



# Mississippi Coast Military Officers Association

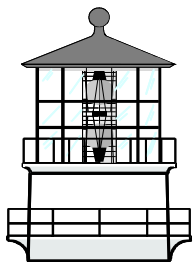
P.O. Box 5027, Keesler Station

Biloxi, MS 39534-0027

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

## June, 2008

<i>June Luncheon Meeting</i>	2
<i>Directors Meeting Minutes</i>	2
<i>Commissary Update</i>	2
<i>Base Exchange Update</i>	3
<i>Medical Center Update</i>	3
<i>Retiree Activities Update</i>	3



*The Mississippi Coast Military Officers Association will be meeting on the second Wednesday of each month for a luncheon or dinner meeting in the local area. The Board of Directors meets that same day at 11 :00 AM at locations to be announced at Keesler AFB. Any member is invited and encouraged to attend the board meetings.*

## Chapter Meets For Dinner At The Phoenician

Over thirty chapter members and guests met for our May dinner meeting at **The Phoenician Restaurant** in Ocean Springs. The evening was a great success as we gathered to enjoy fellowship and fine dining with our members and guests.. In addition we were able to introduce and greet two new members to our growing chapter.

Our special guest speaker was **Mayor Connie Moran** of Ocean Springs. She opened her remarks with a special tribute to the men and women of the armed forces at home and around the world who serve in the cause of peace and freedom.

She elaborated on the Veterans Memorial located in Ocean Springs and how it has gained national recognition as a “must visit” site on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Special emphasis was directed to the many local veterans who worked tirelessly to bring about the establishment of this most impressive monument to the devotion to duty and sacrifices of those who paid the “ultimate price” to secure our peace and freedom.

Mayor Moran went on to tell of her father’s role in the defense of this country during World War II when he proudly served in the Merchant Marines. For so long this group of unsung heroes went without the recognition they so richly deserved when they went to war right along side those in military uniform. Many lost their lives in the oceans of the world as they struggled to deliver the critical war supplies that kept our troops in ammunition, food, shells, tanks, trucks, planes and gasoline. They, too, sacrificed much.

The community of Ocean Springs has established a Seaman’s Memorial located on Front Beach Drive. This site should also be on your itinerary when visiting Ocean Springs. There are so many interesting and fun things to do in this unique community.

Mayor Moran served this government in Europe for 14 years and took the opportunity to visit many cemeterys in the region. These resting places for so many of our fallen heroes of World War II made a lasting impression on her and has been a motivating factor in her support of veterans and military members throughout the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

We wish to extend our sincere thanks to Mayor Connie Moran for attending our May dinner meeting and speaking to us on matters that mean so much to those of us who have served this great nation in war and in peace.

## June Luncheon Meeting ...

Our June luncheon meeting will be held on **Wednesday, June 11** at the **Katrina Kantena** located at Keesler AFB Marina. We hope to have as guest speaker for the luncheon **Col. (Brig. Gen. select) Greg Touhill**, Commander, 81st Training Wing at Keesler. Since Col. Touhill last spoke to us many exciting and important things have taken place in Keesler's recovery from Hurricane Katrina. He should be able to answer many of our questions relating to opening dates, etc. Please plan to attend and hear this important briefing.

Our luncheon will begin promptly at 11:30 AM followed by our guest speaker at 12:00 noon.. The catered luncheon will cost \$9.50 per person and will feature entrees of chicken and beef with "all of the trimmings". This more complete menu promises to be a welcomed departure from our previous soup and salad luncheons.

Our association needs *at least* 25 members and guests at this event. We encourage you to plan to attend and enjoy our special guest speaker and a great time with your fellow chapter members. Last month's evening dinner was excellent with more than 30 persons in attendance. Consider bringing a guest or calling some other chapter members who have not been coming recently and extend a special invitation to them. If possible, please offer a ride to those who no longer can drive and otherwise have to miss out on these special meetings. Your help would be most appreciated.

If you have questions please call **Bob Carson** at **(228) 388-7511**.

