

Grand Strand Chapter

Military Officers Association of America



Nov Dec 2020

The Coastal Tide

www.grandstrandmoaa.org



President's Letter by Jim Albert

Despite the pandemic, our chapter continued to meet its mission of supporting distressed veterans, families and encouraging the next generation of leaders in ROTC and Junior ROTC. Not only did we continue to give out scholarships, but we increased them. Not only did we host an annual Stand Down for homeless veterans, but we took it on the road and did four Stand Downs across the region helping over 200 veterans, including over 50 native American veterans, with essential services, food and clothing – the only chapter in the country to do so.

And, not only did we continue to encourage veteran career advancement, but, with the sharp increase in unemployment across our region, we established a new vocational job training program that is free to all veterans who wish to change careers and learn a new marketable skill. Finally, we established a new program to identify and claim the remains of veterans, who have no family, to give them a well-deserved burial, with honors, at national cemeteries across the state. At the same time, we continued to offer informative dinners and luncheons to our members each month, when allowed by the Governor.

These efforts, and more, led to a tripling of the amount of grants we received this year to assist distressed veterans. It also helped the chapter receive several top recognition awards by national MOAA, one of only three chapters in the country to do so. This, in turn, helped us maintain our membership level at 132, the same number we started the year with.

Now it's time to build on these successes in 2021. And as we end 2020 I want to thank this year's Officers and Board of Directors for their outstanding leadership and efforts, especially Kelly Sharbel for his award winning newsletters and Dave Townsend for his record breaking golf tournament fundraisers. Thank you for your service to others. It was a privilege to serve with you. As Kelly and Dave move off the Board, I need others to pick up the banner. If you can help, please let me know.

Take care everyone, happy holidays and stay safe.

James R. Albert, LtCol, USAF (retired)

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Never Stop Serving

Mark Your Calendar

EDITORS NOTE: Unanticipated schedule changes will be announced via email and Grand Strand MOAA website.

- Dec 25 Christmas
- Jan 1 New Years Day
- Jan 12 Chapter Dinner Meeting, Swear in new Officers; Speaker: Julia Salinas of Goodwill Industries to talk about job training opportunities
- Jan 18 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (observed)
- Jan 20 Presidential Inauguration
- Feb 9 Chapter Dinner Meeting, Speaker: Waccamaw Tribal Chief Hatcher
- Feb 14 Valentines Day
- Feb 15 President's Day
- Feb 16 Mardi Gras
- Feb 17 Ash Wednesday
- Feb 27 Major League Baseball Spring training scheduled to begin
- Mar 9 Chapter Dinner Meeting, Speaker: Lee Brockington Hobcaw Barony
- Mar 17 St. Patrick's Day
- Apr 1 MLB Season scheduled to start

Editor's Note: This is the last issue of The Coastal Tide I will edit. The 5 Harris Communication Awards we have won during my tenure as Editor would not have been possible without the contributions of many Board members who gave generously of their time to submitting informative articles. Thanks to all of you for your contributions.



Chaplain's Corner by Greg Hill



Sleigh bells ring, are you listening, in the lane, snow is glistening. A beautiful sight, we're happy tonight, walking in a winter wonderland. Gone away is the bluebird, here to stay is a new bird. He sings a love song, as we go along, walking in a winter wonderland (Felix Bernard, 1934). While the Grand Strand is not known for its snow and cold, we can all relate to the joys of the holidays and the promise of a New Year. May we join together in prayer for those we hold close, for our Nation, our veterans and their families, and for all those deployed around the world and their family members. I personally wish each of you joy, peace, love, strength, health and safe travels over this holiday season.

My contact information is: Chaplain Greg Hill, 843.231.4507 or ghill54808@aol.com.

Officers for 2021

Pursuant to the Chapter Constitution and By Laws, Chapter officers for 2021 will be sworn in at the January dinner meeting. Those elected officers are:

- President: Jim Albert
- First Vice President — Truman Parmelee
- Second Vice-President — Jim Offutt
- Treasurer — Tony Prince
- Secretary — Peggy DeVivo

Changes in appointed members of the Board of Directors will be announced at a later date.

