21 adoptees with their birth land, recognize our loyal employees, and support the growing relationship between America and Vietnam."

### Swapping stories

The festive flight to Saigon is a far cry from the 1975 evacuations. Young adults in their 30s, strapped three in a seat as infants on their evacuation flight, now travel first class to their homeland. Some are with a parent, spouse, or friend. Shortly after takeoff, the passengers move about the cabin, swapping stories and taking pictures.





**Janice Wollett**, a former flight attendant during Operation Babylift, shows a picture of two orphans taken aboard one of the World Airways flights (top far left). Wendy Greene and Tiana Mykkeltvedt are among those orphans swapping stories on their return flight (bottom far left). Greene is embraced by Ron Honeycutt, a flight steward on an Operation Babylift flight (bottom left). Another orphan, Roger Castillo, holds a photograph showing himself and other orphans in Vietnam before they were airlifted (left). Tanya Bakal poses with her original Vietnamese passport with her baby picture (above left). Jared Rehberg plays his guitar as fellow orphan Jeff Gahr listens (above right).

Flight attendants embrace adoptees they held in their arms as babies. Retired military buddies greet each other and exchange combat stories. The mood is jovial as these strangers, with diverse backgrounds, come together like a reunited family.

Many of the adoptees talk about

growing up as the only Asians in their communities. They describe their relationships with their adoptive families; some have remained strong, while others have withered. And they talk about returning to their home country to find their roots and see where their birth parents lived.

Atsuko Schlesinger, an attendant on the first flight out of Saigon and the last out of Da Nang, recalls waiting in a hot and humid plane for three hours. "I felt bad for the babies. We were all scared, taking off in the dark with a few volunteer doctors. When we picked the babies up to comfort them,

they shook with fright; they never had affection before," Schlesinger says. "My hope was to meet all those children as young adults; I am so proud to be part of their new lives."

"I was on that first flight," Tanya Bakal tells Schlesinger. "You probably held me and changed my diaper." Bakal, traveling with her husband, hopes to trace her family roots so she can start a family tree to share with her own children.

Ron Honeycutt, a World Airways flight attendant for 34 years, recalls: "If something happened we were to tie the babies in a blanket and send them down the chute. We hand-fed each baby from a cup of noodle soup. Until I die, I will remember one little 2-year-old boy. He sat motionless the whole flight. I picked him up and carried him to the back. I could not put him down; he clung to me and screamed when the Red Cross took him out of my arms."

Jared Rehberg, an evacuee who now lives in New York, says he felt resentment at being brought to America without choice or consent. He now writes songs about Vietnam and his feelings about his experience. Rehberg does, however, pay tribute to his adoptive family. "My parents let me be myself, decide my religion, encouraged me to be creative," he says.

Tiffany Goodson was 3½ months old when she left Vietnam. "Growing up a minority in St. Paul, Minn., people stared at me a lot," Goodson says. She earned a degree in political science and communication and, craving diversity and anonymity, moved to New York and then Los Angeles.

Cahn Oxelson, the abandoned child of a Vietnamese mother and a black American soldier, continues to forge an identity for himself. Many years of counseling and therapy have helped fade the scars he carries from growing

up black and Asian with white adoptive parents. "I'm really competitive for survival," Oxelson says.

Tim Bosworth had learned that his Vietnamese birth mother had moved to France, and 23 years later he invited her to visit him in Colorado. "She spoke a little English; we had an instant connection," he says. "I'm blessed with a beautiful family and have nothing to be angry about."

Jeff Gahr, who was 12 years old when he was evacuated, recalls waiting on the tarmac with other children as his older brother was taken out of the line for being too old. The two brothers were later reunited.

Wendy Greene, who studies Vietnamese language and culture, is saving money to move back to her native country. She hopes to find answers with the help of Vietnamese friends who have immersed themselves in local society.

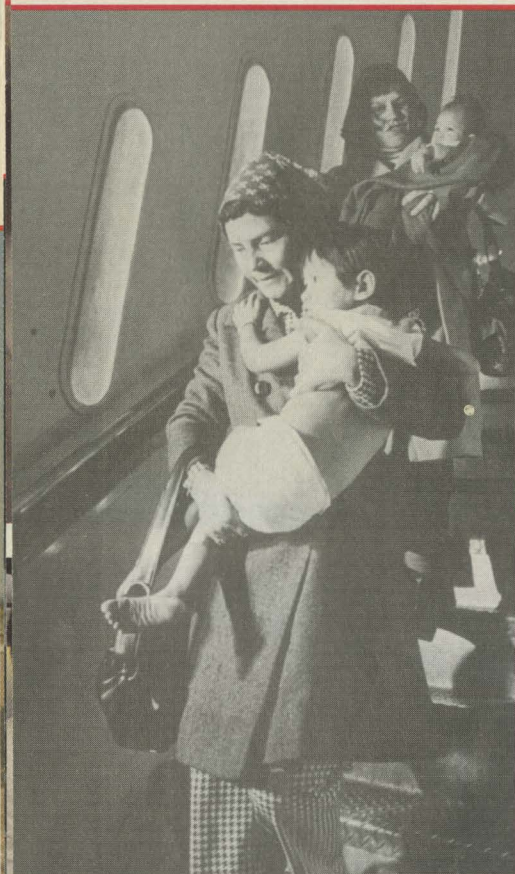
## Operation Babylift Launched

President Gerald Ford launched Operation Babylift to transport Vietnam's orphans out of the country. He met the first military flight to land in the United States and carried a baby in his arms off the plane (left).

The picture-perfect moment, however, was preceded by tragedy. On April 4, 1975, the first Air Force flight to leave Saigon crashed soon after takeoff. Bud Traynor, a former military pilot, recalls that heartbreaking day. Based at the 22nd Air Force command post at Travis AFB, Traynor was scheduled to fly howitzers into Saigon, but was reassigned to fly out orphans. His C-5A cargo plane was restocked with diapers, juice, milk, and a medical team. Some 15 minutes into the flight, a rear cargo door blew off at 25,000 feet, and Traynor was forced to land the plane in a rice paddy. Of the 330 adults and children on board, 154 were killed.







**Two women carry Vietnamese orphans** off a plane after they arrived in the United States in 1975 as part of Operation Babylift (far left). In Ho Chi Minh City this year, a Vietnamese World Airways employee waves U.S. and Vietnamese flags as she greets the group of returning orphans (left). Jeff Gahr looks over a quilt made by Shirley Barnes from clothes worn by the orphans (above left). Another orphan, Thao Chau Le Tran from Orlando, Fla., shows Vietnamese orphans his video camera during a visit to the Phu My orphanage in Ho Chi Minh City (above right).

## Arriving home

The World Airways Homeward Bound flight lands in Ho Chi Minh City and the passengers are greeted by local dignitaries. Inside the airport terminal, Gahr addresses the crowd in both Vietnamese and English. "We are here to establish new emotional bridges," he tells the crowd. Gahr leaves the microphone to hug his fellow adoptees, overwhelmed and dazed by the official welcome.

A framed photograph of the plane is presented to the city, and World Airways' Martinez receives a commemorative plate. "We are here to help these young adults experience the Vietnam of today; here to join hands and learn about a culture they share," Martinez says. "Some of the crewmembers who shared a moment in history are here today, completing the Babylift story by returning 21 adoptees to their homeland."

The group is transported to the Sheraton Saigon Hotel, a welcome treat for the weary travelers. That evening, the hotel celebrates the group's arrival with a traditional Vietnamese feast. The next day, the group sets off to explore the city.

Roger Castillo carries with him the sandals he wore on his flight to America and some papers that lead him and his wife to the orphanage he remembers living in until the age of six. Sadly,

the orphanage is being torn down; he salvages a light switch he says he will display at home. "Subconsciously, I could hear laughter and picture myself running up and down the stairs," Castillo says. "I recognized the street I walked down with my birth mother. It was difficult to walk away knowing this is where I started my life."

Tim Buchanan and his adoptive mother, Lee Sanne, visit the orphanage where he stayed as a baby and find a

different scene. The orphanage is filled with some 370 abandoned children, all with birth defects, some who never leave their beds. Few of the orphans speak, and they cling to their caretakers when lifted and retreat back into a silent world when left alone.

Colorado State Sen. Jim Dyer (R), a retired Marine lieutenant colonel, says he made the trip to come back to the place where "we lost some guys." He notes though that Vietnam has changed. The people are friendly, and there are many signs of a bustling economy.

The group wraps up its visit with a Saigon River boat cruise and a farewell dinner at the Unification Palace, formerly the presidential palace. Barnes presents Vietnamese officials with the third of three quilts she made from clothes worn by hundreds of orphans who passed through her life (one hangs in the Gerald R. Ford Museum, the other in World Airways

headquarters). Rehberg, who is invited to perform, plays the guitar and sings about his experience.

## Looking to the future

The return visit to Vietnam changed the lives of the adoptees, helping them forge new connections to their past. After the local press ran the story with [www.vietnambabylift.org](http://www.vietnambabylift.org) as a net-working site, birth parents in Vietnam learned about the children they had lost and began posting messages. Two families are in the process of being reunited. And Lana Noone, who visited with her adopted daughter Jennifer, is raising funds to update orphanage equipment; 500 wheelchairs have been donated so far.

Richard Silver and his wife, Tina, say they plan to return to Richard's home country. "Now I can tell people I have been there," Silver says. "I am planning to take my children back to show them their father's country." MO





# 2 DECADES STRONG

Marking 20 years this December, The Military Coalition combines the power of its 36 member organizations to speak as one voice on Capitol Hill.

