



President's Message

First let me thank Bernie Eveler for putting together a high quality newsletter for the Low Country Chapter. **THANKS BERNIE!**

As you can see, we have been an active chapter and our very own honorary member Brad McDonald has provided quite a bit of coverage in his paper "DUDE". He has graciously granted us reprint authority for our newsletter. The website to read his full paper is www.dudesc.com

Throughout this year we will continue to provide local professionals as guest speakers to our chapter. We will also be publishing and distributing numerous materials for our members to review. Our focus is to educate and inform you on the importance of the military rights/benefits that we have earned as veterans and to make our voice heard to protect these earned benefits. This educational process will focus in two areas: the currently serving active duty officer and the retired member.

Our conduit for this information will be through our website at www.lcmoaa.org, through email messages and MOAA national materials distributed at our quarterly meetings. We plan to use electronic means in order to minimize administrative costs and keep our dues to a reasonable amount. If you have an email change contact us at lcmoaa@gmail.com with an update.

For those new to the chapter you'll find that we have achieved quite a bit in the past several years including many messages to congress respect-

fully voicing our opinions on a myriad of subjects. One of my goals as your new president is to engage on a more frequent basis with our state senators and representatives. The ability to push a unified message as Low Country MOAA members along with the other 11 SC MOAA chapters is "one powerful South Carolina voice".

We have had some recent success in the legislative front, and although the exemption for military retired pay did not succeed this year our confidence is very high for next year's push.

We need you to be engaged and involved with the Low Country chapter, allowing you to gain the most from your relationship with us. We always need volunteers to serve on the board of directors, such as lending a hand at a show the flag event, or to take the reins as a project officer for one of our fund raising events. Our current needs are for a 1st Vice President to serve on the BOD, and a member to assist in our Wreaths across America fund drive as a project assistant. Please feel free to drop me an email concerning either position at mdakey@yahoo.com or call me (413-345-1524) to discuss ways to be an active member of the chapter. My promise to you - I will tailor your availability to the task and not ask for a multi-year commitment. If your time is limited and you are unable to ac-

tively serve, I'd ask you to take the time to contact your representatives in Washington or Columbia when we push out a legislative alert message.

We promise to make this a quick and efficient method to pass the message, either through the CAPWIZ portal of national, or via a composed email message/letter to Columbia. This is what active membership is all about. MOAA's greatest mission is to fight for the men and women who protect this nation, retirees and their families, and the widows of the fallen.

One of our initiatives this year was to add a Personal Affairs committee chaired by Jim Travis. Jim has gathered quite a bit of infor-

(President; Continued on page 2)

Inside

- Sound Off.....2
- JROTC Award.....4
- MAY DAY!.....5
- VCCOB.....8
- Lowcountry Potpourri....9
- Overheard in the Club...10
- Editor's Bio...11



(President; Continued from page 1)

mation and in turn we have electronically passed it along to the membership. MOAA National has an extensive electronic library as well that can be accessed through www.moaa.org under the publications tab. I'd be remiss by not asking you to spread the Low Country MOAA word and help us in increasing our membership. We are over 150 members strong and our goal in 2015, our 50th year of service is 50 new members. The best means of recruiting is through personal interac-

tion, inviting the potential new member to a luncheon or passing along contact information to lcmoaa@gmail.com.

In closing thanks for being a member of the chapter. We have a busy year ahead with the chapter celebrating its 50th Anniversary. We are cohosting the state biennial conference in Beaufort October 9th – 11th with the Columbia Chapter who is also celebrating its 50th. Guest speakers

include VADM Norb Ryan, MOAA CEO/President and SC Congressman Joe Wilson. We are requesting **early** registration, however no later than September 25th, in order to assist the planning committee. If you have misplaced the registration sheet drop us a short email to lcmoaa@gmail.com. We are looking for maximum participation from the Chapter. The event is shaping up to be a wonderful weekend and a great way to socialize with other MOAA members throughout the state.

Fellow Low Country Chapter members,

We have reason to be pleased with bills that passed with MOAA backing during the past SC legislative session. Some of the legislation is not only important for the welfare of military members and dependent families, but contributes to our national security, as the issues addressed have force readiness implications.

Here's a thumbnail of military-friendly bills that were passed: 1) extends a property tax exemption for vehicle of disabled vet's surviving spouse; 2) establishes in-state tuition while a vet lives in SC; 3) facilitates overseas voting; 4) puts in place protocols to facilitate parents' custody and visitation despite deployment of one parent; 5) establishes a committee selected by legislature, governor and AG to study state and local veterans' issues and recommend legislation; 6) enhances reemployment rights for National Guard members; 7) improves reporting of child abuse and ne-

glect when children of active duty members are involved.