Financial Report by Tony Prince



Chapter finances have remained healthy as we have entered the fall. In addition to revenue from dinners and dues, we are the recipients of generous donations and grants for use in our outreach and scholarship programs. On the expense side, your funds from grants have been spent to support veterans in need, individually and through the mobile Stand Downs we have helped organize. More information on them can be found on pages 3-4. Our financial balances as of November 30 are as follows:

Operating Balance	\$16,959.62
Grants Balance	\$10,185.73
Reserve	\$15,045.77

Grand Strand MOAA Outreach: Innovation and Adaptability

By Truman Parmelee, 1st Vice-President, Veterans Outreach

The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic has afforded the Grand Strand Chapter opportunities to innovate and expand its veterans outreach programs, making them more accessible, effective, and efficient while adhering to our mission to support pre-active duty and active duty military personnel, and veterans.

Our Traditional Programs

Dean Brown has continued to lead the Chapter's efforts to provide financial assistance and leadership awards for 17 South Carolina Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) programs in our area. Hans Duerr has continued to spearhead our competitive scholarship program to support JROTC cadets attending college. Greg Youngman continues to provide liaison and direct Chapter support for the Coastal Carolina University Army ROTC program, including the annual Robert Hawkins Leadership Award.

The New Mobile Stand Down

Many organizations would be content to have such robust programs, but this year, through the leadership of President Jim Albert, 1st Vice President Truman Parmelee, and with the support of the Board of Directors, the Chapter went even further. When cancellation of our premier flagship activity, Veterans Stand Down, was being considered, organizers including local US Department of Veterans Affairs officials Chris Aranda and Scott Perez, the East Carolina Housing Organization (ECHO), Horry Georgetown Technical College, Friendship Place, and Palmetto Goodwill developed a new "Mobile Stand Down" model. Unlike previous years, the mobile version of Stand Down required veterans to pass through a series of portable stops to acquire basic needs like blankets, non perishable food and Food Lion food cards, boots, sleeping bags, winter clothing, etc.

It worked so well in Myrtle Beach, organizers took the new model on the road, holding similar Stand Downs at the Waccamaw Tribal Grounds in Aynor, Georgetown, and Loris.



MOAA Partners supported the Mobile Stand Down in Aynor.



Volunteers helped unload and distribute materials for veterans in need.

More Veterans Assisted

In 2020, these Mobile Stand Downs served 225 veterans in need, including 25 homeless veterans, 53 Native American veterans, and 85 minority veterans. About \$8,000 in Food Lion food cards were distributed and vouchers were issued for 42 medical and 4 legal appointments. Moreover, 26 homeless veterans were put in touch with ECHO and HUD/VASH to work on meeting their housing needs, and 9 other veterans received assistance with VA claims. 18 other Veterans requested employment assistance and vocational training and are currently working with Palmetto Goodwill, HGTC, and Friendship Place for placement in job training classes scheduled to start in the first quarter 2021.

In the seven years Stand Down has been held, military surplus items valued at over \$1M has been acquired from the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) in support of homeless veterans in the Myrtle Beach and surrounding areas.

Enhancing Veterans Marketable Skills

The efforts of our Chapter and our partners in the communities we serve before go beyond supporting veterans with their immediate needs to changing veterans' lives through programs to enhance skills critical to success in today's labor market.

(continued on page 4)

Grand Strand MOAA Outreach

(Continued from page 3)

For example, while collecting registration information at the Mobile Stand Down in Aynor, Grand Strand MOAA identified critical Native American needs that included veterans who lack a high school diploma or GED. The Chapter is now working with the Horry County Board of Education GED program to enroll those who want a GED and with Palmetto Goodwill to enroll those who want a high school diploma through their on-line program with Trident Tech. Palmetto Goodwill will also provide those Native American veterans with personal computers to help them complete their diplomas. Two Native American veterans have already successfully completed Heavy Equipment Operator training and received \$5,000 grant to complete the course.



Establishing Computer Centers

Grand Strand Chapter isn't stopping there. Today's labor market requires skills critical in the on-line environment. Consequently, we are working to establish computer centers on the Waccamaw Tribal Grounds, the ECHO housing facility in Myrtle Beach, and in Georgetown to provide veterans with on-line access to educational institutions such as HGTC. These centers will establish a Grand Strand Community Intra-Network



to enhance veteran education and skills which will lead to better qualified veterans and better job opportunities. Currently 16 veterans are in the queue for education and training scheduled to start in the first quarter of 2021.

Caring for Veterans in State Veterans Homes

In the midst of the pandemic, our Chapter commitment to reaching out and supporting veterans gave us a new opportunity. We partnered with the Charleston and Hilton Head MOAA chapters to fund acquisition of two unique bicycles that allowed veterans at the Walterboro, SC Veterans Home to enjoy bicycle rides. Wheel chairs are attached to the front part of the bike with a traditional bike seat in the rear where a staff member provides peddling to propel the bike. Disabled veterans who had rides enjoyed the bikes and the ability to get out and take a ride.