By Kris Ann Hegle

Photography by Steve Barrett





## WHEN MAJ. FRED EPLING, USAF-RET.,

signed up for the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) in 1972, he was told that after he died his wife, Carolyn, would receive 55 percent of his retired pay for the rest of her life. Instead, Carolyn Epling's SBP annuity dropped to 35 percent when she turned 62 and began collecting Social Security, causing her to lose more than \$400 a month. ■ Epling vowed to do whatever she could to "right this incredible wrong." Soon

after, she became the legislative chair for MOAA's Albuquerque (N.M.) Chapter, which allowed her to bring the SBP age-62 offset issue to the attention of her fellow chapter members. Unbeknownst to Epling, thousands of other surviving military spouses across the country also were looking for ways to make their voices heard on Capitol Hill.

Based on grassroots feedback, MOAA took up the issue in partnership with The Military Coalition (TMC), a powerful advocacy group

and no way to pull together. Until The Military Coalition got involved and picked this issue up for us, and we were able to back them in terms of grassroots support, we didn't stand a chance."

### Speaking with one voice

TMC represents the interests of more than 5.5 million members of the uniformed services — officers, enlisted personnel, active duty members, Guard and Reserve members, veterans, and retirees — plus their



families and survivors. In addition to having strength in numbers, the coalition provides the vehicle needed for its 36 member organizations to speak with one voice on Capitol Hill.

"There's a multiplier effect that comes from working with other organizations that share the same goals,"

composed of MOAA and 35 other military, veterans', and uniformed services organizations. For more than a decade, TMC battled to end this inequity. Last year, its persistence paid off when Congress passed legislation that will phase out the age-62 SBP Social Security offset by April 1, 2008.

"The military widows who were affected by this were just like me," says Epling, who now serves on the Auxiliary Member Advisory Committee to MOAA's board of directors. "We were isolated. We were tucked away all over the country with no ties to each other, no organization,

**The representatives of the organizations** that belong to TMC pictured on page 61 are, by number: 1. Tom Konitzer, AAAA; 2. Dick Esau, MCRA; 3. Jerry Farrell, COAUSPHS; 4. Larry Madison, TREA; 5. Dennis McCarthy, ROA; 6. Don Peterson, AFA; 7. Richard Green, NGAUS; 8. Bob Evans, NOBC; 9. Lani Burnett, REA; 10. Cynthia Dawkins, VWIN; 11. Mike Wysong, VFW; 12. Rick Dean, AFSA; 13. Bill Legg, UAFA; 14. Myles Shaw, CPOA; 15. Herb Rosenbleeth, JWV; 16. John Panneton, NLUS; 17. Dick Schneider, NCOA; 18. Roy Valiant, USAWOA; 19. Darryl Ransom, CWOAUSCG; 20. Ike Puzon, NRA; 21. Len Williams, ALA; 22. Bill Loper, AUSA; 23. Hal Grant, NAUS; 24. Rosalyn Knapp, AFWOA; 25. Rose Lee, GSW; 26. Candace Wheeler, NMFA; 27. Fred Sanford, AMSUS; 28. Mike Blum (treasurer), MCL; 29. Joe Barnes (cochair), FRA; 30. Mike Cline (president), EANGUS; 31. Steve Strobbridge (cochair), MOAA; 32. Michele Traficante (secretary), NGAUS; 33. Norb Ryan Jr., MOAA. Not available for photo: representatives of AMVETS, MCA, MOPH, NERA, and SMCAF. For the full names of TMC member organizations, go to [www.themilitarycoalition.org/members](http://www.themilitarycoalition.org/members).



ILLUSTRATION: LEWIS AGRELL



**Representatives of TMC's 36** member organizations meet monthly (above). Master Chief Joe Barnes, USN-Ret., left, of the Fleet Reserve Association, and MOAA's Col. Steve Strobbridge, USAF-Ret., serve as TMC's cochairs (facing page).

says Master Chief Joe Barnes, USN-Ret., TMC cochair and national executive secretary for the Fleet Reserve Association. "You create significant synergy, which results in a win-win for all members of the coalition."

MOAA and 11 other military organizations realized the value of speaking with one voice when they banded together to form TMC 20 years ago in 1985. At the time, the coalition's primary focus was to repeal the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings deficit reduction law, which would have imposed a 22.5 percent reduction in military retired pay value. The law was repealed the following year, but TMC continued, and in 1996 it incorporated as a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization in Virginia.

In 2005, as TMC marks its 20th anniversary, the coalition addresses a wide variety of issues. These is-

ssues are examined by one of eight standing legislative committees: personnel and compensation; Guard and Reserve; health care; retirement programs; survivor programs; taxes and social security; veterans; and morale, welfare, recreation, and military construction.

To ensure active participation, each TMC organization agrees to have a representative serve on at least one committee. A commissioned officer and a noncommissioned officer serve as cochairs on most committees. Each committee prioritizes initiatives in its area of responsibility. Once this is done, the committee cochairs and TMC officers meet and recommend overall legislative priorities for the year, which then must be ratified by a vote of the coalition members.

Most of the issues considered by TMC come out of one of the eight legislative committees, most of which meet at least once a month. Initiatives arising from other sources are referred to the appropriate committee, which examines the merits of the issue and makes a recommendation. The initiative then comes before the entire coalition for a vote.

## TMC: 20 Years of Achievement

### 1986

Repealed Gramm-Rudman-Hollings deficit reduction law that caused curtailment of military retired pay COLAs

### 1989

Won premium reduction and open-enrollment season for Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP)

### 1992

Achieved Temporary Early Retirement Authority to facilitate equitable force drawdown

### 1994-1996

Restored COLA equity by repealing military-specific COLA delays

### 1998

Won 30-year paid-up SBP coverage (effective 2008)

### 1999

Repealed REDUX system that cut post-1986 entrants' retirement benefits by 22 percent



## Recent Military Coalition Legislative Gains

### HEALTH CARE

- Won permanent ID cards at age 75 for spouses and survivors of military retirees
- Won premium-based single or family TRICARE coverage for Selected Reserve members mobilized at least 90 days since Sept. 11, 2001, who continue in the Selected Reserve
- Permanently authorized 180 days of TRICARE coverage upon separation from active duty
- Permanently authorized pre- and post-call-up TRICARE coverage period for Guard and Reserve
- Prohibited imposing higher pharmacy cost shares on TRICARE For Life (TFL) beneficiaries versus those under age 65
- Waived recoupment of previous TRICARE payments for under-65 Medicare eligibles who were not informed of Medicare Part B enrollment requirement
- Authorized health care for academy and ROTC cadets for service-incurred conditions

### RETIREMENT/SURVIVOR ISSUES

- Won legislation phasing out SBP age-62 "widow's tax" by April 1, 2008
- Ended supplemental premium payment requirement for retirees who previously signed up for extra supplemental SBP coverage, which maintains higher annuity after age 62
- Authorized SBP open enrollment period starting Oct. 1, 2005; lump-sum payment of back premiums and interest required
- Won full concurrent receipt for 20-plus-

year retirees with 100 percent disability ratings, effective January 2005

- Indexed military death gratuity to increase annually by same percentage as basic pay raise
- Authorized disability retirement for academy cadets with significant service-related conditions

### ACTIVE/RESERVE FORCE ISSUES

- Won 3.5 percent active duty, Guard, and Reserve pay raise for 2005 (0.5 percent above average American's)
- Raised Basic Allowance for Housing to cover 100 percent of the median cost of housing for each grade and location
- Increased Army end strength by 20,000 and Marine Corps end strength by 3,000
- Removed the funding cap on military housing privatization and construction programs
- Established DoD obligation to provide commissary benefit in law; strengthened protections for commissary benefit
- Repealed requirement that servicemembers pay subsistence charges while hospitalized
- Permanently increased Family Separation Allowance and Imminent Danger/Hostile Fire Pay

### VETERANS' AND OTHER ISSUES

- Doubled survivor education benefit eligibility period to 20 years after death on active duty
- Authorized Selected Reserve members activated for two years to enroll in the Montgomery GI bill and gave them a year to pay the \$1,200 premium after demobilization
- Provided additional \$250 a month Dependency and Indemnity Compensation to any surviving spouse who has at least one child under age 18 for two years after service-connected death
- Increased from 18 to 24 months the maximum period of employer-sponsored health coverage that mobilized Guard and Reserve members may elect to continue
- Protected spouses as well as servicemembers under Servicemembers' Civil Relief Act for residential and motor vehicle lease termination provisions on joint leases
- Increased the maximum VA home loan guarantee amount to \$333,700

Although many issues are considered, TMC only focuses on those that have a broad base of support and best chance of success. This is reflected in the TMC's "rule of five." If five organizations object to a proposed initiative, the issue is no longer considered. However, organizations within the TMC still may pursue the issue — or even oppose it — on their own.

"Individual associations within the coalition don't always agree," says Joyce Wessel Raezer, TMC personnel and compensation committee cochair and legislative director for the National Military Family Association. "Just because we're part of the coalition doesn't mean we've stopped working issues independently, but where we have common goals, the coalition makes a big difference."

### Sharing resources and expertise

Working as a group provides other advantages, including sharing resources and expertise. This has been particularly helpful since the war on terrorism began, because many organizations within the coalition are confronting new issues.