## Minutes: Officers and Directors Meeting for May 2008 ....

The meeting was called to order by **Major Lucy Welch** at 1100 hours, May 14, 2008 in the 403rd Reserve Wing Conference Room.

In attendance were **Lucy Welch, Bob Carson, Jeff Neel, Phyllis Luttmann, Harvey Nixon, Dick Wilson, Mel Irving, Gloria Skillstad** and **Joe Littlepage**.

**Item 1.** Lt Col Tom Varble gave an update on the status of Junior ROTC awards to be presented to outstanding cadets in 13 local area high schools.

**Item 2.** Programs: The June luncheon meeting will once again be held at the Katrina Kantena at the Keesler Marina with a catered meal. In addition, plans

were discussed for guest speakers later in the year to include **Senator Wicker (R-MS), Representative Gene Taylor (D-MS)**, and former **Senator Trent Lott**. A motion was made, seconded and passed with unanimous consent to extend permanent honorary membership to Senator Lott for his 35+ years of coming to speak to our chapter.

**Item 3.** Finance: The present balance in checking is \$2,454.26 and savings is \$2,234.40

**Item 4.** Membership: As of this meeting there were 109 members who have renewed or joined for 2008..

**Item 5.** The Board discussed various options open to us for recruiting additional new members, in particular, active duty members. The item remains open pending further research.

**Item 6.** Many members have expressed a desire to be able to access the chapter membership roster on our web site. The procedure is as follows: First, go to **www.mcmoa.org** then select members roster. Next, enter **directory** for the user name. Finally, enter **purplesuit** for the password.

## Commissary Update ...

**1.** Projected new time frame for the new BX/Commissary complex is November or December 2009.

**2.** The new Commissary will be a state-of-the-art facility featuring an Olive Bar, SuiShi Bar, bakery, self-checkout lanes with 55,000 square feet of floor space compared to 45,000 square feet in the old commissary.

**3.** A food court is planned and will be located between the BX and the Commissary facilities.

**4.** The new Commissary will also feature a cooked chicken area.

**5.** According to **Mr. Gordy Harris**, Commissary manager, the parking lot situation for handicapped patrons can be improved if he can obtain a golf cart from the Gold Course stable of carts. By regulation, the present motorized carts in the Commissary cannot be taken out of the building. To buy a golf cart, the Commissary would have to spend around \$15,000. To replace a cart like the ones in the Commissary, the cost would be \$4,500.

**6.** The West parking area is currently closed for infrastructure work. But, when it is open there is a good possibility that it could be reserved for handicapped patrons. It was suggested that part of it be used for **Senior Parking** and for pregnant individuals and Mr. Harris was receptive to the idea.

## Base Exchange Update ...

1. The new Shopette/Class Six/Auto Center is now open. **There is going to be a Block Party in the parking lot adjacent to Larcher Boulevard on Friday and Saturday, May 30 and 31.**
2. The Block Party is a joint venture between the BX and the Commissary. The BX will have 6 tents set up with various specials including some electronics. The Commissary will be selling case lots. There will also be an area devoted to children's activities. If this proves to be successful there will be more Block Parties planned for the future.

## Medical Center Update ...

1. **Patient Referrals:** A reminder regarding patient referrals: Referral Services is now located on the 1st floor of the Medical Center near the Auditorium. If a Keesler provider writes a referral, please visit the Patient Referral office before leaving the building and they will give you an appointment for a provider at Keesler or another one offbase.
2. **Internal Medicine:** Last month Internal Medicine started an Urgent Appointmant System. Urgent Appointments are available **Monday through Wednesday from 0800 to 1000** hours. The appointments are for **one issue** and are booked every **10 minutes**.
3. **Hospital Parking:** Again, there is designated parking now available in the **front** of the Medical Center. Please utilize these newly designated parking spaces when available.

## Retiree Activities Update ...

1. **Military Personnel Flight:** The Military Personnel Flight (MPF) customer service office has new system requirements for a variety of services, including issuance of identification and common access cards. For example, customers must bring two forms of identification to be scanned before a new ID card can be issued. For more information or specifics about particular situations, call **376-8348** (Customer Service).
2. **Radiation Oncology Clinic:** A \$10 million contract was awarded March 4 for a radiation oncology center at Keesler. This project is a result of special Hurricane Katrina funding.

