



# Mississippi Coast Military Officers Association

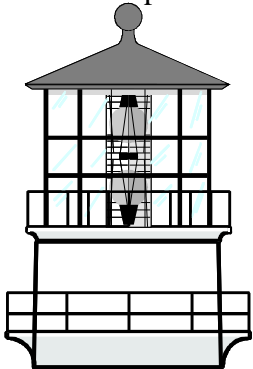
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[www.MCMOA.org](http://www.MCMOA.org)

## October 2007

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*The Mississippi Coast Military Officers Association meets on the second Wednesday of each month at the Katrina Kantina located at the Keesler Marina. The Board meets at 10:15 and is normally followed by an informal luncheon and business meeting at 12:00. Any member is invited and encouraged to attend the Board meetings.*

## No Luncheon Meeting on 11 October

Due to the 25 October Annual MOAA cookout at the Keesler Marina Pavilion, there **will not** be a Luncheon Meeting at the Keesler Katrina on 11 October. We are looking forward to some great food being cooked by LT Carson and Maj Neel. We are looking for some great weather and super fellowship with friends and guests.

### September Guest Speaker: Brig Gen Robb

We were very fortunate to have as our September Guest Speaker one of the newest members of the senior management team on Keesler AFB, Brig Gen Robb the new Hospital Center Commander. Gen Robb comes to Keesler from McDill AFB, FL where he was the US Central Command, Command Surgeon. As a Command Surgeon he was actively involved in developing policies on providing medical service to troops actively involved in the Global War on Terror. He described the scope of hospital responsibilities and the geographic area it supports. He talked about a Medical Readiness Platform which has an impact on many of us in getting medical appointments. This led to a discussion on how you manage to keep your head above water while managing medical support from the battlefield to the Veteran's Administration. Next we heard about some of the on going and innovative efforts in graduate medical education. He talked about how some of the metrics must be addressed due to the environment we live in and why the relationship with the University of Mississippi is critical to meeting the goals established by accreditation agencies. Likewise the constrained medical center resources dictate we develop improved interoperability between the Air Force and the Veteran's Administration. He cited two computer systems being developed for medical records as an area where improvements are on the way. He said the medical system is working to blend/bridge the system--we are pushing some information now but the entire system will not talk with each other. He talked About the impact of the BRAC process and that change is on the way. There is going to have to be a considerable amount of thinking "outside of the box" if our medical providers are able to meet the needs of the active duty force and the retired community. It was a very enlightening presentation and we look forward to a future briefing on the future military healthcare system. We truly appreciate him taking time out of a busy schedule to give our group more insight into one of our top benefits as members of the military community--both active duty and retired.

### Upcoming Guest Speakers

Our Guest Speaker for the November Meeting will be the Director of the National Museum of Naval Aviation in Pensacola, FL--Capt Rassmussen. You can get some great pictures and information on this Museum at [WWW.NavalAviationMuseum.org](http://WWW.NavalAviationMuseum.org)

### Holiday Meetings

The holidays are just around the corner and you need to start thinking about that special evening out with your spouse or significant other. Last year's Christmas get together was a great time to interact with friends and fellow MOAA members. Don't let the time get away from you and miss out on one of our truly memorable meetings

### Membership

One of the results of our recent series of great guest speakers has been the ability to gain some new members and see the return of some seasoned veterans. Since the Senator Lott meeting we have gained three members: Major Dorothy E Sullivan (USAF), Lt Col Wallace T Downs (USAF), and Lt Col Harold M. Chadwick (USA).

### Medicare, TRICARE Fixes Delayed

Earlier this year, the House passed the Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act, which, in addition to increasing coverage of lower-income children under Medicaid, would have reversed the 9.9% cut in Medicare/TRICARE payments to providers scheduled to take effect on Jan. 1 under current law. Instead, the bill proposed modest increases in doctor payments for 2008 and 2009.

This is a crucial issue, both for the elderly and for all military beneficiaries, since Medicare is one of the lowest-paying plans in America and TRICARE payments are tied to Medicare's. Today's payment rates are about what they were in 2001, while doctors' costs have risen significantly over the last 6 years. If payments are cut further, it will only lead more doctors to refuse to see Medicare and TRICARE patients.

We (MOAA) had hoped that the children's health bill would be a vehicle for quick action on Medicare/TRICARE payments. Unfortunately, that didn't pan out.