"We have a lot of people on active duty now, and this brings about family issues and TRICARE issues," says Master Sgt. Michael Cline, AUS-Ret., TMC president and executive director for the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS). "Through the coalition, we're able to tap into other organizations' expertise in these areas. In turn, we're their go-to person on Guard and Reserve issues."

Sharing resources and expertise helped TMC score an important victory last year when it won premium-based TRICARE coverage for Selected Reserve members (and their families) who have been mobilized at least 90 days since Sept. 11, 2001, and continue to serve in the Selected



**Committees meet** regularly to discuss legislative and policy concerns. The Health Care Committee considers its 2006 agenda (above).

Reserve. Other important victories in 2004 include: getting permanent ID cards for spouses and surviving spouses of military retirees at age 75; winning a 3.5 percent pay raise in 2005 for active duty, Guard, and Reserve servicemembers; and doubling the survivor education benefit eligibility period to 20 years following a servicemember's death while on active duty.

According to Col. Steve Strobbridge, USAF-Ret., TMC cochair and director of MOAA's Government Relations Department, better organization and increased cohesiveness have helped the coalition achieve more legislative victories in recent years.

"There's no doubt that the secret of our success has been our willingness to work together to support each other's goals and to mutually prioritize initiatives for joint action," says Strobbridge. "When we go to the Hill and testify, we generally do it together. When we send letters to the Hill, all of our names are on them."

Mike Higgins, a professional staff member who works on the House Armed Services Military Personnel Subcommittee, believes the coalition's grassroots support helped carry such issues as TRICARE For Life (TFL) and concurrent receipt. In fact, during the fight to win concurrent receipt, coalition members sent 25,000 communications to Congress in two [CONTINUES ON PAGE 76]

## 1999-2003

Repealed statutory military pay-raise caps

\*\*\*

## 2001

Won TRICARE For Life and TRICARE Senior Pharmacy programs

\*\*\*

## 2001

Achieved nearly a 50 percent increase in active duty GI Bill benefits

\*\*\*

## 2003

Won concurrent receipt for combat-disabled servicemembers and those with 50-plus percent disability ratings

\*\*\*

## 2004

Phased out age-62 SBP "widows tax"

\*\*\*

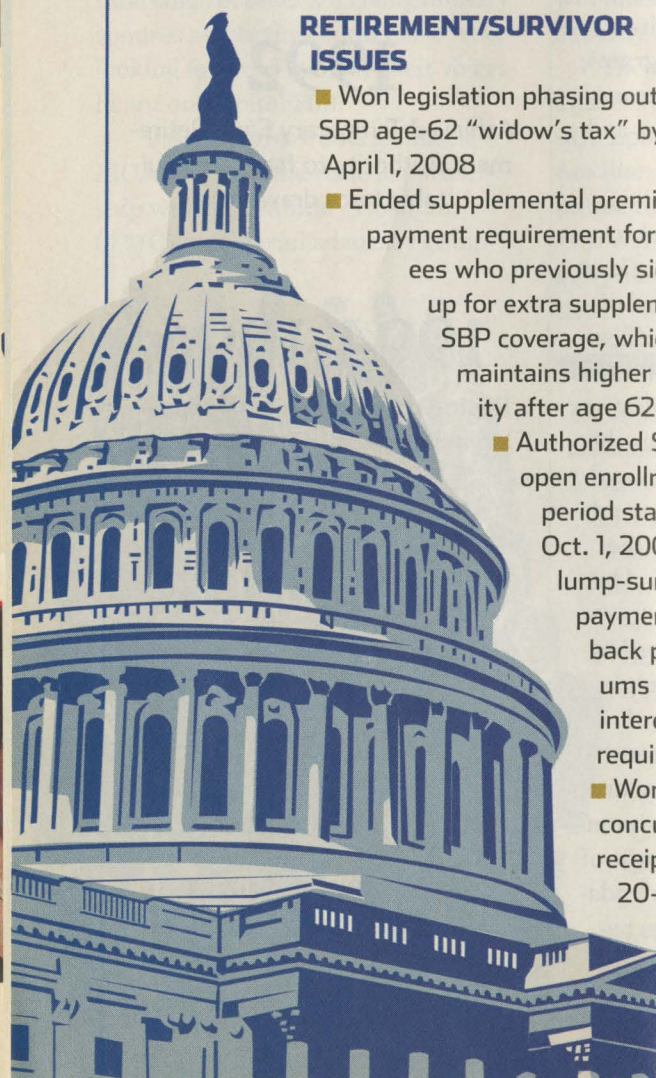
## 2004

Won TRICARE Reserve Select coverage for mobilized members of the Selected Reserve

\*\*\*

## 2005

Increased maximum Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance coverage





# Accountable to the

# Code

Must the United States comply with the Geneva Conventions in fighting the global war on terrorism?

**A**re detainees captured in the global war on terrorism real POWs? Or are they illegitimate fighters who don't merit POW status? The distinction has stirred debate when confronting the abuse of some prisoners. DoD legal advisor Brig. Gen. Thomas Hemingway, USAF, contends that applying POW status to al-Qaida and Taliban fighters actually weakens the protections of the Geneva Conventions. Rear Adm. John Hutson, USN-Ret., dean of the Franklin Pierce Law Center, asserts that the conventions must apply to all **taken** captive in the war on terrorism and that our nation is morally bound to obey them.

**Contribute your viewpoint:** Log on to [www.moaa.org/discussion](http://www.moaa.org/discussion) to share your views. Scroll to the bottom of the page for the Geneva link.

## DoD's viewpoint: Brig. Gen. Thomas Hemingway, USAF



America is at war. If anyone thinks that the acts of terrorism committed against America on Sept. 11, 2001, were not acts of war, they need look only to the 1996 and 1998 declarations of war, or fatawa, by al-Qaida against America and its allies and to al-Qaida's subsequent sustained, concerted, and hostile acts against America and its allies

throughout the world, including Bali, England, Indonesia, Kenya, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Tanzania, Tunisia, and Yemen.

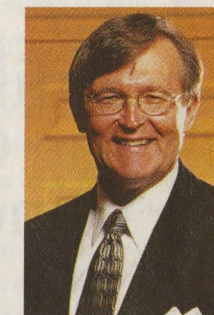
Congress reacted swiftly to the Sept. 11 attacks and authorized the president to use force against those responsible. Consistent with this authorization, the president detained at Guantanamo Bay (GTMO), Cuba, individuals threatening the security of America and the lives of innocent civilians. The Supreme Court has ruled that the president is authorized to detain individuals who engage in

hostile acts against the United States until the end of hostilities to prevent them from returning to the battlefield. The court has noted that the detention of such individuals is not punitive, but rather is based on the compelling need to protect the nation's security during times of armed conflict.

The armed forces also have a clear policy, consistent with a directive from the president, to treat al-Qaida and Taliban detainees humanely. This is true even though al-Qaida is an international terrorist [CONTINUES ON PAGE 68]

## Another viewpoint: Rear Adm. John D. Hutson, USN-Ret.

The answer to "Must the United States comply with the Geneva Conventions in fighting the global war on terrorism?" is emphatically "yes." The United States is not just a party to the treaty — it was the prime proponent of the Geneva Conventions in the aftermath of World War II. The conventions represent an international obligation we are



not free to disregard. If we do disregard them, we do so at our peril. We become an international scofflaw deserving of the opprobrium of our allies and enemies alike.

That analysis both answers the question and begs it. There are at least two more subtle, but nevertheless important, levels of consideration. What legal obligations do the conventions provide? And, regardless of those legal obligations, what are the moral, diplomatic, military, and practical requirements?

Common article three of the conventions recognizes only two types of people: combatants and "other persons" (including POWs). Each carries with it certain obligations. For example, if civilians are found to be breaking the law by committing acts of terror, they can be prosecuted and punished. If combatants are found to be breaking the law, they are unlawful combatants, and they, too, can be prosecuted and punished. Nowhere in that regime does it say, or even imply, that by virtue of [CONTINUES ON PAGE 69]



## DoD's viewpoint: Brig. Gen. Thomas Hemingway, USAF

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 67] group, not a state, and thus cannot be a signatory to the Geneva Conventions. This is true even though al-Qaida does not recognize the conventions or comply with the principles they embody. This is true even though al-Qaida conducts its operations in flagrant violation of the laws and customs of war, including by targeting innocent civilians. This is true even though Taliban fighters do not fit the definition of POWs under the Geneva Conventions because, for example, they fail to distinguish themselves from innocent civilians and to conduct their operations in accordance with the laws and customs of war. To go beyond this policy and conclude that al-Qaida and Taliban fighters are POWs bastardizes the Geneva Conventions and undermines the protections afforded to legitimate, state-sanctioned fighters. There is no incentive for fighters to adhere to rules of warfare if they are entitled to POW treatment under the Geneva Conventions regardless of whether they adhere to the conventions themselves or not. Nonetheless, it is the armed forces' policy to treat detainees humanely and, to the extent appropriate and consistent with military necessity, in a manner consistent with the principles of Ge-

treatment of detainees but also to investigating detainee abuse and punishing the culprits. Credible allegations of abuse have been investigated and individuals responsible for criminal acts have been disciplined, even though we know that the al-Qaida manual instructs "brothers" to make torture claims as a matter of course. Also, numerous investigations have been conducted to determine whether detention and interrogation tactics used at GTMO and elsewhere violated the Geneva Conventions or constituted criminal offenses. The findings are clear: At no time has DoD employed policies permitting, tolerating, or condoning torture of detainees.