Nevertheless, there was one priority issue not acted upon by the Senate that deserves priority attention and passage in January: During the past SC legislative session, MOAA members in South Carolina made a heroic effort to persuade our state lawmakers to exempt military retired pay from SC state income tax. Unfortunately, the unanimously-passed House bill languished in the Senate Finance Committee and wasn't brought to the floor for a vote. We want this matter acted on as soon as the (both available on www.scmilitarybases.com)

legislature reconvenes.

The bill carries a hefty price tag, as the tax generates \$22 million from military retirees in SC, but advocates understand that even more can be recouped as the retiree base grows, as retirees pay income taxes from SC jobs, as taxes

on goods and services used by retirees and their families are generated. Retirees also end up on the plus side of the ledger for employers, communities, and the state. Military retirees are contributors to their communities. Period.

Exempting retirement income from state income tax would be a major inducement to attracting military retirees to make South Carolina their retirement home and workplace. Two important studies completed this past year support this legislation.

I suggest you follow this link. It'll take you to some good work by the SC Military Base Task Force. Nevertheless, the Low Country Chapter has developed some good reasons of its own to pass a retired pay exemption. I recommend you email your state senator (see contact info at end of this email), ask him to support an exemption and cite some of these reasons. I also

(Sound Off; Continued on page 3)



(Sound Off; Continued from page 2)

request that you come up with a few of your own reasons and share them with your fellow MOAA members and me!

With the military downsizing after 13 years of war in the Middle East & South Asia, there could be a new round of base closings under BRAC (Base Realignment & Closings) in 2019. States that demonstrate solid support for their troops and families, especially via military-friendly laws, stand to fare better when government accountants sharpen their pencils. The military puts over \$18 billion into SC's economy. Recently, Ft. Jackson was threatened with personnel cuts as deep as 3,500, but fortunately, lost only 180. Exempting military retired pay could be an important discriminator when SC next comes under scrutiny for base cuts and closings.

Thanks & regards,

Bob

LTC Robert L. Freeman, USA (Ret.)
Legislative Liaison, MOAA Low Country Chapter
(843) 476-7871

RETIRED PAY TAX EXEMPTION TALKING POINTS

- Retirees in South Carolina now benefit from a partial income tax exemption, but the state is disadvantaged by adjacent states that do not have a state income tax or exempt military retirement pay from state income taxes; exemption may also be a BRAC (Base Realignment And Closing) “discriminator”;
- MOAA has consistently advocated exempting South Carolina military retirees from state income tax as an inducement for service members to retire here, become part of local communities and join the South Carolina workforce;
- Military retirees are law-abiding, conscientious and invariably benefit their communities due to their broad life-experiences, commitment to service and as inveterate volunteers;
- They bring to their post-military employers leadership, organizational, technical and logistical skills;
- They are can-do team players with a strong work ethic who value their colleagues and act with integrity;
- As South Carolina attracts more and more industry, employers will have greater need for the skills, experience and character of military retirees; such a workforce also ATTRACTS industry.

Sen. Tom Davis
<http://senatortomdavis.com/contact-tom/>

Sen. Chip Campsen
<http://campsen.org/contact/>



LOWCOUNTRY MOAA AWARDS JROTC SCHOLARSHIP TO Cadet Captain Brooke Everly

By Brad McDonald
DUDE Magazine

This past spring members of the Lowcountry Chapter of the Military Officers Association gathered at the absolutely gorgeous, scenic Traditions Club on Parris Island Marine Recruit Depot for a delectable dinner and some memorable camaraderie. It's always enjoyable getting together with a fine group of Americans to hear their stories of valor and service to our great country. It's also intriguing to hear their opinions on the state of our military as it currently pertains to different foreign policy affairs.

After some delectable cuisine prepared by the staff and chefs of Traditions, it was time for this proud group to acknowledge, pay tribute to and award a fine outstanding member of our community, who is surely to become an accomplished military officer herself. Not only does the MOAA fight for veterans rights in the legislature but they are also very involved in military transitioning to civilian life. Another one of their great annual achievements is to award a JROTC scholarship to a local outstanding, deserving individual and this year's hard working individual is Cadet Captain Brooke Everly from Whale Branch Early College High School. She graciously accepted her MOAA JROTC Award from Major General Mike Akey, Low Country Chapter President. A proud moment for all involved indeed.