Rev. Rutledge and other Low Country Veterans Group members join Chapter President Jim Albert at the Georgetown Stand Down.

All of the aforementioned programs complement our traditional daily support to area veterans where numerous daily emergencies occur. We have provided funding for individual veteran housing repairs, mortgage assistance payments, ramps and porches for amputee veterans, car payments, utility bills, medical bills, and other veteran related areas. We are proud to partner with numerous local and national groups in assisting veterans in addition to those already mentioned. They include the Low Country Veterans Group, Veterans Café, Blue Star Mothers, Quilts of Valor, the Medal of Honor Memorial and Patriots Point in Charleston, Friendship Place in Georgetown. Our Chapter programs would not be possible without the partnerships and financial support of these and a number of other organizations. They are listed on page 5.

Grand Strand MOAA anticipates that 2021 will be busy as well. Each and every member of the Chapter can be proud of what we have accomplished, and every Chapter member is invited to join us in whatever capacity you choose to support our efforts. Contact Chapter President Jim Albert or Truman Parmele, our First Vice-President for Veterans Outreach, to add your name to those participating in our activities.

Salute

To all of our partners and benefactors who work with us or who provide the funds needed to carry out our mission to support veterans. Their support has been critical to the success of our programs.



Partners

HUD/Veterans Administration Supported Housing Veterans Center (Myrtle Beach)
East Carolina Housing Organization
Low Country Veterans Group
Horry Georgetown Technical College
Waccamaw Native American Tribe
Palmetto Goodwill
Food Lion
Friendship Place

Benefactors

AARP Grant (\$10,000)
MOAA Outreach Grant (\$5,000)
MOAA COVID-19 Grand (\$5,000)
Home 4 Heroes Grant (\$5,000)
MOAA COVID Family Grant (\$2,500)
Women Who Care (\$2,500)
Providing Hope VA (\$1,900)
Tidelands Health (\$1,000)
Grand Strand Medical (\$500)
Grand Dunes Social Club (\$375)

And a Bravo Zulu

To our own intrepid Golf Chairman Dave Townsend whose leadership of the golf committee has produced record breaking revenues that are used to support JROTC, scholarships, and the ROTC unit at Coastal Carolina University. Dave has served as Chapter president and Chapter secretary as well heading up the golf tournament. His truly unselfish gifts of time and talent demanded Chapter recognition, so he was appropriately honored at our December dinner meeting. Thanks, Dave, for all of your hard work, and wife Gail, for sharing him with us for the untold number of hours he devoted to these tasks.



Toys for Tots



Roger Pilcher reports that the Grand Strand Chapter donated 150 toys for Toys for Tots at the December dinner meeting. The Chapter also purchased Food Lion meals and food cards for distribution to those in need. The need is expected to be higher this year than last due to the economic challenges resulting from the pandemic. Thanks to all who generously donated to this annual col-





South Carolina Council of Chapters President Michael Akey was the guest speaker at the November luncheon meeting held at Maggie D's. He took the time to visit with Second Vice-President Peggy DeVivo and stalwart surviving spouse Suzi Albright.

Chapter member Tracey Miller, Secretary Dave Townsend, and Chapter President Jim Albert visited with MG Akey before the luncheon meeting at Maggi D's.



Carolina Forest High School music teacher led the school's string quartet in spreading Christmas cheer at the Chapter's annual Christmas music program at the year's final dinner meeting held at Prestwick

The Chapter closed out 2020 by partnering with other veteran organizations to host a mobile stand down in Loris for the first time.



New Tricare Enrollment Fees

(Courtesy of National MOAA)

New TRICARE Select enrollment fees take effect in 2021 – a first for retirees who joined the military prior to 2018 and their families. Here’s what you should know about the new fees, and how you can ensure your medical benefit continues without interruption.

Q Does this apply to TRICARE for Life or TRICARE Prime beneficiaries? No. Only TRICARE Select retiree beneficiaries in Group A – those whose sponsor entered service before Jan. 1, 2018 – must pay the new fees beginning Jan. 1, 2021.

Q. How much are the fees? Annual enrollment fees are \$150 for an individual or \$300 for a family. The Select enrollment fee will be billed monthly at \$12.50/month for individual and \$25/month for family coverage.