The president has affirmed repeatedly the United States' commitment to the worldwide elimination of torture: "America stands against and will not tolerate torture. We will investigate and prosecute all acts of torture and undertake to prevent other cruel and unusual punishment."

The United States is at war against a determined and dangerous adversary. It is committed to ending this war, complying with all of its constitutional, statutory, and treaty obligations regarding the treatment of detainees, and investigating and punishing abuses of detainees. The

To ... conclude that al-Qaida and Taliban fighters are POWs bastardizes the Geneva Conventions and undermines [their] protections.

neva. The current Army Field Manual reflects this policy and provides that all detainees shall be treated humanely.

After the Abu Ghraib scandal, some critics erroneously believed the United States was engaged in a conspiracy to violate the conventions by torturing detainees to elicit information about the enemy. The impression was that America was providing no protection to detainees. Nothing could be further from the truth. The United States is committed not only to complying with all of its constitutional, statutory, and treaty obligations that apply to

United States is committed to providing fairness and justice to these detainees. Al-Qaida and the Taliban, on the other hand, seek to attack and destroy America by targeting innocent civilians while claiming the protections of the Geneva Conventions to which they are not entitled. MO

**Brig. Gen. Thomas L. Hemingway, USAF**, is the legal advisor to the appointing authority in the DoD Office of Military Commissions. He entered active service in 1965, retired in 1996, and was recalled to active service in August 2003.

## Another viewpoint: Rear Adm. John D. Hutson, USN-Ret.

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 67] having thereby lost the protective status of a POW does that person lose the protections of the Geneva Conventions. He simply loses the protections of being a POW. It does not mean he may be tortured or treated inhumanely or cruelly.

But even more important than the question of what the United States must do is the question of what the United States should do. Somewhat to my surprise, after

In many ways, it is unfortunate the debate is resolved in the courts. The much more important decision should take place in Congress, in the Pentagon, in schools, and in coffee shops around the country. We lost our moral compass, we lost the diplomatic high ground, and significantly, we imperiled our troops — present and future. If we play fast and loose with the Geneva Conventions, other countries — our enemies — will too. For generations the United States has

The conventions protect our troops, first and foremost. We must be able to argue they always apply, even when we know the enemy will ignore them.

being a lawyer for 33 years, these issues have caused me to experience an epiphany. I now realize that law is less important than I thought and lawyers more important. Clever lawyers can use legal sophistry to twist the law to make black seem white, wrong seem right. This is especially true when they are aided by the momentum of people's fear and emotion.

For generations, the United States has stood tall in the international community in its support of the rule of law and human rights. Now, when put to the test in our own backyard, we falter. We have taken a giant step down the slippery slope from the high road toward the low road.

We can no longer credibly claim that the abuse we've seen [at Abu Ghraib; Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; and elsewhere] was the result of the misbehavior of "a few bad apples." It was much too pervasive in terms of locations, number of events, units, and organizations involved. There was an underlying systemic reason: unclear guidance about the application of the Geneva Conventions. In speaking with scores of company and field grade officers who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is clear that confusion was rampant. I've watched them argue back and forth among themselves long after returning from the war zones about whether the Geneva Conventions applied and, if so, how.

been more forward-deployed than all other nations combined. We have the most to lose. The conventions protect our troops, first and foremost. We must be able to argue they always apply, even when we know the enemy will ignore them. It will make it more difficult to form future coalitions if our potential partners believe we will pick and choose when we will feel bound by the conventions.

Finally, the literature and our experience all indicate that abuse is ineffective in gaining useful intelligence. Eventually, everyone will talk, but you have no idea of the reliability of what they tell you. The reality is the best method to gain usable intelligence is to break down the barriers between you and the captive, not reinforce them. This often takes patience and experience; it is more subtle than piling naked men up in a pyramid, but it actually works.

Yes, the Geneva Conventions apply. But even more important than the legal analysis are morality, diplomacy, and military practicality. If the Geneva Conventions didn't exist, we should invent them. MO

**Rear Adm. John D. Hutson** completed a 28-year career in the Navy, retiring as a rear admiral after having served as Judge Advocate General of the Navy. He is president and dean of the Franklin Pierce Law Center in Concord, N.H.



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Lt. Col. Robert A. Boxell, USA-Ret.  
(continues on page 72)

## TRUE GRIT [CONTINUED FROM PAGE 51]

A unit goes over, leaves its vehicles, comes back, and falls in on someone else's equipment. Well, we may have taken some of that equipment over already. Some is being consumed, and we are purchasing



more. But the industrial base can only react so fast.

Technical readiness, in fact, has gone down.

So the question comes up: "What happens if have to deploy somewhere else?" Well, we use equipment in our pre-positioning squadrons.

**But hasn't pre-positioned equipment and even your Norway stocks been drawn down?**

Norway stocks and one of three maritime pre-positioning squadrons have been drawn down. We have fenced the other two. Each would provide a brigade-sized unit with ground equipment — Humvees, tanks, and so on.

**So if you had to respond to another large contingency operation, there would be equipment shortages?**

It would depend on where we are going. Timing, rather than equipment, is the greater challenge. Do we leave all the forces in Iraq? Do we swing some of those? The [Joint Chiefs] chairman has testified that we can do another major contingency, though maybe not as fast as

we had predicted. On the other hand, the force has never been more ready.

**Last July you said the Marine Corps has seen 5,300 major pieces of ground equipment, Humvees and the like, consumed or destroyed in Iraq. How many years will it take, given industrial capacity, to get back to where you need to be?**

If the war stopped today we would probably take close to three years to completely reconstitute. Some of that is money, but quite a bit is the industrial base. It can produce just so much. And in some cases you're not going to produce the same equipment again.

Take an AAV (amphibious assault vehicle). We're not going to produce another one [CONTINUES ON PAGE 72]

PHOTO: JOHN MOORE/AP

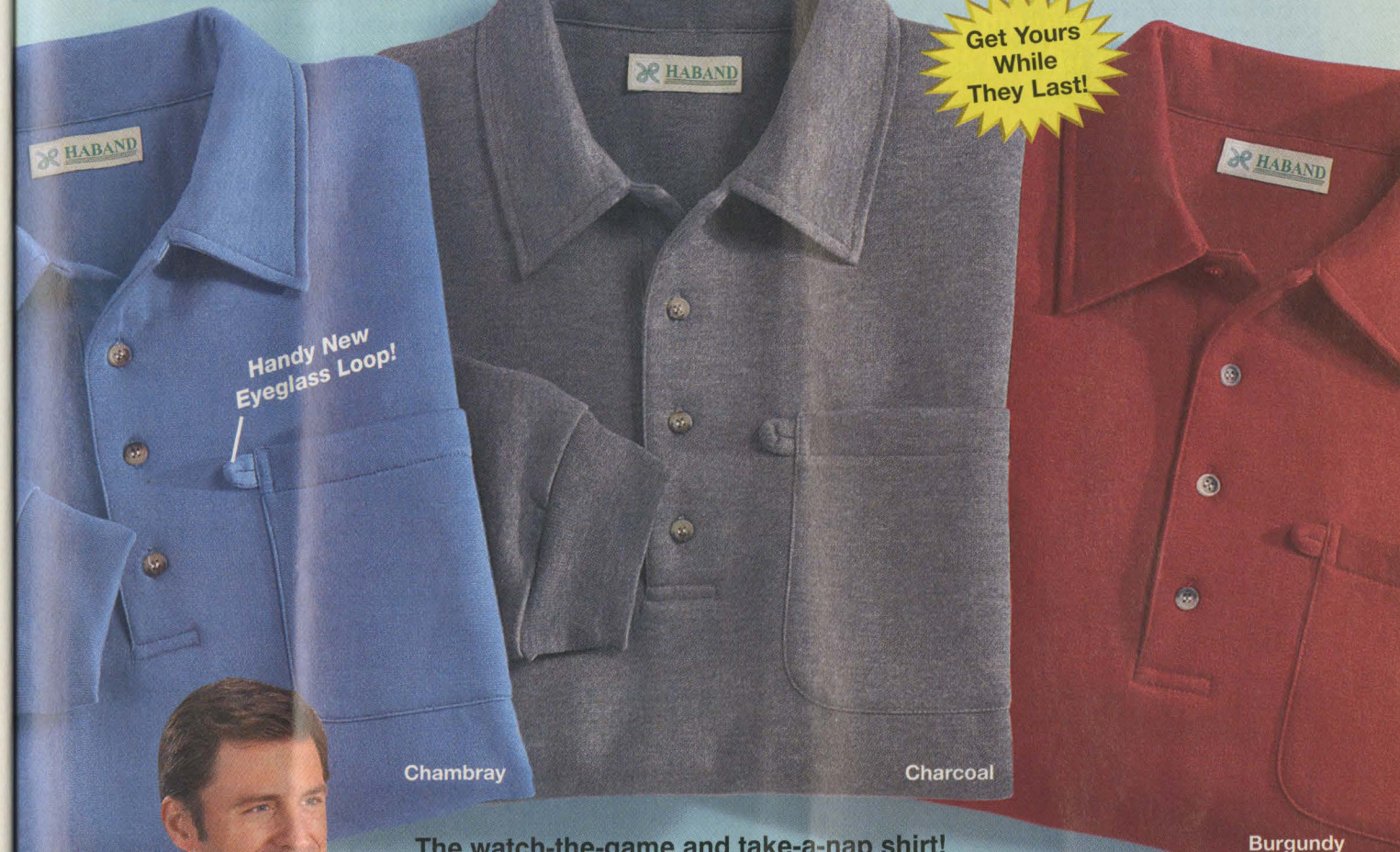
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(continues on page 80)

## TRUE GRIT [CONTINUED FROM PAGE 70]

of those. We're going to wait for the expeditionary fighting vehicle.