In a recent interview, **Brig. Gen. (Dr.) Doug Robb**, 81st Medical Group Commander, said "The new facility will enhance Keesler's ability to provide the superior care the Keesler community expects from the Keesler

Medical Center team".

"It is important to provide high quality spaces that will compare favorably with similar facilities in the public health-care sector," said **Lt. Col. Richard Onken**, Air Force Health Facilities chief of design.

The project includes two linear accelerator vaults, a simulator room, exam rooms, physician offices, physicists' work areas and offices and other basic support spaces required for clinic operation.

Completion of the project is expected by September 2009.

3. **DIC vs. SBP:** When a military retiree is rated 100% service-connected disabled, withdrawal from SBP is authorized: (1) after 5 years if the individual was rated 100% effective with retirement, or (2) after 10 years if the individual was rated 100% effective after retirement.

To withdraw, call the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) at **1-800-321-1080**.

The refund of the costs paid will not be made to the survivor until the retiree passes away.

You must consider one point before withdrawing from SBP. When the retiree passes away, the survivor is authorized Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). This amount is currently \$1091 per month. If the SBP annuity to the survivor is more than the current rate of DIC (\$1091), the survivor would receive the difference plus a refund of SBP premiums.

This is an easy decision when the DIC payment is more than would have been received from SBP but this may not be the best decision if there is still a sizeable amount of SBP over and above what will be received in DIC.

Again, if there are any questions concerning the SBP Premium Refund, please call **Hal Grant** at **1-800-842-3451, ext. 1005**.

4. **Travel Reimbursement:** Effective Feb.1, 2008, VA increased the beneficiary travel mileage reimbursement rate from 11 cents per mile to 28.5 cents per mile, a change welcomed by more than a million eligible veterans who travel to VA medical facilities.

While increasing the payment, VA, as mandated by law, also equally increased the deductible amounts applied to certain mileage reimbursements. The new deductables are \$7.77 for a one-way trip, \$15.54 for a round trip, with a maximum of \$46.62 per calendar month. However, these deductables can be waived if they cause a financial hardship to the veteran.

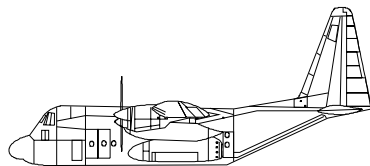
**Mississippi Coast Military Officers Association**  
**P. O. Box 5027, Keesler Station**  
**Biloxi, MS 39534-0027**

PLACE  
 STAMP  
 HERE



**June, 2008**

*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.*



**Monthly Luncheon Meeting on  
 Wednesday, June 11 in the Katrina  
 Kantena at Keesler Marina**

***Chapter Officers***

***President and Treasurer ..... Maj Lucy Welch (594-6508)***

***First Vice-President and Secretary ..... LT Bob Carson (388-7511)***

***Second Vice-President ..... Maj Jeff Neel (896-6588)***

***Past Presidents***

***CAPT Clark Wakefield - President Emeritus***

***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***

***Brig. Gen. Richard Moss - Col. Phyllis Luttman - Col. Harvey Nixon***

***CDR Dick Hansen - Maj. Mel Irving***

***Committee Chairs***

***Chaplain ..... To be announced***

***Commissary & BX ... Col. Phyllis Luttman***

***Club Representative Lt. Col. Dick Wilson***

***Legal Council ..... Lt. Col. Russell Thompson***

***Legislative ..... Maj. Mel Irving***

***Medical Center ..... Col. Phyllis Luttman***

***Newsletter ..... Col Harvey Nixon***

***Retiree Activities ..... Maj. Mel Irving and***

***Maj. Jeff Neel***

***Programs ..... LT Bob Carson***

***Publicity ..... Gloria Skillestad***

***ROTC ..... Lt. Col. Tom Varble***

***Scholarships ..... CW4 Ray Skillestad***

***Webmaster ..... CDR Ron Miller***