Q. Are any TRICARE Select Group A beneficiaries exempt from the fees? Yes. Members of following groups won’t pay the new fees: Active duty family members, survivors, medically retired beneficiaries, or their family members. **Is anything else changing about TRICARE Select?** Yes. As of Jan. 1, 2021, the catastrophic cap for TRICARE Select retiree Group A beneficiaries will increase from \$3,000 to \$3,500. Learn more about how TRICARE catastrophic caps work here.

Q. Why are these fees being charged now? The debate took place in 2016, with MOAA and other groups successfully fighting proposals during the FY 2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) process that would’ve resulted in massive upticks in fees and beneficiary cost shares. Plans called for enrollment fees up to \$900 for some beneficiaries, and even an annual TRICARE for Life enrollment fee of up to \$632. Instead, the NDAA included the more modest fees that are now being implemented. MOAA has continued to fight further fee increases, proposals for which began in rapid fashion after the 2017 NDAA took effect.

Q. How do I pay the fees? If you receive retirement or other pay from a military pay center, you’ll have the fees taken out of that payment. If not, you’ll be asked to set up a recurring payment from a credit or debit card, or via an electronic funds transfer (EFT) from your U.S. bank account. You should receive notification regarding the fees from TRICARE later this summer, per the TRICARE website.

Q. What if I don’t pay the fees? You’ll be disenrolled from TRICARE, and you’ll have 90 days from your paid-through date to contact your regional contractor and request reinstatement. Any care you receive would have to come at a military treatment facility on a space-available basis.

Q. What is MOAA doing to help beneficiaries? Along with getting the word out on the new fee structure, MOAA is pushing Congress and DoD to establish a longer grace period so that no beneficiary will lose coverage in 2021 because they don’t pay their fees.

Q. What about TRICARE Select Group B members? Group B sponsors entered service on or after Jan. 1, 2018. Group B retirees are currently a small group of medical retirees (and their family members). These beneficiaries will continue to pay annual enrollment fees – for 2020, Group B retiree enrollment fees for Select are \$471 for an individual or \$942 for a family. Group B enrollment fees are increased every year by the military retirement cost of living adjustment. Unlike Group A, Group B medical retirees and their families are not exempt from enrollment fees.

For more information on issues MOAA is working go to <https://takeaction.moaa.org/moaa/>

Now and Always
We’ll be There.



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Grand Strand Chapter MOAA: ___ Application/Renewal ___ Change of address /contact info

Chapter Annual dues: \$20.00 for regular membership or \$50 For 3 year membership.

For NEW MEMBERS: \$20 1st Quarter; \$15, 2nd Quarter; \$10, 3rd Quarter; \$20, 4th Quarter (Good for Following Year).

You may pay by credit card on line at www.grandstrandmoaa.org

Otherwise, please make check payable to: "Grand Strand MOAA". Mail to: MOAA Grand Strand Chapter, P.O. Box 15842, Surfside Beach, SC 29587.

Last name _____ First name _____ MI _____

DOB _____ Rank _____ Service _____ Spouse's name _____

Street _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home phone _____ Cell phone _____

Email address (please print clearly !!) _____

Are you a member of National MOAA? ___ If yes, please provide membership number: _____

Status: _ Retired _ Active _ Reserve _ National Guard _ State Guard _ Former Officer _ Auxiliary _ ROTC _ JROTC

{My signature below verifies that the above information may be shared in a Members Only Directory and that I am eligible for MOAA Chapter membership.}

Amount: \$ _____ Check ___ Cash ___ For year(s) _____ Signature _____

Additional amount (donation) for this year's scholarship awards: \$ _____

Current employment (optional): _____

Professional skills (optional): _____

If Auxiliary member or applicant, please indicate your spouse's full name, military service affiliation, rank, and current status: _____

Interested in a Chapter leadership/committee position? If yes, what? _____ (continue on reverse)

MOAA Mission/Purpose: To foster fraternal relations (and mutual support) among retired, active duty, and former officers of the uniformed services and their National Guard and Reserve counterparts, ROTC cadets, their families and survivors; Assist community organizations that support service members and veterans and their families; to provide funds for college scholarships for area high school seniors (normally JROTC students); conduct fund-raising to support other service member and veterans' programs (e.g. Wounded Warrior visits); provide annual MOAA leadership awards to graduating cadets in all area high school approved/active JROTC programs; participate, collaboratively, in coastal community events and activities, as priorities and resources permit; Maintain a proactive chapter affairs program that supports members during health and other family emergencies; promote the aims and objectives of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA); and, the aims and objectives of the SC MOAA Council of Chapters. MOAA and its affiliated Chapters and Councils are non-partisan.