Likewise, if we lose a CH-46 — I flew those when I was a lieutenant in Vietnam — we're not going to replace it with a CH-46. We will stand up the first squadron of MV-22s next year. We will stand up two a year and the first squadron will deploy in [fiscal year] 2007. But we can only build those so fast.

Probably our biggest challenge is what to replace the Humvee with. We're an expeditionary force; we come from the sea. In a lot of cases we don't need the vehicle armored. Armor weighs a lot. What we need is a vehicle maybe not designed like the Humvee. Though it's a powerful vehicle, it's square. It's a box. You have a square and a cube problem on board ship. Against mines or IEDs, you probably wouldn't design a vehicle with the same big, flat surfaces. So, do we replace our fleet of Humvees with Humvees or something else while working on the next generation vehicle? We're working on that right now.

**The projected life cycle of a Humvee is 13 years, but I understand they last no more than two in Iraq.**

That's pretty close. We are committed to replacing the Humvees we have today either with MAKs or 1114s.

**Your vision statement notes that the Marine Corps must be the most ready of services. If the war in Iraq continues, will the Marine Corps say, "Look, we're nation-building here. It's hurting readiness. We have to bring Marines out and prepare for other contingencies and recapitalize our equipment"?**

That's a great question and one we talk about a great deal. I have a prob-

lem saying, "Okay, we've got to train and get ourselves ready for whatever comes down the pike." Wait a minute. We're at war, aren't we? So we've got to be there.

The real challenge for the Marine Corps while we're fighting the war, for the Army too, is we've got to reconstitute ourselves — not only replace the equipment we're losing with like equipment but, in the case of the CH-46, for example, replace it with MV-22s.

**"The real challenge for the Marine Corps ... is we've got to reconstitute ourselves."**

We are remanufacturing the Cobra engine from a two-blade to four. So we're taking Cobras off-line in the middle of a war, modifying their electronics and blades, and making [the Cobra] a much more capable machine.

That presents some challenge, because we are also using them at a high rate. We've got to be able to manage that, both the war and the reconstitution. We're not going to be able to reconstitute quite as fast as we would have liked. Fortunately, Congress appears very supportive by giving us the supplemental [budgets].

**With recruiting and retention, what are your concerns?**

The Marine Corps is in good shape. We made our first-term reenlistment goal in fiscal 2005 earlier than we had in the past [CONTINUES ON PAGE 74]

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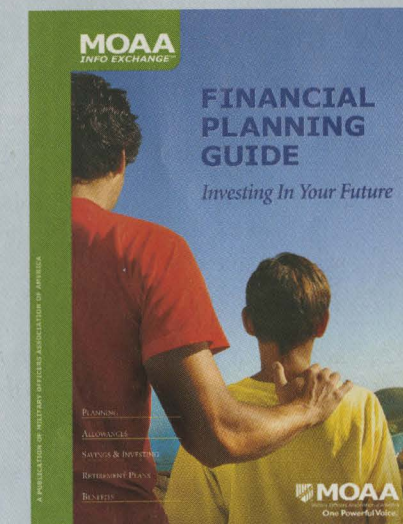


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## TRUE GRIT [CONTINUED FROM PAGE 73]

three or four years. We had a better military occupational specialty match, so we're retaining the right guys and gals. ... The number of individuals leaving before completing their four-year commitment—either because they are in jail, or [are] deserters, or hurt themselves, [or] show bad conduct—is way down. We had 900 fewer such attritions in fiscal 2005 than projected. All of that is great news.

The cohort most often reenlisting are married individuals, a little surprising given our deployment tempo. So families feel comfortable staying in the Marine Corps.

On recruiting, as fiscal 2005 came to a close, we were 103 percent of where we wanted to be. We put more people into boot camp than we thought we would be able to. We like to start a new fiscal year with 50 percent of the year goal already recruited. We were at about 45 percent. Before Sept. 11, recruiters spent about four hours per successful recruit. Today they spend 12 hours on average, mostly with the parents. That challenge isn't going to go away anytime soon.

With both recruiting and retention we are going to have to work very hard. We will not reduce our quality. To be successful on that chaotic battlefield we have to have high-quality individuals.

**Support for the war among Americans, polls show, is going down. Many feel the war was a mistake. You served in Vietnam. Are you worried what this can do to morale and the mission?**

Having come home from Vietnam I can tell you there is no comparison. I was not allowed to wear a uniform. You were going to have a tomato or egg thrown at you. As you came off

the aircraft there was no band. There was no support. Only my wife met me.

The American population is torn, [but] I have seen no lack of support for the individual serviceman or -woman. There's unbelievably strong support. Any time I'm out talking to [the public] they want to know "What can we do?", "What can we send them?", "How can we support them?"

On the other hand, these same people are questioning whether their sons or daughters should go in. There's an understandable tension there. All of the service chiefs have been talking about the value of service to this nation. But it is a challenge, especially when you have individuals asking—and this is not in my lane—whether or not we should have gone in [to Iraq]. I know that's what the American people are concerned about. But this is really important. We need to be successful.

**Assume we weren't in Iraq. As a member of the Joint Chiefs, if you were told the president wanted to democratize Iraq—that there were no [weapons of mass destruction], but the mission you're now conducting was the premise for the war—would you advise against it?**

I don't like to play what-if games, because you usually have one part of the what-if but not the others. ...

My job as a service chief is to advise the president on what is militarily feasible. That includes not only major combat operations but [also], if we're going to be involved in nation-building or stability and security, what the challenges are and what we need. And based upon the entire situation, at least the chiefs we have now, [and] the chiefs before, are very blunt on what's required, the readiness of the force, and where shortages are.

That's probably as far as I go. MO

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## 2 DECADES [CONTINUED FROM PAGE 65]

days. "The postcards and phone calls we receive make a huge difference," says Higgins.

Unity and persistence continue to help TMC achieve legislative victories. However, not all victories involve legislation. Coalition members track and monitor policies that affect servicemembers and their families just as much as laws do. For example, when the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) list came out recently, TMC members looked at how retired servicemembers would be affected in terms of access to health care, commissaries, and other benefits.

TMC members also follow up to see how a particular piece of legislation is implemented to ensure its intent is maintained. When TFL passed, for example, coalition members worked with DoD's TRICARE Management Activity, establishing regular beneficiary advisory panel meetings to provide feedback on problems recipients were experiencing and discussing solutions.

Coalition members plan to build on their legislative successes. However, success in the legislative arena tends to come in cycles. "There are many competing issues, and while military personnel issues have enjoyed a great deal of success in the last five years, there are other contenders for the front seat," says Higgins.

Strobridge says he believes the coalition will have to exert even more effort on preserving and protecting recent gains. The coalition is well aware that the secretary of Defense has chartered the Defense Advisory Committee on Military Compensation to review the military compensation system and make recommendations on possible changes to military pay and benefit programs.

The coalition will be carrying this fight, says Strobridge. "I see great things ahead for the coalition." MO

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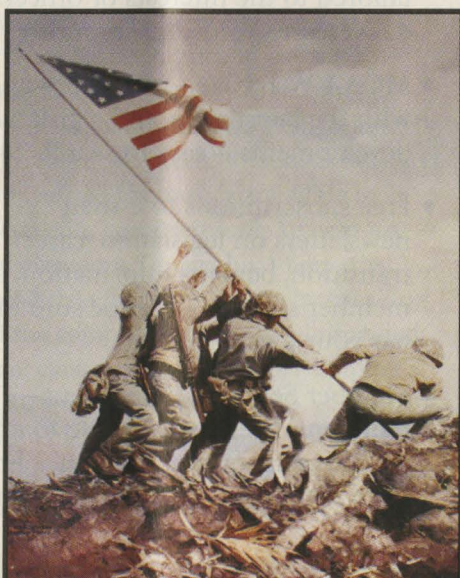


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## Overdue Recognition

Army Cpl. Tibor Rubin, a Holocaust survivor and a Korean War POW, has received the Medal of Honor for his bravery in combat and his selfless efforts giving aid to his fellow soldiers.

**I**n a White House ceremony Sept. 23, former Cpl. Tibor Rubin, 76, was awarded the Medal of Honor, receiving long-overdue recognition for his bravery during the Korean War.

While serving with Company I, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, Rubin single-handedly defended a hill for 24 hours against an overwhelming number of North Korean troops so his unit could withdraw to safety. Later, when Chinese forces attacked his unit, he manned a .30-caliber machine gun at the end of the unit's line until his ammunition was exhausted, slowing the enemy's advance and helping his fellow soldiers retreat. During the battle Rubin was severely wounded and captured by the Chinese.

In a POW camp, Rubin, a Hungarian immigrant not yet a U.S. citizen, used what he had learned about survival while held in a Nazi concentration camp to help his fellow prisoners. During his 30 months there, he risked his life nightly by sneaking out of the camp to steal food and provided medical care and moral support, helping some 40 soldiers survive.

Rubin had been recommended previously for the Medal of Honor, but it is believed a superior officer failed to submit

the paperwork because Rubin was Jewish. It was Rubin's fellow POWs who, in the early 1980s, began a campaign to have his actions honored.