The Senate equivalent bill did not include the Medicare/TRICARE payment fix, and congressional leaders decided to drop that provision in the interest of passing a "clean" bill on children's health coverage.

### New Law Affects Employer TRICARE Plans

Many military retirees who work for defense contractors, airlines, and certain state governments are getting letters from their employers that their health coverage options will change as of Jan 1. In many cases, it's a notice that the employer will no longer be able to offer a TRICARE supplement as one of its health plan options. That's because a provision in last year's Defense Authorization Act (FY2007) bars civilian employers from offering their employees incentives to use TRICARE rather than the company's normal health plan. It specifically bars offering employees a TRICARE supplement.

Congress has no problem with retirees choosing TRICARE on their own initiative, since they earned the right to the TRICARE benefit through their service. But the Defense Department and Congress developed extensive evidence that many employers - including several state governments - have been consciously working to shift their health care costs to TRICARE, sending letters to TRICARE-eligible employees urging them to use TRICARE rather than the employer's plan. And tens of thousands of TRICARE-eligibles across the country have taken up those offers in recent years.

This was part of the reason that the Defense Department proposed raising fees for TRICARE enrollees by up to \$1,000 a year - to help stem the tide of people opting out of employer-based plans. So far, Congress has agreed with MOAA that imposing steep TRICARE fee hikes isn't the appropriate reaction. But the Armed Services Committees took a dim view of employers who seek to cut their costs at TRICARE's expense, and changed the law to try to discourage that behavior.

Initially, the law was interpreted as barring any reimbursement that could be used to cover TRICARE expenses. That strict interpretation would have barred TRICARE-eligibles from participating in company-sponsored cafeteria plans (under which employees can receive a specified amount of cash that can be used to purchase coverage) or plans that pay a flat monthly amount to any employee who elects to use alternative coverage, whether it's TRICARE or a spouse's employer plan.

At MOAA's urging, the Committees included language indicating that these kinds of initiatives should not be barred because they are not specifically aimed at TRICARE. But it's hard to argue that a TRICARE supplement isn't TRICARE-specific. So what can TRICARE-eligibles do if they get a letter notifying them that their employer is terminating a company-offered TRICARE supplement?

The first option is to ask the employer to offer a flat-rate payment in lieu of the supplement. If the company was willing to pay the cost of a supplement, one would think they'd be willing to pay up to the cash equivalent. But to be allowed under the new law, the payment needs to be non-TRICARE-specific. That is, it should be the same amount for an employee who chooses TRICARE as it is for an employee who chooses coverage under a spouse's employer plan. Many employers already offer such cash payment plans; it's just a matter of including TRICARE-eligibles in them. Another alternative is to enroll in TRICARE Prime, if Prime is available in your area.

## Keesler Change of Command

Brig Gen Paul Capasso, 81st Training Wing Commander and a strong supporter of the Mississippi Coast Military Officers Association relinquished command of the Wing to Col Gregory Touhil on Tuesday, 2 October. Gen Capasso arrived at Keesler in November of 2005 just after Hurricane Katrina and provided strong leadership during the recovery phase of our nation's worst natural disaster. His new assignment is Director of Command, Control, Communications and Computer Systems for U.S. Africa Command and will be based in Stuttgart, Germany. It is with a degree of sadness that we see Gen Capasso and his lovely wife depart Keesler and the Mississippi Gulf Coast. He has been a leader in the local community as well as holding down a very tough job in a most demanding period of time. We wish him well in his new assignment (a lovely place to serve) and look forward to an equally close relationship with Col Touhill as he continues the excellent work of Gen Capasso.

## KATRINA KANTINA (377-2219)

Lots of special things going on at the Kantina this month including a club membership campaign kick-off Oct. 3, Oktoberfest Oct. 25, and a Halloween Party Oct. 31. Lunch will be served 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. **Mondays**, beginning Oct. 1 with red beans and rice, sausage and tossed salad, rolls and butter. Cost is \$6 for members, \$8 for non members. Monday the 15th will feature fried catfish, the 22nd will be Spaghetti and meat sauce, corn, tossed salad, rolls and butter. The 29th's menu is fried or grilled chicken with mashed potatoes, green beans, salad, rolls and butter. The Kantina has been a strong supporter of our MOAA chapter and you can help them by taking advantage of these specials and save a couple of dollars in the process. Once again, this is Monday's only and will not impact our monthly MOAA meeting at the Kantina.