Lowcountry MOAA Chapter President, Major General Michael Akey presents Cadet Captain Brooke Everly with scholarship

Brooke's goal is to attend a military academy with sights on the Naval Academy. She is also considering the Citadel but is just going into her senior year. A very impressive young lady for sure. Here is a quote from her, "In middle school, I was very shy and I had a really hard time making friends. That all changed once I joined my JROTC program. JROTC has and still is changing me into the character I never thought I could be. I have become more outgoing and the leadership skills I never knew I had are coming out better every day. I also like JROTC because it has helped me focus on what I want to do after high school and every day I push myself harder."

A very admirable young woman that I think many teenagers out there should take a look at, that in my opinion are lacking in confidence, manners, social skills and direction in life. It really makes you feel good about the future of this country, especially if we are going to have leaders and future role models such as Brooke. Congratulations Young Lady! You deserve it and keep up the great work. Somehow I feel certain we'll be hearing more from her as she continues to grow in to a fine young military officer.

Also attending the dinner and making a presentation was Lieutenant Colonel Paul Merritt USMC (Retired) who you may remember from the article I did about him and Master Sargent Warren Disbrow USMC (Retired), who have successfully started the Military Transitioning Training Program through the Technical College of The Lowcountry. It is so gratifying to see how successful this program has become and how many transitioning Marine aviators it is helping obtain the FAA certification and training that is getting them placed in great jobs with local aerospace companies such as Boeing in Charleston, South Carolina and Gulfstream in Savannah, Georgia. Keep up the great work gentlemen, I know your efforts are much appreciated by these young up and coming aviation professionals.

Thanks to all my fellow Lowcountry MOAA members for making feel like part of the association, even though I never served my country, much less became an officer. All of you do inspire me and make me proud to be an American. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE TO THIS GREAT COUNTRY OF OURS!



MAY DAY! MAY DAY! MAY DAY!

AMERICAN EAGLE GOING DOWN

By Brad McDonald
DUDE Magazine

This is a DUDE account of the very amazing and harrowing story of Major Kenneth Harney and Captain Tyler Stark of the United States of America AIR FORCE. These two DUDES' F-15E STRIKE EAGLE went down during a combat mission in the very hostile land of Libya in 2011 when we were going after Gaddafi.

Earlier this year, I was very honored to be invited to join the Lowcountry Military Officers Association (LCMOAA) as an honorary member. To be a part of this amazing group of DUDES is one of the nicest honors of my life. These are the BEST of the BEST DUDE. Active duty and retired Officers, Captains, Colonels and Generals abound.

Meeting them, hearing their stories, being able to look them in the eye, shake their hands and THANK THEM FOR THEIR LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE TO OUR GREAT COUNTRY has really been an enjoyable experience.



LCMOAA member, Lieutenant Colonel Bob Freeman, USA (Ret) with Major Harney & Captain Stark, USAF

Well, now being of part of these GREAT DUDES and yes, there are some LADIES as well that lead us in the fine group, I was informed that the LCMOAA was going to be providing (sponsoring) the food and drink for a very special Officers Call/PME (Professional Military Education) being held at the Officer Club on the Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS), Beaufort. Being that I was not really sure what that meant, I was very intrigued by the very thoughtful cordial invitation to join in on this very private, seemingly auspicious event where these two amazing DUDES were going to speak to all the active duty Marine Corps Pilots serving on MCAS Beaufort aka FIGHTERTOWN. ALL HANDS ON DECK DUDE!

The Officers Club on the MCAS Beaufort is a very cool place and I enjoyed being there before at a MOAA luncheon meeting and listening to Lieutenant Colonel Brian Foster USMC and Major Duncan French USMC and hearing their FA/18 SUPER HORNET and F-35B LIGHTNING II stories. So, I already knew what a cool place this is, but when I walked in and saw a couple hundred of America's Finest, Marine Corps Pilots in full uniform having cold ones, drinking out of their very own private personalized ceramic mugs in the bar, I was a bit taken back. Well, I joined right in and had some fellowship with my fellow Americans and had a chilly cold one prior to the main event, OFFICERS CALL PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION.

We were all welcomed by the MCAS BEAUFORT COMMANDER, Colonel Peter D. Buck and soon we were introduced to Major Harney and Captain Stark. To be in a room with so many amazing American Heroes was truly awe-inspiring. These casual heroes addressed the Marine Corps Pilots by giving them a bit of a jab about how the Air Force goes in and executes flawlessly, so the Marines can come in and sweep up. It was a great anecdotal beginning to their amazing story of a jet crash and the search and rescue mission that followed.