### Living Legends

**A**irmen are getting a chance to learn what it is like to wear heavy cotton khaki uniforms instead of camouflage battle dress uniforms. Living Legends, started at Dover AFB, Del., is a group of active duty airmen who wear vintage Air Force uniforms to honor those who have served in the past.

Airmen don vintage uniforms during events such as Air Force milestones, POW/MIA Observance Day, and annual award ceremonies. They perform normal, everyday duties – including checking identification at the front gate – in their throwback attire.

"It's amazing watching a civilian pull up [who has] worn that uniform from the Korean War or the Vietnam War," says Chief Master Sgt. Mark Brejcha, 90th Mission Support Group superintendent at F.E. Warren AFB, Wyo. "They are just flabbergasted."

Locating uniforms is key to the program, and Brejcha challenges each airman wearing a vintage uniform to learn about the person who wore it. **MO**



**Cpl. Tibor Rubin** came to the United States and enlisted in the U.S. Army after being liberated from a concentration camp in Austria.

### THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

**On Dec. 25, 1991**, Mikhail Gorbachev announced his resignation as president of the Soviet Union. Four days earlier, 11 of the former Soviet republics had established the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), dismantling the USSR.

PHOTO: COURTESY U.S. ARMY



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(continued from page 72)

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(continues on page 82)

## information exchange

### Reunions

#### Army

**OCS 2-70 Fort Benning, Ga.**, March 23-26, Santa Fe, N.M. Contact: H. White, 14111 Linden Blvd., Jamaica, NY 11436-1035, (718) 529-3641, captain14111@hotmail.com.

#### Navy

**MCB-22 and all who supported MCB-22**, March 17-19, San Antonio. Contact: C. Biermann, 127 Crestwood Dr., Kerrville, TX 78028-4830, (830) 895-2189, carlton@kctc.com.

#### Air Force

**607th Air Control Sqdn and Tactical Control Sqdn at Luke AFB, Ariz.**, Feb. 17-20, Phoenix. Contact: kenjiseta@gmail.af.mil.

**Pilot Tng Class 56-O**, March 9-12, Tucson, Ariz. Contact: J. Kerr Jr., 1439 Fulbright Ave., Redlands, CA 92373, (909) 792-7003, john\_kerr@eee.org.

### Reader Exchange

**Mothers**—For an article in *Military Officer*, I am looking for stories about moms of servicemembers and moms who are servicemembers. Memories, anecdotes, letters, and photos from past to present, happy or sad, are welcome. Contact: K. Racette, 5239 N. Catherine St., Plattsburgh, NY 12901, kellie-racette@excite.com.

**Lt. Col. Crone, USMC-Ret.**—I am looking for him. He was an aviator, CO of Cobra unit in RVN NAVAIR Systems Command, and AH-1J program with Iran in 1975. Contact: T. Hill, 323 Edgewater Dr., Pensacola, FL 32507, (850) 453-1729, sunds valla@earthlink.net.

**Michael Aaron Wooten**—I am looking for him. I do not know his service or rank. He was born July 21, 1964, and was a respiratory tech 91V. Contact: R. Burleson, 535 Waymarket Dr., Ann Arbor, MI 48103, latinqueen\_9@hotmail.com.

**Capt. Silas O. Nunn III, USN-Ret.**—I am looking for him. He was CO of *USS Coontz* (DDG-40) from 1976-77. I was his chief engineer. Contact: D. McCullough, 1032 Taft Rd., Chesapeake, VA 23322, (757) 421-0471, dgm1098@aol.com.

**7th Platoon, MCRD**—I am looking for anyone who was in boot camp in San Diego, March-May, 1938. Contact: C. Cormier, 8310 S.W. 28th Pl., Gainesville, FL 32607, (352) 332-7887, cjcormier@earthlink.net.

**Maj. Joseph Baker, USA**—I am looking for him. He was a cavalry officer. Contact: D. Garrison, 905 N. Lexington St., Arlington, VA 22205, (703) 869-7146, ldgarrison@earthlink.net.

**Lt. Ronald Cherry, USA**—I am looking for him regarding Operation Cedar Falls. He served in Btry A, 8th Bn, 6th FA, 1st Inf Div from 1966-67. Contact: R. Carletta, (503) 654-9685, rac117@comcast.net, or J. Seely, 46-402 Haiku Plantations Dr., Kaneohe, HI 96744, (808) 235-5466, jbs1236@aol.com.

**Maj. Charles F. Manning, USA-Ret.**—I am looking for him. He was a 1st Cavalry airborne inf pilot on Pathfinder Committee in 1972. He was in Vietnam from 1965-69. Contact: J. Manning, 17454

Meadow Lake Cir., Fort Myers, FL 33912, (239) 482-7027, soccergramma@hotmail.com.

**Maj. Kenneth Naumann, USA**—I am looking for him. He was a special forces CO in Vietnam. Contact: B. Martin, 5570 Coach House Cir., No. E, Boca Raton, FL 33486, (561) 750 2137, fax: (561) 750-8228, charliemail1@aol.com.

**Lt. Cmdr. H.V. Cronk, USN-Ret.**—I am looking for him. He was CO of the *USS Pelican* (AMS-32) during the Korean War. Contact: W. Brown, 923 Hatteras Ave., Clermont, FL 34711, (352) 241-0479.

**2nd Lt. Sheldon Sandler, USAF**—I am looking for anyone who served with him in North Africa, Sicily, or San Severo 1944-45 in the 309th in WWII. Contact: M. Sobel, P.O. Box 9636, Rancho Santa Fe, CA 92067, (858) 722-4361, emodoc@cox.net.

**John D. Kowalczyk and Frank J. Harasiemowicz**—I am looking for them. I do not know their service or rank. Kowalczyk served in WWII, Co E, 2nd Inf Rgt, and served in Normandy. Harasiemowicz was 82nd Abn. Both are from Schenectady, N.Y. Contact: R. Korkin, 3107 Gambriel Ct., Louisville, KY 40205.

**1st Sgt. Henry Mangus, USA**—I am looking for him. He was a high-level admin mos inf in Korea during Vietnam. He was in Co C, DLIWC Presidio of Monterey, Calif. Contact: F. Holloway, 3110 Belmead Ln., Tyler, TX 75701, (903) 593-0015, fax: (903) 593-2333, frederick.holloway@us.army.mil.

**Diane Polk**—I am looking for her. I do not know her service or rank. She was stationed in Frankfurt, Germany. Contact: H. Polk, 1631 Fernwood Glendale Rd., Apt. E4, Spartanburg, SC 29307, henrypolk@bellsouth.net.

**Lt. Cmdr. U.H. "Jack" Rowley, USN-Ret.**—I have been looking for him and his family since Hurricane Katrina. Contact: D. Kaider, 8817 Alliston Hollow Way, Gaithersburg, MD 20879, (301) 963-2867, dkeith@comcast.net.

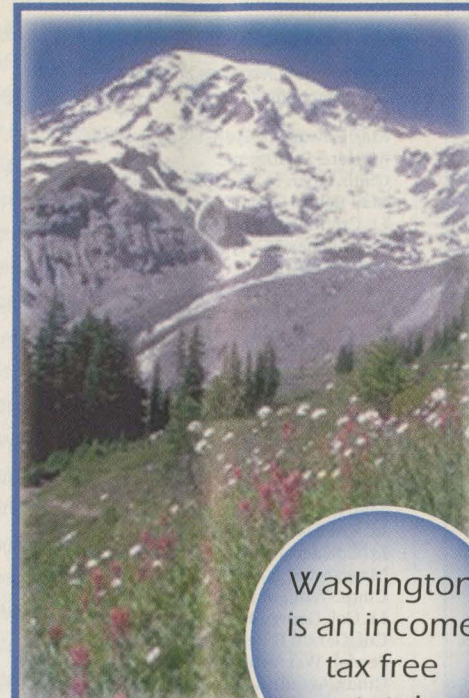
**Capt. John Esch**—I am looking for him. I do not know his service. He worked in an air traffic control field and with security police as a staff sergeant. Contact: S. Kent, 1024 Hillside Dr., Webb City, MO 64870, skent@joplinmo.org.

**William J. Henderson, USAF; Bruno Kaminsky, USAF; Joseph A. Lacey, USAF; Earl W. Nethercutt, USAF; Jack J. Shore, USAF; and Roy L. Thompson, USAF**—I am looking for them. I do not know their ranks. They graduated RO Class 53-8 from James Connally AFB, Texas. Contact: W. Johannsen, 1319 YZ Ave., McAllen, TX 78504, (956) 687-4329, jerylf@juno.com.

**CWO4 Walter T. Johnson, USA-Ret.**—I am looking for him. He was military intelligence and served in Taiwan 1960-64 as a Mandarin linguist. Contact: W. Thayer, 4724 Kellogg Dr., Woodbridge, VA 22193, (703) 590-3753, thayerwb@comast.net.

