

U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION ATLANTA CHAPTER NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2005



VADM NORB RYAN '67, PRESIDENT OF MOAA IS LUNCHEON SPEAKER – OCTOBER 21ST

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Where in the heck did September go? I can't believe that it is already October, we're well into the football season (although Navy has only played three games) and the social schedule is jam packed with events right through the holidays (I also can't believe that I am already mentioning the "holidays".)

Our September luncheon was well attended and was also one of the most enjoyable events that we have had in some time. **Reggie Vachon '58** spoke to us about his uncle George, or as he is better known to us, **CAPT George O'Connell '35**, USN (Ret), or SOPA. It seems that George has been holding out on us, as Reggie explained that his uncle was involved in several major battles during WWII while earning two silver stars. Bob Schulz '71 has written a great synopsis of Reggie's talk that appears later in this newsletter. Attendees included: George O'Connell '35 as an honored guest, Jim Hatch '45, Ed Flynn '51, Bill Rentz '55, Reggie Vachon '58, Mary Vachon (Reggie's wife), Donald Thompson '59, Bill Holmes '64, Stew Caldwell '65, Jon Barton '66, Will Wood '66, Ted Webster '68, Gary Grant '68, Paul Borer '70, Bob Schultz '71, Lee Whitfield '71, Steve Frederick '72, Mark Sims '82, Mario Maddox '85, Kent Leka '90, Perry Stephens '91, and Tony Yonnone '98.

From an activity standpoint, the month of October is overloaded. On 8 October, we have the Navy

Air Force game, televised at Jock's and Jill's Restaurant and Sports Bar on Peachtree Road. Then, on 13 October, the West Point Society of Atlanta (WPSA) has invited us to join them for a tour of the Lockheed F-22 and C-130 production lines. Finally, on 21 October, we will have our monthly luncheon, also at Jock's and Jill's, with a special guest speaker, **VADM Norb Ryan '67**, USN (Ret). VADM Ryan served as Chief of Naval Personnel and is currently the President of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA, formerly TROA.) Interestingly, he is the twin brother of VADM John Ryan USN (Ret), formerly Superintendent of the Naval Academy. **Jim Hatch '47** made the arrangements to get VADM Ryan here to speak, and we are all looking forward to hearing about the issues facing MOAA and how those issues can affect us.

As you are probably aware, Navy's football schedule was retooled three weeks into the season as Navy was scheduled to play Rice University in Houston on the same weekend that hurricane Rita arrived. That game was rescheduled to 22 October, which had been an open date for the team. Because of that open date in the schedule, Paul Johnson had agreed to speak to the Atlanta Touchdown Club on 17 October. However, as he will now be enmeshed in game preparation that week, he has forwarded his regrets and will not be joining us that day. Currently, we are unaware of any plans for him to visit later in the season, but if such a plan evolves, we will let you know asap. Stay tuned to the website for updates.

In addition to the Lockheed tour, the WPSA has invited us to join them on a Saturday in early November for a Skeet and Trap Shooting event at the Tom Lowe Shooting Grounds (formerly the Wolf Creek Shooting Grounds, the 1996 Olympic shooting venue.) Competitive skeet and trap shooters will guide participants through two hours of shooting - no experience required! The Price of \$55.00 for members and guests includes: 2 hours of shooting, professional instruction, all equipment (shotguns, earplugs, ammunition, clays, & eye protection) and a barbeque lunch. (Of course, USNAAAA attendees will be expected to uphold the traditions of the USNAAAA golf team which thoroughly and

routinely trounces the Woops at the spring golf competition each year.) Many of the Woops will attend with spouses, so feel free to bring your spouse or significant other. Check the website for sign up instructions for this event as they become available.

As you can see, there are many events that enable you as members of the greatest fraternity in the world to network, tell sea stories and enjoy the camaraderie that made the "four years together by the bay" almost bearable. The members of the Board of Directors spend a great deal of time planning, coordinating and conducting these events. I invite each of you to participate whenever you are inclined to do so. The website, meticulously maintained and updated by **Bob Schultz '71**, contains the latest and greatest info on all of our future events, and great reports on past events (including pictures of attendees.) Please join us for one or more events. If you have ideas or suggestions for the Board of Directors regarding events or venues please let us know via e-mail, phone call or simply tell one of us at one of the monthly luncheons. If you are not participating in this organization you are missing a great time with some great friends. I hope to see you at one of our events in the near future.

BEAT ARMY!
Steve Frederick '72
Chapter President

VADM Norb Ryan '67 to speak at the October 21st Monthly luncheon.