For hours on March 21, 2011, Pilot, Major Kenneth Harney (USAF) of Lexington, Kentucky, and Weapons Systems Officer, Captain Tyler Stark (USAF) of Littleton, Colorado, were the focus of nearly every United States of America service member in the Mediterranean Sea region. You see, we don't or shouldn't leave service mem-

(May Day; Continued on page 6)



(May Day; Continued from page 5)

bers behind, in Iran, Mexico or any damn where, so at least a dozen aircraft, a platoon of Marines and even Libyan civilians worked to rescue Harney and Stark after their F-15E crashed in eastern Libya.

These two DUDES truly had their audience of fellow pilots captivated immediately by the up close and personal tales of their heroic survival. They, among others, were involved in Operations Odyssey Dawn in Libya. Information and the story of their crash and rescue were a closely guarded secret for quite a while and it was thought to never be made public.

The men were part of the 48th Fighter Wing, normally based at RAF Lakenheath, a Royal Air Force base that has hosted United States Air Force units for years in Suffolk, England. On this fateful day, March 21, they took off from the United States air base in Aviano, Italy, in support of the no-fly zone enforcement over Libya.

According to Harney and Stark, their pre-mission briefings went on for a few days prior to deployment. There were understandably some anxious moments for these warriors on the actual day of the mission, as they realized they were going in to combat that night. Intelligence had rebels out of Benghazi as trouble makers and there was to be no Libyan aircraft in the air whatsoever PERIOD! Once air borne in the area, they were immediately in anti-aircraft surface to air fire. Their radio transmission went out to the nearest proximal tanker, as they dropped their ordinance a 500 pound bomb on their specified coordinates. I'm sure there was a big boom some where down there, but when Major Harney departed the area with a heavy G-force, the F-15E Strike Eagle suffered an aerodynamics issue due to the large extra-capacity fuel tanks hanging from either wing. Well, this put our boys in a flat spin. A rumble of humor ran through the room when Major Harney said, "IT WAS JUST LIKE TOP GUN!" He parodied it to a car out of control spinning in circles on a patch of ice. The amazing F-15E has an automatic anti-spin recovery program that has a 50% recovery rate, but it did not work this time DUDE. The call went out...MAYDAY! MAYDAY! MAYDAY!

One can only imagine what is going through their minds, but at around 9,000 feet it was clear, they had to bail out over hostile territory. I'm sure it takes an inordinate amount of composure and strength to "PUNCH OUT" as they called it and pull those handles. Immediately, they received a full shot of 25 G's and adrenaline. As their parachutes deployed, they slowly floated down in to hostile enemy territory, at night mind you. They also got to see their F-15E explode on impact. Their immediate thoughts were, "this is real DUDE" and "we need to get it together quickly and let our training kick in." Military pilot training says most likely you will not immediately be able to find your partner, if you have one, so you must go in survival mode and take care of yourself first. Once on the ground, isolated and separated from your partner, it was grab your gear, take off running and get the hell out of the immediate area and find cover.

The intensity ratcheted up when they heard dogs, men's voices, saw lights and heard gun fire. As they avoided hostile contact they eventually found "Hole-Up Sites." Here's where training, survival vests and radios can save your ass. Moving at night with just an old school compass in unknown sheep farm fields in Libya requires discipline and training. I can't imagine going through this and hearing these proud Air Force pilots telling these Marine Corps pilots that, Yeah DUDE, this can happen to you! It was pretty gripping.

Harney, call sign "Meso" and Stark, call sign "Mask" knew their boys were looking for them as they constantly heard American aircraft scoping the area. Air Force F-16 Falcons and Marine Corps MV-22 Ospreys were in search of our boys who were now separated without contact with each other. Yeah DUDE, now isolated and separated, they admitted that they were scared.

Finally, after several very intense hours, Stark was found by Libyan civilians and at first, he didn't know whether they were friendly or not. They protected him in a local farm building from possible retaliation by forces loyal to Libyan leader Moammar Gaddafi and he was eventually taken safely back to Europe via Italian frigate. There was one problem. With the stress, Stark couldn't remember the number to call in the UK for rescue, so, he called his father, from Libya. "In the age of cell phones, whose number do you know off the top of your head? Well, your parents. So I called him up, spoke with my dad and said, "Hey, I need you to make a call for me."