**Frank Mathias**—I am looking for him. I do not know his service or rank. He graduated WOC flight school at Fort Walters, Texas, Class 69-39. Contact: L. Goldsmith, 1629 N. Dunworth St., Visalia, CA 93292, peterpilot335@comcast.net. MO

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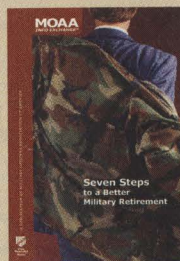
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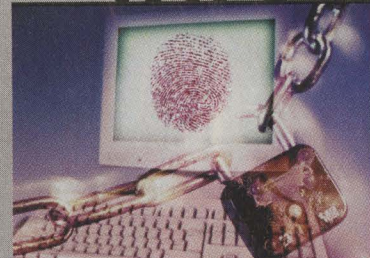
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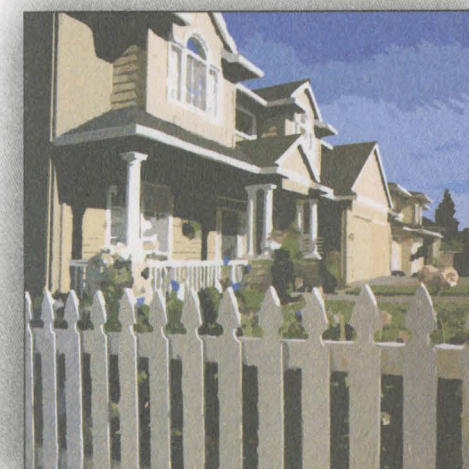
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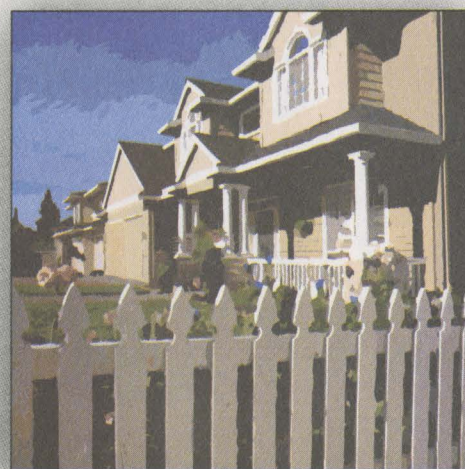
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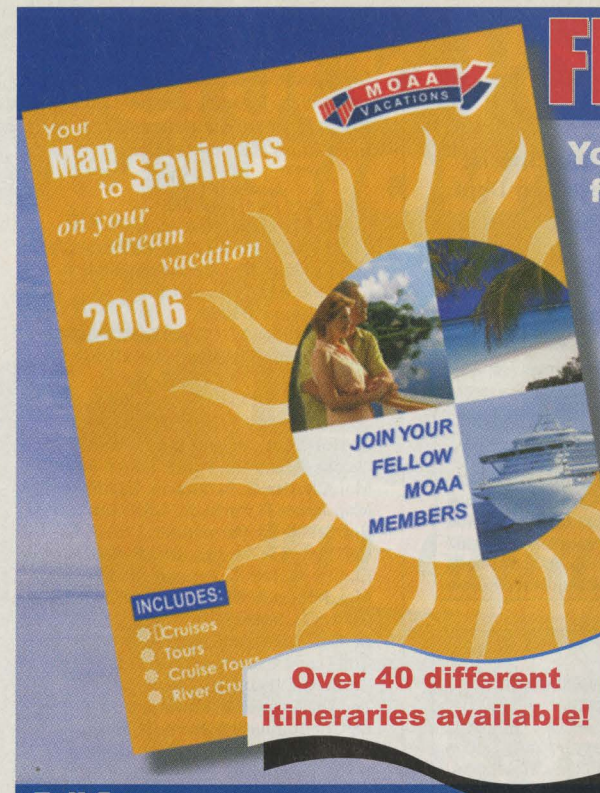
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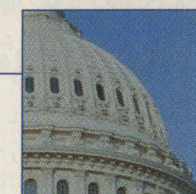


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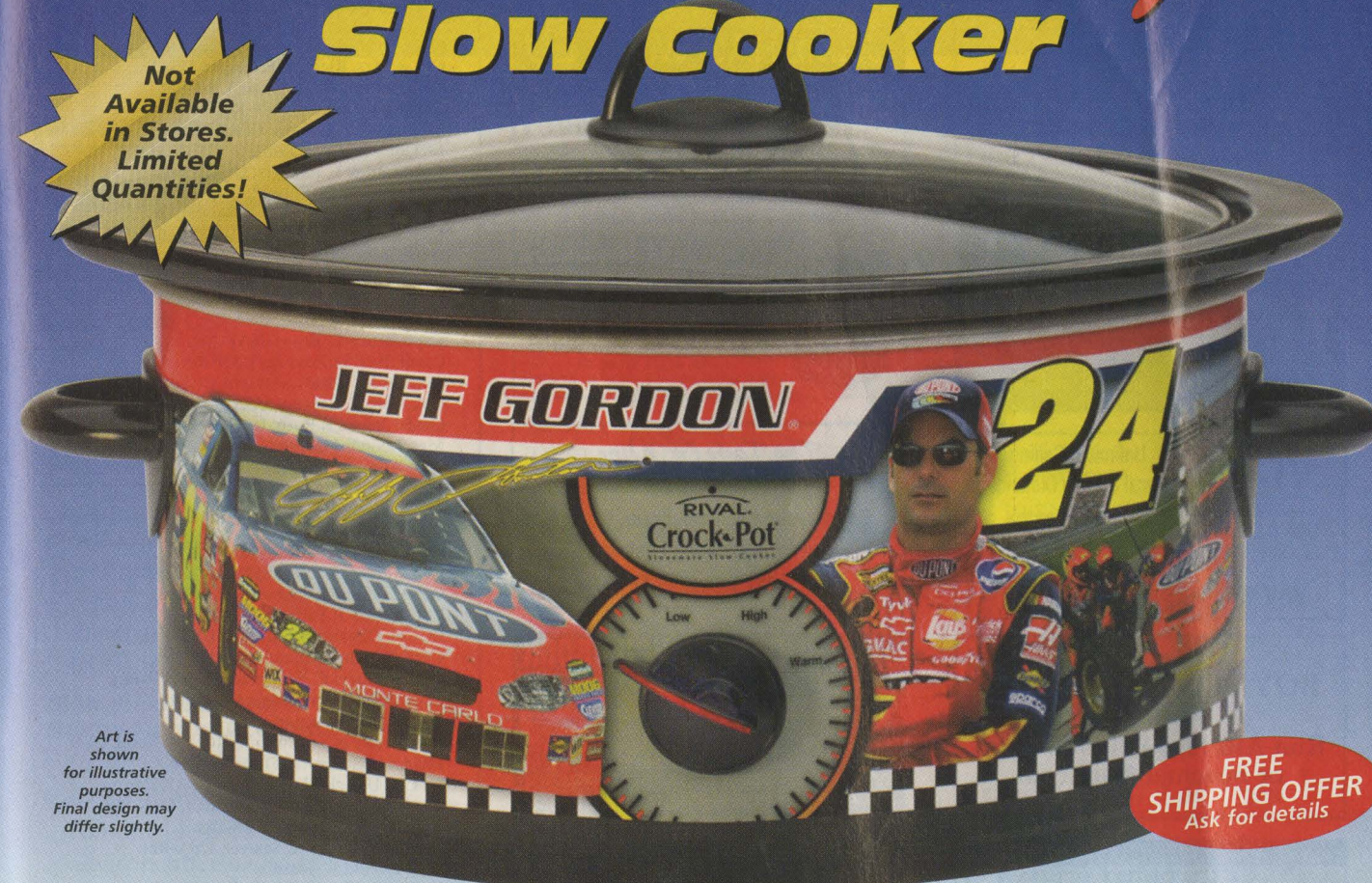
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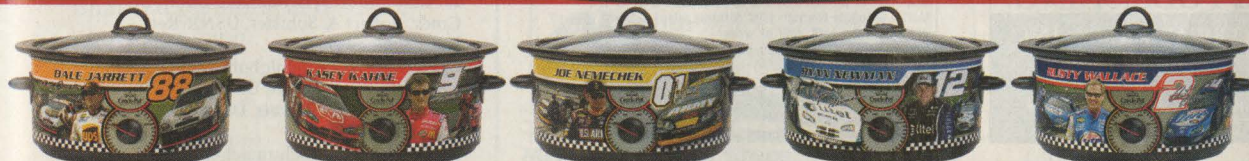
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**Georgia**, FORSCOM/Fort McPherson, Dec. 2, 10 a.m., Col. Jerry Crews, USA-Ret., *TOPS*

**Maryland**, NAS Patuxent River, officers club, Crow's Nest, Dec. 5, 9 a.m., Col. Jerry Crews, USA-Ret., *TOPS*

**Maryland**, NAS Patuxent River, Dec. 5, former Army Capt. Phil Dyer, *Benefits Information Department (BID)*

**Nevada**, Nellis AFB, base theater, Dec. 5, 9 a.m., Col. Dan Koslov, USAF-Ret., *TOPS*

**Nevada**, NAS Fallon, base theater, Dec. 6, 9 a.m., Col. Dan Koslov, USAF-Ret., *TOPS*

**Utah**, Hill AFB, family support center, building 150, Dec. 7, 9 a.m., Col. Dan Koslov, USAF-Ret., *TOPS*

**Virginia**, Arlington, Henderson Hall, Dec. 6, former Army Capt. Phil Dyer, *BID*

**Virginia**, Fort Belvoir, Dec. 7, former Army Capt. Phil Dyer, *BID*

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Laben, Robert C., CPT (CA)  
Ladd, Charlie H., LTC (TX)  
Lady, James R., MAJ (FL)  
Laforge, Laviana L., 1LT (GA)  
Lewis, Martin E., LTC (AZ)  
Limpic, John, 1LT (MO)  
Livingston, Daniel, MAJ (FL)  
Lowery, John J., MAJ (CO)  
Lucas, Grover E., MAJ (WA)  
Lummis, Mason M., LTC (VA)  
MacDonald, George A., CPT (AL)  
Marchut, Chester E., COL (NH)  
Marshall, William D., MAJ (CA)  
McDonald, Lawrence F., CW4 (WA)  
McKie, James K., Jr., 1LT (CA)  
Michaels, Herman J., LTC (MD)