Join us to hear VADM Norb Ryan '67. Norb is the former Chief of Naval Personnel, now President of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA). formerly The Retired Officers Association (TROA). His twin brother is the former USNA Superintendent, VADM John Ryan '67.

Reggie Vachon '58 Recounts the Naval Service of his Uncle George O'Connell '35 at Chapter September Luncheon

George O'Connell '35, Captain, USN (Ret.) is not only the Atlanta Chapter's senior member, he leads

by example. He is one of the most active members of the Chapter who can be counted upon to be at most every major event that we hold during the year.

George's nephew Reggie Vachon '58, didn't actually tell George the whole truth about why he was bringing him to this particular luncheon. The problem was that George had quite a distinguished Naval career, but whenever asked about what he did in the Navy, he always answered simply "I saw a lot of water"! It's hard to pry a good story out of such an unassuming character as George.

So, Reggie took it upon himself to review some of "Uncle George's" service experiences with us. Reggie, who says that he thinks of Uncle George as a Dad, beamed with pride when talking of his war experiences in the Navy. George was at both Okinawa and D-Day, and was awarded two silver stars as well. George was fire control officer aboard the USS Salt Lake City during the battle of Komandorski Island, one of the longest Naval sea battles ever.

Reggie gave a-minute-by-minute "felt like you were there" review of the action during that battle right down to the guns fired and the hits scored by both sides. This scribe was so caught up in the well told story, that I couldn't keep up with the taking of notes. Luckily, I managed to find a detailed summary of the battle action that I've provided at the link below:

[Battle of Komandorski Island Summary](#)

Hard copy readers go to:

<http://www.usnaaaa.com/Komandorski-Island.htm>

An excellent book is also available about the battle, published by the Naval Institute Press, titled "The Battle of Komandorski Island". (ISBN 0-87021-093-9). By author John A. Lorelli.

I have also found an excellent web site devoted to the memory of the USS Salt Lake City and her crews. The site has many pictures of the crew and stories written by the crew. George even wrote a summary of his service aboard. It's a must see, at the link below:

http://sandysq.gcinet.net/uss_salt_lake_city_ca25/

We cannot thank Reggie and George enough for sharing these great service experiences with us. We are honored to have George, a member of the Greatest Generation, as our senior Chapter member. It was wonderful to see the smile on Reggie's face telling these tales as well as to see the sparkle in George's eye during the telling!

Bob Schultz '71

Upcoming Events

Saturday, October 15, 2005 - 1:30 pm

Kent State at Navy Football - Jocks & Jills

Friday, October 21, 2005 - noon

Monthly luncheon - VAdm Norb Ryan '67,
Pres. of MOAA, will speak – Jocks and Jills

Saturday, October 22, 2005 – 6:00 pm

Navy at Rice Football- Jocks & Jills

Saturday, November ??, 2005

Skeet Shooting – Wolf Creek Shooting
Grounds – details will be on website.

Saturday, November 5, 2005 –1:30 pm

Tulane at Navy Football (Homecoming) –
Jocks and Jills

Saturday November 12, 2005, 1:00 pm

Navy at Notre Dame on NBC *at southside
location yet to be determined.*

Saturday, November 19, 2005 –1:30 pm

Temple at Navy Football – Jocks and Jills

Saturday, December 3, 2005 – 2:30 pm

Army-Navy from Phila. on CBS. TV
location in Atlanta TBA.

Monthly Luncheon Details:

We hold monthly luncheons at noon on the third Friday of each month at:

Jocks & Jills Sport Bar & Restaurant
4046 Peachtree Road NE
Atlanta, GA
Phone: (404) 816-2801

Blue & Gold Officer Update

I get asked a lot about the Blue and Gold program and who can participate. A BGO is a USNA Blue and Gold Officer. BGOs perform counseling and interview students that are applying to USNA. A BGO performs a very important and needed service to the Academy Admissions office by providing a face-to-face interview with the candidate and evaluating the student for their true desire to attend USNA and serve in the Naval service.

Who can be a BGO? A BGO can be an active duty or reserve officer, retired military, a civilian who was an Academy graduate, or civilians who are parents of midshipmen or graduates. We are always looking to add BGOs to our great team here in Georgia; we currently have about 80 BGOs in the state. We need BGOs no matter where they live in Georgia. If you are interest in being a BGO and helping USNA get the most qualified and motivated students, please contact **Cindy Miller** at (770) 650-8921 or cindymiller@1990.USNA.com.

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Address Correction Requested