Harney's rescue came a bit more quickly. He stayed in communications with another F-15E pilot still in the air over Libya. Eventually, an MV-22 Osprey carrying Marines who were part of a Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel, or TRAP, team landed near his position. "As that back door opened, I saw a group of young Recon Marines jump

(May Day; Continued on page 7)



(May Day; Continued from page 6)

out, and that was probably the best feeling I've ever felt in my entire life," Harney said. Relief really wasn't felt till Harney felt those Osprey props turn upwards and take him out of this hostile area. As he looked down, a couple of hostile vehicles were in hot pursuit to intercept the rescue and the result was a couple of Marine Corps AV-8B Harriers swooping down and taking action. How's that for rules of engagement DUDE. BYE BYE! After some hopscotching, he was flown to the USS Kearsarge for a quick medical check. A short time later he was sent home with Stark to RAF Lakenheath via C-130, where friends and family welcomed them with hugs and a rendition of "God Bless America." A heartfelt Harney. personally thanked the Marines for coming in and saving his ass and that was pretty cool to witness first hand.

After a brief intermission, so we could all go grab another cold one in the Officers Club bar, the post rescue story came to the forefront. Without getting in to too much detail for various reasons, they were some what put out on the transition of debriefing to actually getting back to be with their families. A trip to the Benghazi state house, a much appreciated call to Dad, hotels, Italian frigates, multiple de-briefings and, eventually, a C-130 trip home. That had to be taxing on these stressed out pilots. Maybe some more immediate attention to the families rather than to the de-briefings should have been considered for heroes.

As they closed their presentation, they opened the floor to questions. There were many. Some we cannot discuss here in this article. Some of the lessons they basically wanted these proud Marine Corps pilots to know: your training can save you, don't hesitate when it comes time to PUNCH OUT, re-integration sucks, so try to go through it with a positive mental attitude; and a bit more family support could have been shown during the transition. Most of all, Don't think it can't happen to you DUDE. I was a bit miffed when a Marine Corps pilot asked, "Is there something you wished you had in survival kit?" and they answered, "It sure would have been nice to have a Cell Phone and some Night Vision Googles!" What? All the money and technology we have and our pilots don't have cell phones and night vision googles in their survival kits? Well, hopefully those seemingly simple recommendations from two DUDES who went through it might be worth considering. Maybe they already have, if not, GET IT DONE!

I love and have faith in my country and because of heroes like these DUDES who are as brother Luther Vandross sings, "Have the will to fight the unbeatable foe and who are willing to fight for the right, without question or pause and be willing to march in to Hell, for that Heavenly cause."

A very special thanks to the LCMOAA for the invite to this Officers Call and for the hospitality of the MCAS Beaufort Officers Club. Another VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU TO MAJOR HARNEY, CAPTAIN STARK and ALL THE MARINE CORPS PILOTS whose company I was so fortunate enough to be in FOR THEIR SERVICE TO OUR GREAT COUNTRY. OOORAH!



VETERANS CEMETERY COMMITTEE OF BEAUFORT (VCCOB) DELIVERS

By Brad McDonald
DUDE Magazine

This past June I joined some of my fellow Lowcountry Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) members along with some dignitaries and other honorable GOD & country loving veterans for a very heartfelt event at the Beaufort National Cemetery. I love seeing veterans respected and honored in any way shape or form and this dedication had some extra special auspicious local meaning.

A VETERANS' PLAQUE was dedicated on the hallowed grounds of the Beaufort National Cemetery by Director, Craig Arsell. Also on hand with fellow LCMOAA members were various Veterans Cycle Groups, local Veterans from all branches, as well as our



good State Senator, Tom Davis and our Honorable Mayor of Beaufort, Billy Keyserling. The Veterans' Plaque honors the great efforts of the Veterans Cemetery Committee of Beaufort.

The VCCOB was formed in 1994 by local veterans and other concerned citizens to expand the Beaufort National Cemetery. The committee secured essential adjacent land for BNC in 2007. Keeping America's sacred promise to her defenders for an eternal resting place is very important to all American Veterans and should be to all the legal citizens of the United States of America. The plaque reads as follows;

“This memorial plaque honors the hard work and dedication of the Veterans Cemetery Committee of Beaufort (VCCOB). The Committee formed in 1994 with the sole purpose of acquiring land adjacent to Beaufort National Cemetery for an expansion area that would ensure that Veterans and their loved ones had a place of rest for decades to come. Through their diligence and perseverance, the VCCOB succeeded in acquiring more than 20 acres which were presented to the Cemetery and dedicated in May 2007”.

A BIG DUDE SALUTE to VCCOB Officers; Major General William W. Cobb, USA, Colonel James H. Leach, USA and Staff Sergeant John C. McMillan, USMC. I should also mention and salute the other VCCOB members; CWO3 Janes E. Gay Sr., SCARNG, Master Sergeant Walter Al Gray, Jr. USAF, Lieutenant Colonel Roger W. Herrmann, USA, Lieutenant Colonel James D. Neighbors, USA and Sergeant Jesse P. Schaudies, USA. Job well done gentlemen! Your country appreciates you and THANKS YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE TO THIS GREAT COUNTRY OF OURS!