Mills, Francis B., COL (VA)  
Mooney, Louis K., 1LT (NJ)  
Moore, Franklin L., CW4 (TN)  
Munroe, Irving W., COL (VA)  
Murray, George W., CW3 (CT)  
Nafziger, Dale A., LTC (CA)  
Nichols, Howard V., LTC (UT)  
Nichols, Robert S., COL (MD)  
O'Meara, Andrew P., GEN (VA)  
Petras, Elias H., LTC (NY)  
Pickens, Robert G., MAJ (SC)  
Plotnick, Harold L., COL (NJ)  
Poche, Charles D., COL (LA)  
Price, Donald L., LTC (FL)  
Prysock, Jack V., COL (VA)  
Raber, Arthur D., COL (AZ)  
Ross, Archibald W., 1LT (FL)  
Roush, John W., MAJ (NC)  
Rowan, John V., Jr., COL (VA)  
Ryan, John M., CW3 (VA)  
Sanders, William O., Jr., LTC (CA)  
Scally, Anthony V., LTC (GA)  
Sellers, Haywood C., 1LT (FL)  
Sellin, Jack D., COL (KY)  
Shue, Michael D., MAJ (VA)  
Sigholtz, Robert H., COL (AZ)  
Simmington, Theodore, Jr., MAJ (MA)  
Skelton, Robert, COL (CA)  
Smith, James M., LTC (GA)  
Staelens, Joseph C., MAJ (AR)  
Stephens, Herschel B., COL (AZ)  
Stickles, Ronnie J., CW3 (OH)  
Stoneburner, John G., CW3 (OH)  
Swete, Richard W., CPT (CA)  
Theusch, Vernon M., MAJ (MN)  
Tyger, Louis E., CW4 (PA)  
Weinstein, Marvin S., LTC (CA)  
Williams, Cyrus L., COL (CT)  
Willis, Jean P., MAJ (AR)  
Wilson, Earl G., CW4 (FL)  
Wood, Clyde J., COL (AL)

## Marine Corps

Barber, Stewart C., LtCol (SC)  
Bateman, William E., Maj (CA)  
Blake, James L., LtCol (VA)  
Brown, George K., Lt (FL)  
Dillon, James W., Col (CA)  
Holt, Ralph P., Col (VA)  
Keith, Bruce E., Col (CA)  
Kooker, David L., Maj (CA)  
Lever, R.W., Maj (WA)  
McLennan, Kenneth, Gen (CA)  
Moore, William A., 1stLt (CA)  
Pennell, Guss H., Jr., Capt (NC)  
Perry, Samuel C., Capt (SC)  
Seaton, Baxter W., LtCol (VA)  
Shane, Harry J., Maj (NC)  
Walker, Anthony, Col (RI)  
Werbinski, Kenneth L., Maj (VA)  
Wolcott, John A., LtCol (FL)

## Navy

Andersen, Leonard H., LCDR (FL)  
Beuster, Richard A., CWO4 (CA)  
Blackstone, James L., WO (TX)  
Bland, Joe R., LCDR (CA)  
Bonnell, Theodore V., CDR (FL)  
Brower, Charles M., CAPT (VA)  
Brown, Edward J., CAPT (CA)

Burns, John C., LCDR (CA)  
Centonze, Nicholas A., CWO4 (FL)  
Clegg, John G.R., LTJG (CA)  
Colvin, F.N., CDR (NH)  
Combs, Martin F., CDR (CA)  
Conway, Clyde M., Jr., LCDR (SC)  
Davis, James R., LCDR (NC)  
Desmond, Ralph P., Jr., CAPT (VA)  
Dolan, William R., LCDR (AZ)  
Downey, Louis A., LCDR (MS)  
Duke, John M., Jr., CAPT (CA)  
Emerson, Jack M., CDR (GA)  
Fenstermaker, Roy E., CWO4 (FL)  
Galbreath, Robert S., LCDR (VA)  
Garver, Don G., CAPT (VA)  
Geiger, Robert E., LCDR (AR)  
Hambley, Louis C., CDR (CA)  
Hamilton, Kennard R., CDR (FL)  
Holmes, Gloria A., CDR (NH)  
Jennings, John L., LT (NC)  
Johnson, Walter H., LCDR (TN)  
Kangas, Robert T., LCDR (FL)  
Kendrick, Thomas F., CDR (WA)  
Koester, Donald H., LCDR (CO)  
Kuhns, Helen F., LTJG (TN)  
Lappin, Robinson, CAPT (WA)  
Lewis, Harry G., CDR (NC)  
McGee, Neale S., LCDR (TX)  
McGill, Samuel W.P., Jr., LCDR (CT)  
Mudge, James M., CWO4 (AZ)  
Nolan, John T., CDR (VA)  
Promersberger, Edward S., CAPT (FL)  
Purinton, David F., CAPT (ME)  
Reedy, Joseph S., LCDR (FL)  
Schmitt, George S., LCDR (NY)  
Sheldon, Robert E., Jr., CWO4 (RI)  
Sibold, Arthur P., Jr., CAPT (VA)  
Spalding, Joseph E., CAPT (FL)  
Venverloh, Dorothy J., LCDR (MO)

## Air Force

Anderson, Richard W., Maj (WA)  
Bates, Gordon D., Maj (TX)  
Bischofs, Hans, LtCol (FL)  
Bishop, Ira E., Maj (TX)  
Brady, Francis T., Col (VA)  
Brown, John H., Maj (OK)  
Brya, Edward N., BrigGen (SC)  
Chase, George W., Maj (NY)  
Clark, Robert W., Jr., Maj (VA)  
Clemens, John M., LtCol (VA)  
Coffey, Narvin W., LtCol (TX)  
Coghlan, John A., Sr., Capt (OR)  
Colvin, Robert A., Maj (MI)  
Cook, James L., Jr., Maj (TN)  
Davis, Ruby E., Jr., Col (SC)  
Dickinson, Edward L., LtCol (TN)  
Donaldson, Glenn H., LtCol (TX)  
Dunleavy, John D., LtCol (FL)  
Dyer, Kenneth L., Jr., LtCol (WA)  
Evans, Donald L., Col (CA)  
Falk, Neil R., LtCol (CA)  
Fisher, Orville H., Maj (MD)  
Forman, Wade K., LtCol (WV)  
Foster, Warren W., LtCol (CA)  
Garvin, Charles T., LtCol (MO)  
Gebhardt, Richard F., Maj (CO)  
Gerrity, Richard A., LtCol (NC)  
Gillis, Wilson, Col (HI)  
Granat, Cathleen J., Capt (OR)  
Gregory, Hugh R., Maj (AR)  
Hance, Richard E., WO1 (OH)

## Coast Guard

Cote, George E., CAPT (DE)

For submission information, see page 16.



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# Christmas Past

A little girl anxiously awaits her daddy's phone call. Their story may be 52 years old, but it is sure to strike a chord with military families who are separated this holiday season.

**M**y husband, an Army colonel known to all as Smitty, spent many years in the European theater during World War II. Shortly after he returned home, we were married. Little did we realize the Korean War was on the horizon.

When he received orders for Korea a few years later, our impending separation would be even more difficult because by that time we had a toddler. The weeks before my husband left for Korea, he spent every precious moment creating memories with our daughter, Tracey.

By the time Christmas rolled around, I was learning to cope without my husband, as unpleasant as that was. Staying true to tradition, I attempted to put up our Christmas tree. Although lopsided, it would do just fine. I was learning.

Back in those days, as many might remember, there were nowhere near as many options for long-distance communication as there are today. When special holidays were near, arrangements had to be made well ahead of time for phone calls to be placed. My husband made such arrangements to place a holiday phone call to us. He was so excited about the prospect of hearing his little girl's voice on the phone, as I had told him in letters how she talked nonstop. Tracey was equally excited to talk to her daddy.

The big moment arrived. Tracey and I had practiced the phone call on the toy telephone. I was sure she was ready. I know I was! The phone rang with instruc-

tions from the overseas operator. There stood our precious daughter all dressed up and wearing her favorite shoes — black patent leather Mary Janes. She was convinced that Daddy would be able to see her. She held the phone to her ear and with the other hand clutched her favorite doll, a Raggedy Ann named Aggie. I waited to hear what she had to say to her daddy, who was so far away. But the only response to his voice was frequent nods, smiles, and her wide eyes getting bigger and bigger. When it was finally my turn on the phone, we had only a few seconds, and I spent them convincing my husband that our daughter actually could speak. Of course after the call, Tracey told anyone who would listen about her conversation with Daddy.

Wartime separations are never easy, but I am pleased that young military families today at least have the advantage of modern technology to stay better connected. My heart goes out to all of them this holiday season. *MO*

— **Violet Montgomery Smith** is the widow of Col. Francis J. Smith Jr., USA. She is a member of MOAA's Auxiliary Member Advisory Committee. In the summer of 1954, following that Christmas phone call, the family was reunited in Okinawa, Japan, where they settled for the next few years. For submission information, see page 16.



ILLUSTRATION: ELWOOD SMITH

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