## Pentagon Plans to Drop ID Card SSAN

It will take a few years, but the Pentagon has told Congress it plans to remove Social Security numbers from military ID cards to help protect the personal data of servicemembers, retirees and their families.

## 2008 Chapter Officer Nominations

Our Chapter's President and Board of Directors at their September meeting designated LTC Fred Dunaway as the chairman of the 2007 nominating committee. The results of the Committee's deliberations are contained in the following listings. They represent the committee's recommendations for the slate of officers and directors for the Mississippi Coast Military Officers Association (MCMOA) during calendar year 2008. **In addition, nominations for any office may be made from the floor.**

### OFFICERS

**President: Maj Lucy Welch**

**First Vice President: CDR Bob Carson**

**Second Vice President: Maj Jeff Neel**

**Secretary/Treasurer: LTC Bob Snyder**

### DIRECTORS

**MG James Garner, COL Phyllis Luttman**

**COL Harvey Nixon, CDR Dick Hansen**

**MAJ Melvin Irving**

Due to the 25 October "Cook Out", the **NEXT** general membership meeting will be held on Wednesday, 14 November, at the Katrina Kantina located in the main building at the Keesler Marina. The Board will meet at 10:15 and the regular meeting will begin at 12:00.

**PLEASE ATTEND** this important meeting and participate in electing your chapter leadership for **2008**.

## Retiree Activities Update

This was a relatively quiet month in the Retiree Activities area but one reminder is appropriate. In the event any retiree dies, action should be taken to immediately notify the Defense Finance Accounting Service (DFAS), US Military Retirement Pay, P.O. Box 7130, London Ky 40742-7130 (Phone: 1-800-321-1080 or commercial (216) 522-5534/5955. The pay of the retiree ends when they die but will continue to accrue until DFAS is notified.

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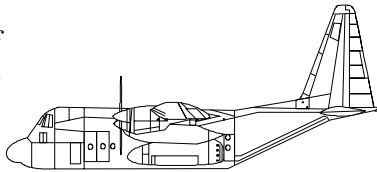
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**October 2007**

*The Newsletter is published monthly for members and friends of the Mississippi Coast Military Officers Association. It aims to broaden their awareness and understanding of events and issues relevant to military officers in this area.*

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Cookout Oct 25th in lieu of Monthly Luncheon meeting

**Chapter Officers for 2007**

**President** .....Maj Lucy Welch (867-0893)      **2nd Vice President** .....Maj Jeff Neel (896-6588)  
**1st Vice President** ..LT Bob Carson (388-7511)      **Secretary/Treasurer** ....Lt Col Bob Snyder (388-9084)

**Past Presidents**

CAPT Clark Wakefield - *President Emeritus*

Col. Matthew Thompson	Lt. Col. Carl Remley	Lt. Col. Dean Todd	Maj. Gen. Leo Jones
Lt. Col. Hollie Wilkes	Lt. Gen Bryan Shotts	Lt. Col. Sid Marcus	Lt. Col. Fred Dunaway
Lt.Col. Dick Wilson			CDR Dick Hansen

**Directors**

Maj. Gen. James Garner - Col. Phyllis Luttman - Col. Harvey Nixon  
 CDR Dick Hansen - Maj. Joseph Littlepage

**Committee Chairs**

<b>CBC Council</b> .....	CAPT Clark Wakefield	<b>Medical Center</b> .....	Col. Phyllis Luttman
<b>Chaplain</b> .....	Col. Joe Peck	<b>Retiree Activities</b> .....	Lt. Col. Yvonne Dougherty
<b>Commissary &amp; BX</b> ...	Col. Phyllis Luttman	<b>Membership</b> .....	Lt. Col. Bob Snyder
<b>Dinner Seating</b> .....	Mrs. Gloria Skillestad	<b>Newsletter</b> .....	Col. Harvey Nixon
<b>Club Representative</b>	Lt. Col. Dick Wilson	<b>Personal Affairs</b> .....	Maj. Jeff Neel
<b>Legal Council</b> .....	Lt. Col. Russell Thompson	<b>Programs</b> .....	LT Bob Carson
<b>Legislative</b> .....	Lt. Col. Fred Dunaway	<b>ROTC</b> .....	Lt. Col. Tom Varble
<b>Marina</b> .....	Maj. Glenn Bremenkamp	<b>Scholarships</b> .....	CW4 Ray Skillestad
		<b>Webmaster</b> .....	CDR Ron Miller