Lowcountry Potpourri

Reported by Scott Marshall



One of only two Republican Presidential candidates with prior military service, former Texas Governor Rick Perry paid a visit to the Beaufort area on July 23. After speaking to a packed crowd at Sun City's Magnolia Hall in the morning, he sat down with about a dozen MOAA Lowcountry Chapter members at Bricks on Boundary in the afternoon. Upon his arrival he wasted no time in engaging in one-on-one conversation with several different members before sitting down with the group as a whole.

While speaking with Lowcountry members, he related his experience as Governor of Texas for 15 years, the unique challenges he faced, and how he dealt with them. He pointed out that no one had a manual for him on how to lead a state through major crises like caring for tens of thousands of Hurricane Katrina refugees, managing Ebola patients, and how to secure the border. The Governor also pointed out Texas' many successes as the world's twelfth largest economy under his leadership.

South Carolina State Representative Shannon Erickson played host to Governor Perry, who sat for over an hour with Lowcountry Chapter members before attempting to depart for his next stop at the Beaufort Water Festival. His departure was delayed, however, by dozens of patrons who wanted an opportunity to greet him and have their picture taken with him. He refused no one and went out of his way to converse with off-duty active duty military members who were present.

Governor Perry served in the U.S. Air Force flying C-130 tactical airlift aircraft in Europe and the Middle East. He is a lifetime member of both the NRA and American Legion Post #75. Prior to being elected Lieutenant Governor in 198, he served two terms as Texas Commissioner of Agriculture and three terms in the Texas House of Representatives.



Email from 104th Fighter Wing
Re: Chapter's August 18th tour of the Savannah Combat Readiness Training Center

From: 104th Fighter Wing Barnes ANGB
<publicaffairs_104fw@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2015 7:04 PM
Subject: Today's Tour

Good Evening,

Thank you very much for attending the tour today at Savannah Combat Readiness Training Center. The photos from today are attached to this e-mail.

Very Respectfully,
104th Fighter Wing Public Affairs Office



Overheard in the O-Club

Military Officers Don't Need College Degrees

There are other ways for candidates to gain the skills they need.

By Benjamin Luxenberg,
In the WSJ
Aug. 10, 2015

Military recruiters and top brass like to repeat the refrain that the average member of the armed forces is better educated than the average American. It's true. According to the Defense Department, nearly 94% of enlisted personnel have a high-school diploma, while only 60% of Americans do. About 83% of officers have a bachelor's degree, in comparison with 30% of the general population.

These statistics, though, involve a bit of self-selection: Most officers have a bachelor's degree because becoming an officer generally requires one, though this prerequisite appears increasingly anachronistic.

For one thing, the requirement of a college degree is simply a box for officer candidates to check. It doesn't matter to the armed forces where you went to school, what you studied, or how well you did—short of a minimal GPA level of about 2.5 out of 4.0.

Scholarships provided by the Reserve Officer Training Corps and military academies such as West Point and Annapolis may have more stringent criteria, but in general anyone with a four-year degree who can pass the basic background checks and physical requirements of the military may apply for Officer Candidate School.

Instead of mandating that officers have college degrees, the military should expand alternative avenues to officership. A few exceptions to the degree mandate already exist: Warrant officers or limited-duty officers—typically highly trained specialists in technical fields like avionics or equipment maintenance—have worked their way to officership. Their service is akin to apprenticeship, where useful knowledge is gained through practical experience, not textbook theory. Why not offer the same deal to other recruits?

Historically, a college degree signaled superior intelligence, critical reasoning and writing skills, and dedication. A degree holder could be expected to form logical, coherent arguments and effectively communicate ideas. But a college degree in 2015 no longer signals—let alone guarantees—much of anything.

According to a 2014 Lumina-Gallup poll, “just 11% of business leaders strongly agree that higher education institutions in this country are graduating students with the skills and competencies that their business needs, and 17% strongly disagree.” In a Chronicle for Higher Education [survey](#) published in March 2013, employers said that applicants with degrees lacked decision-making and problem-solving abilities, written and oral communication skills, adaptability, and even the capacity to manage multiple priorities.

Even more than in civilian environments, those are skills needed for war. If a college degree no longer confers them, then why should the armed forces require it at all? Beyond the usual arguments about the prohibitive cost for many high-school graduates unable to take on debt, a college degree isn't needed to be successful. Peter Thiel, an accomplished tech businessman, offers a fellowship of \$100,000 for aspiring entrepreneurs who want to skip college and build businesses instead. Companies started as a result now employ 200 people and have generated \$200 million in economic activity, according to the fellowship.



Photo: Getty Images

Some may argue that obtaining a bachelor's degree shows responsibility or maturity. Yet how much responsibility does a typical single, childless 22-year-old college senior have? Has he demonstrated greater responsibility than a 22-year-old corporal at the end of his first tour of duty? Has he even demonstrated greater responsibility than a 19-year-old private first class after six months of service?

(Overheard; Continued on page 11)



(Overheard; Continued from page 10)

The only mark of distinction that a college degree still indicates, perhaps, is dedication. It usually requires four or more years to achieve, and following through to the end suggests long-term commitment to a goal. Yet clearly, college and putting off the working world is not for everyone. In 2013, the six-year graduation rate in the U.S. was only 59%, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

Commitment is certainly important to success in the military, but the armed forces already have a way to measure and test it: a four-year enlistment. If aspiring officers must demonstrate commitment and responsibility, completing a four-year enlistment should suffice. If they must prove raw intellectual aptitude, high scores on the military's own General Classification Test should be enough. If they must have general knowledge and the ability to think and write coherently, an exam akin to the State Department's Foreign Service Officer Test would work.

A combination of these could easily form a new path to an officer's commission—and providing an alternative to the bachelor's degree would produce an even more qualified officer corps.

Mr. Luxenberg served as a first lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps from 2009-13. He is now pursuing an M.B.A. and master's in public policy at Harvard.

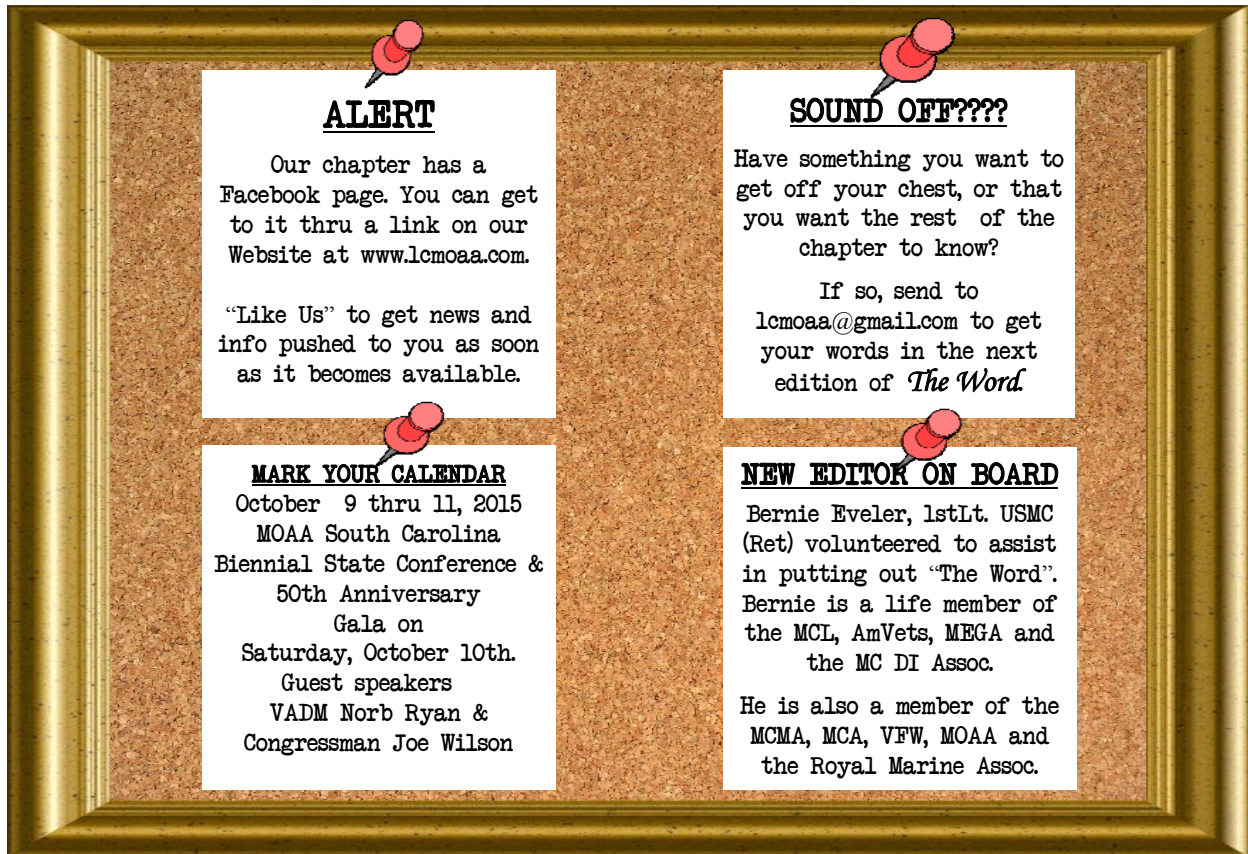
Editor's Bio

Pvt. Eveler joined the Marine Corps Reserve in Columbia, Pennsylvania on June 9, 1953. **Pfc.** Eveler volunteered for active duty and reported to MCRD, Parris Island, SC in February of 1954. Re-enlisted in the regular Marine Corps in April 1954 while undergoing recruit training. Reported to Infantry Training Regiment at Camp Pendleton upon completion of recruit training. Assigned to machine gunner's school after ITR but, subsequently, was re-designated in the 3000 field as a supply clerk and assigned to the supply office of CamPen's base communications section. In February, 1956 **Cpl.** Eveler reported for Marine Security Guard School at Henderson Hall, Arlington, Virginia and subsequently posted to the AmConGen, Istanbul, Turkey. On May 5, 1958 **Sgt.** Eveler was transferred to the Marine Barracks, Naval Facility, Port Lyautey, (now Kenitra) Morocco. In December 1960 he departed Morocco for duty with MAG 32, MCAS, Beaufort, SC. In the fall of 1961 he reported to Drill Instructor School, PISC and subsequent assignment to 2nd RTB, RTR, PISC During February of 1964 he reported for duty with 2ndBn., 5th Marines. In June of 1965 2/5 was re-designated as 3rdBn, 9thMar and after a short fitting-out period at Camp Hanson, Okinawa, landed in Da Nang, RVN. In August, 1966 **SSgt.** Eveler left RVN for re-assignment to the I&I Staff, H/2/23, 4thMarDiv at Port Hueneme, CA. In May, 1969 **GySgt.** Eveler was com-

missioned a **2ndLt.** and re-assigned as the supply officer, 4th LAAM Bn, Twentynine Palms, CA. In 1971 **1stLt.** Eveler reverted to **MSgt.** and assigned as supply officer, Marine Barracks, Naval Station, Treasure Island, San Francisco, CA. **MSgt.** Eveler transferred to the FMCR on August 28, 1973 and was later placed on the retired list as a first lieutenant in June 1983. Mr. Eveler spent 28 more years in the material management field before retiring for good in July 2002 from Gardco Lighting, an outdoor lighting manufacturer in San Leandro, Ca. where he earned the prestigious designation of CPIM, (Certified in Production and Inventory Management). Also, since 1973 he was a member of the Alameda County Sheriff's Department Reserves and attained the rank of captain prior to retiring from the SO in 1995. Lieutenant Eveler has been married since 1958 to the former Miss Dina Gizatullin of Istanbul, Turkey. They have 4 children, 8 grandchildren and 1 great grandchild. Lt. Eveler, who resides in Beaufort, SC is a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Marine Corps Association, a life member of the Marine Corps League, a life member of the Marine Corps Drill Instructor's Association, a life member of AmVets and a member of the Marine Corps Mustang Association. His personnel awards consist of the Combat Action Ribbon, MC Good Conduct Medal, Drill Instructor Ribbon and the Embassy Guard Ribbon.



FYI



ALERT

Our chapter has a Facebook page. You can get to it thru a link on our Website at www.lcmoaa.com.

“Like Us” to get news and info pushed to you as soon as it becomes available.

SOUND OFF????

Have something you want to get off your chest, or that you want the rest of the chapter to know?

If so, send to lcmoaa@gmail.com to get your words in the next edition of *The Word*.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

October 9 thru 11, 2015
MOAA South Carolina
Biennial State Conference &
50th Anniversary
Gala on
Saturday, October 10th.
Guest speakers
VADM Norb Ryan &
Congressman Joe Wilson

NEW EDITOR ON BOARD

Bernie Eveler, 1stLt. USMC (Ret) volunteered to assist in putting out “The Word”. Bernie is a life member of the MCL, AmVets, MEGA and the MC DI Assoc.

He is also a member of the MCMA, MCA, VFW, MOAA and the Royal Marine Assoc.



MOAA
Military Officers Association of America
Low Country Chapter
P.O. Box 1433
Beaufort, SC 29901

